BUILDING 21ST CENTURY EDUCATION LEADERS: A MULTIPLE CASE STUDY

OF SUCCESSFUL UNIVERSITY–DISTRICT PARTNERSHIPS FOR PRINCIPAL

PREPARATION

by

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this dissertation to my amazing wife, children, and my grandfather.

Thank you, Kimberly, for pushing me when I wanted to quit and for believing in me every step of the way. As an educator, you inspire me. I would not be here today without your love and support. We share this dissertation journey, and I cannot wait to see where your dissertation research takes you.

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ABSTRACT

The focus in this qualitative multiple case study was to examine how four successful university–district partnerships for principal preparation were addressing the need to produce effective campus leaders and the impact universities and districts in such partnerships had on each other and aspiring principals. The study included 16 participants who served in the role of professor, district representative, current advanced student, or graduate from each of the four principal development programs. Data collection included documents, archival records, and interviews with stakeholders at each university and school district. Data analysis involved a process of analyzing and comparing data from the interview transcripts, memos, and artifacts collected as well as a continuous process of comparing data to the existing literature on university–district partnerships and principal development.

The findings from this multiple case study research indicate university–district partnerships for principal preparation are highly effective models for developing future educational leaders. Supportive and consistent leadership within both the university and school district is critical to the success of a university–district partnership. The identification of a viable funding source to sustain a long-term partnership is essential to a lasting partnership for principal development. Future principals benefit most from the university–district partnership when they have an opportunity to apply research-based practices learned in the classroom to real-world experiences through an internship model.

A theoretical model of a university–district partnership for principal preparation emerged from the study that addresses the problem of effective principal development. The data collected from the study support the six components of the theoretical model, which are principal competencies, funding, marketing, recruitment, pedagogy, and real-world experiences.

I. INTRODUCTION

In 1983, a report titled *A Nation at Risk* was published by the National

Commission on Excellence Education as a warning that the U.S. education system was

mediocre at best (Mehta, 2015). Nearly 40 years after *A Nation at Risk* was released, the

United States continues to fail to compete educationally and is trailing many other

industrialized nations in education production, especially in the areas of math and science

(Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, 2010). The report was not

only a wakeup call regarding where the nation's education might be headed, it provided

options on how to systematically avoid the present predicament. One of the solutions

offered in this momentous report was to place greater emphasis on the campus principal

as a leader who could affect student achievement (National Commission on Excellence in

Education, 1983). In 2001, federal legislation passed through the No Child Left Behind

(NCLB) Act sparked a national standards-based reform movement that also required a

focus on campus principals as the driving force behind turning the nation's schools

around (Glatthorn, Jailall, & Jailall, 2017).

Statement of the Problem

Darling-Hammond, LaPointe, Meyerson, Orr, and Cohen (2007) warned that,

according to their research, many principal preparation programs were not producing

campus leaders who would be capable of leading successful 21st century schools.

Leaders of university principal preparation programs have been forced to find creative

ways to meet the need for highly qualified school leaders who can rise to the demands of

federal and state mandates (Kufel & Parks, 2010). University–district partnerships for

principal development reflect one creative approach that is being attempted by a few

institutions of higher education (Sanzo & Willson, 2016). With regard to university–district partnerships and their impact on principal development, there is a gap in the literature. Historically, research on university–district partnerships has reported on their failures more so than their successes (Brookhart & Loadman, 1990; Browne-Ferrigno, 2011; Gooden, Bell, Gonzales, & Lippa, 2011; Kilbourne, Decker, & Romney, 1994; Sanzo & Willson, 2016). According to Gooden et al. (2011), university–district partnerships are difficult to form and do not sustain for an extended period of time. The many problems associated with university–district partnerships, coupled with their short history, may be the contributing factors behind the absence of an abundance of research on successful partnerships. I designed this study in an attempt to fill the gap in the literature on university–district partnerships formed for the purpose of principal preparation after conducting research on partnerships that have successfully formed and are effectively developing principals. Furthermore, this study offers a framework for future university–district partnerships.

Purpose of the Study

When I started the research for this dissertation, I was a newly appointed principal only 3 years removed from the classroom. I had just completed my first year as a principal and was beginning my second year at a historically low performing elementary school in Central Texas. Despite being a product of a district's grow your own (GYO) principal preparation program and a graduate of a Texas-based university principal certification program, as well as completing a Texas Education Service Center principal leadership program, I could relate to the 87% of principals in one study who reported they felt ill-prepared to be a campus leader (Lortie, 2009).

Most universities and many school districts have standalone principal preparation programs. Several research studies have shown that the quality of many principal preparation programs is mediocre at best, and researchers are consistent in their findings that the majority of homegrown district programs do not adequately prepare principals (Joseph, 2010). Additionally, studies conducted on some standalone university leadership preparation programs have shown the graduates of these programs are poorly equipped to be principals (T. N. Miller, Devin, & Shoop, 2007). District leaders are discovering that they have a responsibility to fill the gaps left by principal preparation programs and train principals to be successful instructional leaders in order to build capacity within their districts (Marzano, Waters, & McNulty, 2005).

Marzano and Waters (2009) concluded that effective leadership is essential for the successful operation of schools. With the implementation of new accountability and rating systems for schools and the use of standardized test scores as the primary rating tool for the state, there has been a shift in principal preparation programs toward meeting the needs of school districts for education leaders with a robust instructional base (Kufel & Parks, 2010). Despite efforts by principal preparation programs to develop instructional leaders, these programs continue to fall short of meeting the needs of school districts (Kufel & Parks, 2010). District leaders are working hard to support new campus leaders by filling the gaps in instructional leadership that are not addressed in many principal preparation programs (Marzano et al., 2005). When partnered together, school districts and universities have the opportunity to strengthen principal development by exposing aspiring principals to a combination of research-based theory and real-world experience (Joseph, 2010; T. N. Miller et al., 2007). The purpose of this qualitative study

was to examine how successful university–district partnerships for principal preparation were addressing the need to produce effective campus leaders and the impact universities and districts in such partnerships had on each other and aspiring principals.

Research Questions

Research questions are crucial because they guide the focus of any study (Creswell, 2013). The five questions I attempted answer through this research were:

1. What are the points of collaboration within the successful university–district partnership?

2. What are the unique program features enabled by the successful university–district partnership?

3. How does the successful university–district partnership affect the university?

4. How does the successful university–district partnership affect the partner district?

5. How does the successful university–district partnership affect the students participating in the principal development program?

Significance of the Study

According to Glatthorn et al. (2017), the passage of NCLB placed in the hands of principals a substantial amount of responsibility for student achievement. A study on university principal preparation programs is worthy, as many state legislatures are finding principals are ill-prepared for the position and are demanding change (Darling-Hammond et al., 2007). Researchers have noted that to improve the nation's education system, reform of education leadership development programs, including a strong emphasis on how to implement theory into practice, is necessary (J. Davis, 2016). Therefore, this

research study is significant as I explored university–district partnerships and the impact of a principal preparation program on educational leadership development when it melds the theoretical with the practical (Parylo, 2013).

The significance of the study lies in the identification of successful principalship preparation models for use by leaders of universities and districts seeking to develop or improve partnerships for the preparation of school leaders. Another benefit of this study is that district leaders will be able to identify principal preparation programs and practices that will assist in increasing the campus leadership capacity within their own districts. University leaders will be able to use the findings to identify different frameworks for partnerships with local school districts. My hope was that my research would contribute to improving leadership development and thus improve schools, instruction, and student learning.

Conceptual Framework

In researching the problem of effective principal development through university–district partnerships, it was necessary to identify what constitutes an effective principal preparation program. I used a conceptual framework to guide my study (Roberts, 2010). The conceptual framework of a research study is "the researcher's understanding of how the research problem will best be explored, the specific direction the research will have to take, and the relationship between the different variables in the study" (Grant & Osanloo, 2014, pp. 16-17). It is a blueprint to guide the research based on the researcher's assumptions, opinions, and notions (Miles & Huberman, 1994). The conceptual framework I used for this study is presented in Figure 1.
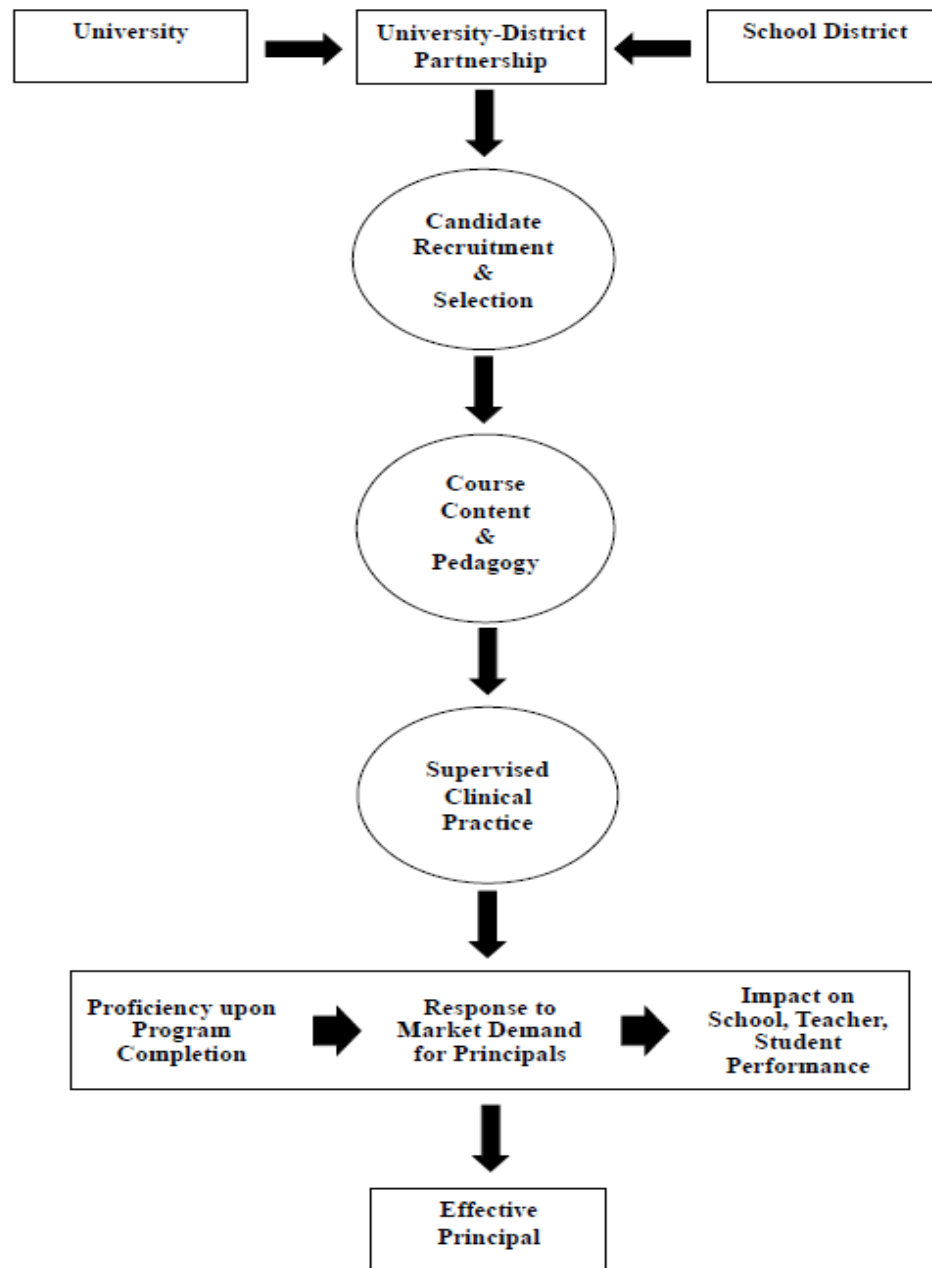
Figure 1. Conceptual framework.

The conceptual framework was inspired by a principal preparation program

quality measures rubric designed by the Education Development Center (EDC; see

Appendix A). I used the general concepts of the rubric to develop this study's conceptual

framework; I did not apply the rubric itself during this study. Using a rubric that is

research-based and designed with the national standards in mind to inspire my conceptual framework paralleled the process most effective principal preparation programs follow to create a successful program (Cheney, Davis, Garrett, & Holleran, 2010).

Building a conceptual framework influenced by a principal preparation program quality measures rubric allowed for a holistic understanding of the programs I studied. The EDC developed the rubric for the purpose of evaluating principal preparation programs after conducting extensive research on several effective principal programs (King, 2013). Both the national standards and EDC rubric contributed to a research-based conceptual framework that helped bridge the gap between the theoretical and practical concepts within my study (Ravitch & Mittenfelner Carl, 2016).

The EDC used research and case studies of effective principal programs to create the rubric as a tool "for discussions and evidence of core preparation program components" (King, 2013, p. 3). In an effort to ensure the concepts from the rubric would meet my needs for this study, I compared the elements in the rubric to the national *Professional Standards for Educational Leaders* (National Policy Board for Educational Administration [NPBEA], 2015). Grounded in sound research, the *Professional Standards for Educational Leaders* provide a framework for educational leaders and the development of principal competencies used to prepare future leaders (NPBEA, 2015). Principal competencies are the skills, knowledge, and dispositions educational leaders need to lead an effective school (Cheney et al., 2010). Developers of the most effective principal preparation programs identify and use principal competencies to create a framework that is the foundation for the recruitment, curriculum, and self-evaluation of those programs (Cheney et al., 2010). Thus, both the national standards and EDC rubric

provided me with a research-based conceptual framework that guided my overall research on principal preparation partnerships.

The *Principal Preparation Program Self-Assessment Toolkit* (King, 2013) includes an explanation of how and why the rubric was developed, the rubric, and an extensive annotated biography of the research used to support the project. King (2013) created the rubric based on six themes that are commonly found in the research on effective principal preparation programs. The themes and quality indicators King identified are:

1. Candidate Recruitment and Selection

    a. Rigorous program admission standards

    b. Multi-dimensional approach to outreach and communication

    c. Valid measures for assessing candidate potential

    d. Competitive recruitment incentives

2. Course Content and Pedagogy

    a. Includes required course content domains

    b. Curriculum is logically and sequentially organized

    c. Incorporates project-based learning methods

    d. Is linked to performance exceptions for principals

    e. Includes formative and summative assessment measures

3. Supervised Clinical Practice

    a. Developmentally sequenced experiences

    b. Problem-based experiences linked to standards

    c. Coaching and performance feedback

d. Formative and summative assessments

e. Opportunities to practice in multiple contexts

4. Graduate Performance Outcome I: Proficiency upon Program Completion

   a. Vision for learning and commitment

   b. Strategic management and development of human capital

   c. Leadership and supervision of quality of instruction

   d. Management of systems and school operations

   e. Parent and community relationships

5. Graduate Performance Outcome II: Response to Market Demand for

   Principals

   a. Graduates meeting state certification requirements

   b. Graduates meeting district eligibility criteria for hiring

   c. Graduates hired as principals or assistant principals

   d. Graduates qualified for placement in chronically low performing schools

   e. Graduates retained in leadership positions for three or more years

6. Graduate Performance Outcome III: Impact on School, Teacher, Student

   Performance

   a. Evidence of graduate impact on school performance

   b. Evidence of graduate impact on teacher performance

   c. Evidence of graduate impact on student performance (pp. 12-23)

My conceptual framework served as a tool to guide my methodology and research

design, as well as helped frame my data analysis (Creswell, 2013). It helped bridge the

gap between the theoretical and practical concepts within my study (Ravitch &

Mittenfelner Carl, 2016).

Overview of Research Framework

The epistemological approach to this research study was from the constructionist

lens. A constructionist's perspective of a university–district partnership would be that it

cannot exist without human interpretation (Crotty, 1998). Thus, I took into account the

interpretations of the stakeholders who interacted with university–district partnerships

through the theoretical perspective of symbolic interactionism. *Symbolic interactionism*

perceives that people are actors engaged in the events that shape their worlds and focuses

on how people undertake these activities (Charmaz, 2014). Charmaz (2014) further

defined symbolic interactionism as a "theoretical framework of premises and concepts for

viewing social realities" (p. 262). Grounded theory was the methodology that linked the

various methods I employed during this study (Crotty, 1998). Through a grounded

theory approach I used the data gathered to develop a theory of how a university–district

partnership affects principal preparation (Corbin & Strauss, 2007). I discuss the research

framework in detail in Chapter 3.

Overview of Research Methods

In this study, I used a multiple case study approach to examine four university–

district partnerships for principal preparation recommended by a panel of experts

(Maxwell, 2005; Yin, 2009). Stake (2005) noted that the case study method is a viable

option for analyzing specific programs. Multiple variables within each program can be

compared to provide an in-depth understanding of each case (Yin, 2009). I collected data

from program artifacts and interviews with a professor, district administrator, student, and graduate from each partnership.

I examined documents to review each partnership's framework, content, and impact. I gave careful consideration to each program's goals, philosophy, curriculum, and field-based experiences. I evaluated the data collected to determine each partnership's alignment with the research on effective principal preparation. I discuss the research methods in detail in Chapter 3.

Challenges

This qualitative case study presented some challenges. The first challenge was the identification of the four cases (Creswell, 2013). Several universities nationally have established principal preparation programs with local school district partnerships. However, there are few in my local region and not enough to create a viable sampling for my dissertation research. I conducted all of my case studies with university–district partnerships outside the immediate area in which I live and work. Therefore, I had to complete all communications remotely. Another potential challenge for the research was the amount of data that needed to be collected for this to be considered a viable multiple case study. Coordinating schedules with numerous participants from multiple universities and school districts was difficult. A combination of persistence and patience was necessary to meet this challenge.

Definition of Terms

The following definitions are relevant to this study:

Distributive leadership – leaders distributing roles and responsibilities among leadership teams, teachers, and community stakeholders in an effort to create conditions

that are conducive to influencing instructional practice (Spillane, Halverson, & Diamond, 2004).

Ethical leaders – leaders who consider their ethical beliefs during decision-making and how they may affect the members of their organizations (Begley, 2008).

Instructional leaders – leaders who apply their skills to coordinate the instructional programs of their schools by setting a vision and mission, focusing on aligned and high quality teacher professional development, working to build community, and distributing leadership with teachers (Bowers & White, 2014).

University–district partnership – a collaborative, well-defined relationship between universities and school districts for the purpose of preparing school leaders with the capacity to address specific district needs (Browne-Ferrigno, 2011; Cheney et al., 2010; Clark, 1999; Cleaver Simmons et al., 2007; Darling-Hammond et al., 2007; J. Davis, 2016; Gooden et al., 2011; Gordon, Oliver, & Solis, 2016; Joseph, 2010; T. N. Miller et al., 2007; Parylo, 2013; Sanzo & Willson, 2016).

Organization of the Study

This dissertation is divided into five chapters. Chapter II offers a review of the relevant literature on the changing roles of the principalship, the professional leadership standards at the national and state levels, the 21st century demands of school leadership, and a brief overview of different types of principal development programs. Chapter III contains an in-depth explanation of this study's research framework and research methods. Chapter IV presents the findings. Chapter V contains interpretations, conclusions, and recommendations for future research.

II. REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The purpose of this literature review is to explore university–district partnerships for principal preparation. Research indicates the development of principals has a direct correlation to overall student achievement (Bowers & White, 2014). Marzano et al. (2005) examined 69 research studies of 2,802 schools, approximately 1.4 million students, and 14,000 teachers and concluded that campus principals have an impact on student achievement.

Various educational leadership preparation programs exist across the country, including in-house school district programs, school district and university partnerships, standalone university programs, and state agency-based programs. Each program was founded upon leadership development theories and practices. To understand the need for and development of university–district partnerships for principal preparation programs, this review begins with an overview of the different eras in principal preparation, the historical roles of the principal, and the evolution of the principal's role in a changing world. The review also covers the characteristics of effective principal preparation programs in general and an overview of four types of principal preparation programs.

A potential benefit of this study is that district leaders will be able to identify principal preparation programs that can increase the campus leadership capacity within their own districts. Effective principal preparation is crucial; however, results of one study of principals in suburban schools showed that only 13% of campus leaders felt prepared to be principals (Lortie, 2009), indicating new leaders often are thrust into the position with inadequate preparation. Studies like this one support the need for additional studies on more creative and more effective ways of preparing principals.

This literature review begins with an examination of the capacities recommended for educational leaders in the two most recent eras of education leadership preparation: the pre-reform era and the reform era. A broader historical look at the evolution of the principalship also is presented. As the principal position evolved, principal preparation programs also evolved to meet the demands of the position as leaders in the field identified various dimensions that principals should possess as part of their skill set. The *Professional Standards for Educational Leaders* (NPBEA, 2015) and state standards are also addressed because they have been used by organizations to assist with identifying critical dimensions of the principalship and to lay the framework for educational leadership preparation programs. The final section provides an overview of four broad types of principal preparation programs.

Recent Eras of Educational Leadership Preparation in the United States

Pre-Reform Era: 1976-1985

As the needs and demands of the principalship change over time, so does the framework that informs the preparation of future campus leaders. Through their historical research of educational leadership development, Gordon, Taylor-Backor, and Croteau (2017) described the leadership development literature of selected decades from the two most recent eras of educational leadership preparation within the United States and the dominant frameworks used for the development of education leaders in these two eras. Scholarly publications on educational leadership development from 1976 to 1985, or the pre-reform era, most commonly focused on themes surrounding technical management and the application of behavioral and social science theory. Gordon et al. used the frequency that leadership competencies were discussed in the literature of the

pre-reform era to create a pyramid demonstrating the focus during this era of leadership

development. Figure 2 represents the pre-reform pyramid.
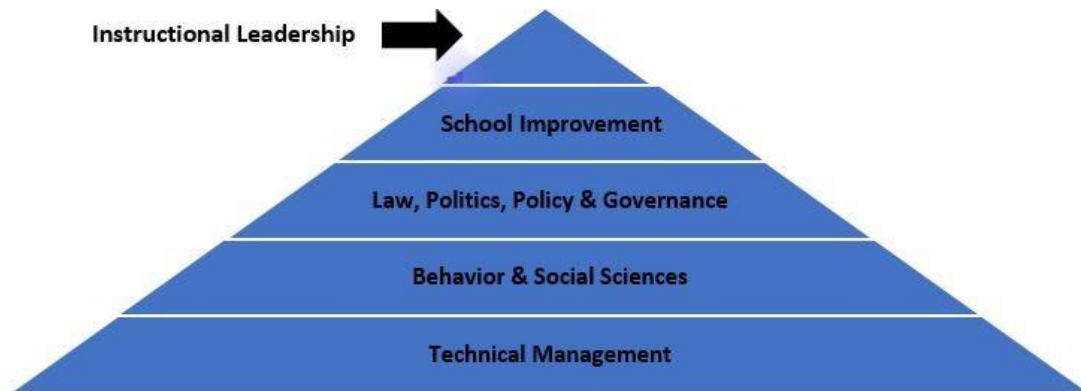
Figure 2. A decade from the pre-reform scholars' pyramid (1976-1985; Gordon et al.,
2017).

The foundation of the pyramid is technical management, which refers to the day-
to-day operations of a campus (Gordon et al., 2017). The daily activity on a campus

consists of the hiring and management of staff, student management, ensuring the

transportation and nutritional needs of the students are met, and fulfilling the financial

obligations of the campus (Hallinger, 1992). During the pre-reform era, principals were

primarily viewed as building managers first. As the leader of an organization, it is

imperative that the principal is aware of the behavioral and social theories and strategies

for developing a campus of trust within an environment that is a stress-free environment.

The large amount of literature on behavioral and social science in schools, and the

implications for the principal's application of these strategies to her or his campus,

indicate that there was a significant concern for psychological well-being within the

campus environment during this period (Gordon et al., 2017).

Scholars of the pre-reform era highlighted the impact of court decisions on the

principalship. A few of the legal topics discussed focused on desegregation, attendance

concerns, separation of church and state, and teacher and student rights. The politics of

governmental mandates were also a topic of discussion among education scholars. The

literature during this period also covered topics such as bilingual education, educational

standards, urban schools, and public funding of schools (Gordon et al., 2017). The

shifting political climate and evolving expectations from legislatures (Hallinger, 1992)

required aspiring educational leaders to have a foundational understanding of how to

navigate education law, politics, policy, and governance.

Resting at the top of the pre-reform era pyramid (meaning they were given lower

emphasis) are the categories of school improvement and instructional leadership. The

topics discussed in the literature relating to school improvement during this period were

focused on applying effective school research. The principal's ability to embrace change

and to lead his or her campus through the school improvement process was addressed in

the scholarship on school improvement. Instructional leadership, the smallest category

within the pre-reform era pyramid, includes research on instructional supervision, the

evaluation of school programs, professional development, and curriculum leadership

(Gordon et al., 2017).

A Decade from the Reform Era: 2006-2015

Through their writing, it was evident that reform era scholars maintained an

interest in four capacities from the pre-reform era: technical management; instructional

leadership; school improvement; and law, politics, policy, and governance. However, as

can be seen in Figure 3, the reform pyramid shows a definite shift in the literature during

this time period. From 2006 to 2015, scholars placed heavy emphasis on school

improvement and instructional leadership and there was a decrease in publications related

to technical management as well as law, politics, policy, and governance (Gordon et al., 2017). This shift in focus may be attributed to the increased demand for principals to function as instructional leaders who could adequately meet the mandates handed down from the increased accountability requirements (Kufel & Parks, 2010). Gordon et al. (2017) also identified two new leadership capacities present in the literature of the reform era: social justice and professional, personal, and spiritual dimensions.
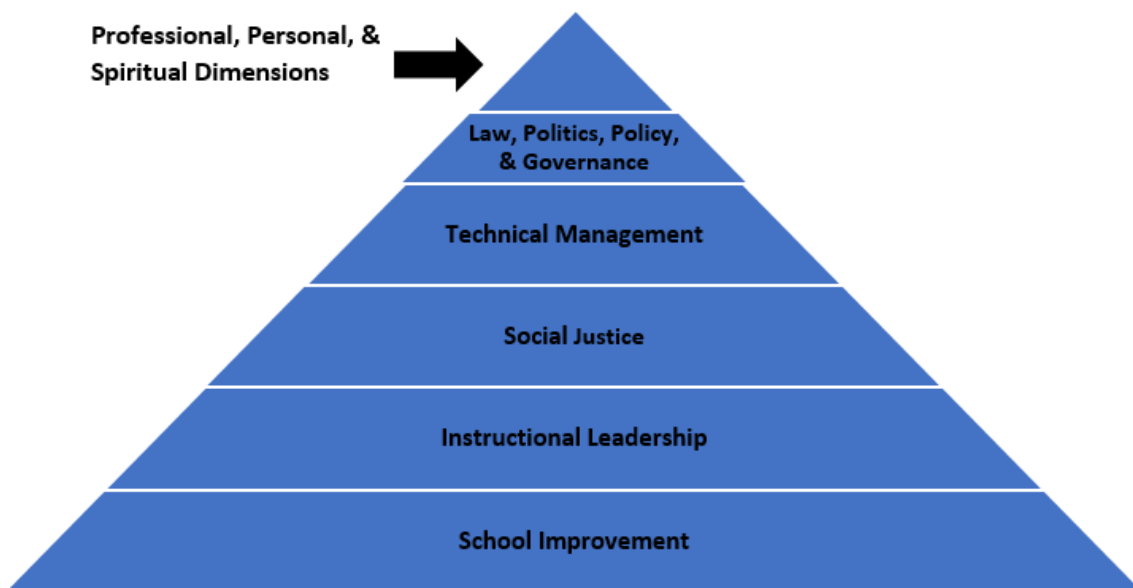
Figure 3. A decade from the scholars' reform pyramid (2006-2015; Gordon et al., 2017).

In the reform period, the school improvement capacity was considered by scholars to be the foundation of leadership in education. Gordon et al. (2017) identified school improvement capacities within the literature, including:

General capacities for leading school improvement efforts as well as capacities

for using data to improve student achievement, facilitating change and improving

school culture, managing education technology, democratic leadership,

differentiated leadership, and foster school-community collaboration. (p. 196)

The literature during this period experienced a shift among scholars, from the campus leader being a solo leader to one who shared responsibilities; terms such as distributed leadership and democratic leadership were commonly used. A distributed and democratic leadership perspective recognizes that it takes more than one person to lead a campus. Therefore, the wise principal empowers the stakeholders of his or her campus to share in the leadership responsibilities of the school (Spillane, 2006).

Five specific capacities for instructional leadership discussed extensively by scholars during the 2006 to 2015 period were instructional supervision, curriculum leadership, program evaluation, staff development, professional learning communities (PLCs), and action research (Gordon et al., 2017). The literature on instructional supervision during this period described a shift of principals from being inspectors of instruction to facilitators of teacher growth through collaborative inquiry and creating opportunities for teacher reflection (Reitzug, West, & Angel, 2008). Curriculum leadership extended the pedagogical focus on instructional leadership and included leadership practices that focused on the "sociocultural and political aspects of educational content decisions: what is taught, to whom, and by whom" (Ylimaki, 2012, p. 305). Increasing demands based on accountability standards during the 2006 to 2015 period had an impact on the scholarly works related to instructional leadership. Program evaluation was viewed as a systematic way to evaluate school improvement efforts (Thorton, Shepperson, & Canavero, 2007). Many scholars during this time period referred to the work of Fullan on school change (Fullan, 1993, 2001, 2004, 2005) and DuFour on PLCs (DuFour, 2002, 2007; DuFour & Eaker, 1998; DuFour & Marzano, 2011) and school development and instructional improvement through staff learning and

collaboration (Huffman, Hipp, Pankake, & Moller, 2014). In an effort to improve

teaching and learning, there was an increased demand for school leaders and teachers to

be reflective in their practice; action research provided the vehicle for school leaders to

evaluate their practices and address the changes necessary to improve student

achievement (Sullivan & Glanz, 2013).

Two capacities not discussed as frequently during the reform era as in the pre-

reform era were technical management and law, politics, policy, and governance. When

technical management was mentioned in the literature, topics were similar to the pre-

reform era: personnel management, school finance, and the administration of special

programs. The increased use of technology in schools during this period resulted in the

addition of technology management to the literature on principals' capacities. The law,

politics, policy, and governance literature during the 2006 to 2015 period included a topic

that was not present in the research during the pre-reform period: increased control from

the federal and state governments. In an effort to improve schools, federal and state

legislators passed new laws that increased accountability and changed curriculum

standard requirements (Ingersoll, 2003). In addition to topics related to the federal and

state governments, the literature on leadership preparation also touched upon school law,

local politics within education, how to navigate and apply education policy, and how to

successfully lead a campus (Gordon et al., 2017).

A Deeper Look at the Historical Record: The Changing Nature of the Principalship

Within the written history of education, resources are abundant on topics related

to the operation of schools, curriculum, student experiences, and community engagement

(Rousmaniere, 2013). What is missing in public education's historical record are the

resources necessary to paint an authentic portrait of the U.S. principal (Rousmaniere, 2007). Beginning in the early 1930s, a few scholars started to build a historical record of the principalship that is at times confusing and jumps from era to era (Kafka, 2009). Rousmaniere (2007) explained that the three factors that may have contributed to the sparse literature available on principals are (a) authors who write scholarly articles on education history often have little to no education experience, (b) historians have focused on the overall scope of education administration and not the individual role of the campus leader, and (c) writers may hold a personal bias against the principalship that stems from their own experiences and interactions with the office. The gaps found in the literature related to the public school principal proved to be a challenge to providing a historical portrait of the principalship.

Demographic Changes

During the 1800s and through the early 1900s, those who were considered to be the head teacher or principal on a campus were predominantly male educators (Kafka, 2009). Women were not commonly considered for campus leadership positions. Societal views of women were that they were supposed to be homemakers and therefore would not be fully invested for the long-term commitment required of an effective school leader (Rousmaniere, 2013). By the mid-1900s, female principals were found primarily at the elementary level and made up 64% of the elementary administrative workforce, whereas their male counterparts occupied the majority of the secondary principal positions (Rousmaniere, 2007). Female administrative candidates at the elementary level were chosen out of a need to fill undesirable, lower paying jobs; however, as these positions became more prestigious in the 20th century and came with higher salaries, they were

increasingly populated by White male applicants (Rousmaniere, 2007). The exception to this was in the segregated African American schools in the South that were led by African American principals. More than half of the African American professionals in the 1950s were educators (Cole, 1986). The landmark Supreme Court case *Brown v. Board of Education* led to the desegregation of public schools, resulting in a dramatic decline in the number of African American principals as they were replaced with White male principals to avoid having white students managed by African American educators (Fultz, 2004; Irvine, 1988). Before WWII, over half of the principals in education were female; by the 1970s, a gender shift resulted in a drop in the representation of female principals to approximately a quarter of all principals (Rousmaniere, 2007). Female principals would not outnumber male principals again until the 2011-2012 school year (Hill, Ottem, & DeRoche, 2016). Though there has been a resurgence in the number of female principals, the disparity of principals of color has remained. In the 1987-1988 school year, 86% of the principals in the United States were White, compared to 8.5% who were Black and 3.3% who were Hispanic. By the 2011-2012 school year the numbers shifted slightly, with U.S. principals identified as 80.3% White, 10.1% Black, and 6.8% Hispanic (Hill et al., 2016).

The Principal's Role

An education system resembles the ebbs and flows of the aspirations and the political and economic climates of the country it serves; therefore, to best understand the historical context of the principal position, it becomes necessary to consider what was happening in the United States at the same moment in time (Kandel, 1970). In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, the principal position was typically filled by a head teacher

(Hallinger, 1992; Young & Grogan, 2005). The head teacher acted as the liaison between

the schoolhouse and local school board that supervised and controlled school operations

by issuing directives, maintaining staffing, completing teacher evaluations, and assessing

students (Rousmaniere, 2013). Schools were no more than one or two rooms made up of

approximately 25 students in each room ranging in age from 5 to 18 years old (Blystone,

2014). Small class sizes did not require the day-to-day operations of a schoolhouse to be

managed by an executive leader. The majority of the school responsibilities were

teacher-driven as described by one schoolhouse teacher who noted that his day started

promptly at 9:00 a.m. with a morning lecture concluding at 10:30 a.m., followed by a 15-

minute recess and more lessons until lunch, which began around noon (Blystone, 2014).

The afternoon schedule was similar to the morning session with the day ending at 4:00

p.m. (Blystone, 2014). Smaller schoolhouses did not provide transportation and lunches;

however, some of today's principal responsibilities were present, such as providing a safe

and orderly environment, communicating with parents, and monitoring student progress

(Marzano et al., 2005).

In most cases, the lead teacher was a male educator who was charged with

completing the daily operations while also meeting his teaching responsibilities

(Hallinger, 1992). Increases in population, improved transportation, and an increasing

need to educate youth to meet the societal needs of the time period led to schools growing

in size and administrative demands, resulting in teacher leaders requesting exclusive

authority over their campuses (Brown, 2005). By the mid- to late-1930s, the majority of

schools in largely populated areas had full-time principals and the campus leadership

position was growing in prestige (Kafka, 2009).

From the 1920s to the 1960s, principals tended to emulate the industrial and corporate managers of the time (Hallinger, 1992). Assuming a relatively new position in education made it difficult for early principals to model themselves after other campus leaders. A change from lead teacher to campus leader required a shift in thinking from delivering curriculum to students to leading other educators and managing the operations of a campus (Watkins, 2013). Principals focused on the daily operations of their schools through their interactions with students, teachers, and parents. In the 1960s, there was an infusion of federally funded programs in the areas of special education and bilingual education. New federal programs, in addition to mandating sweeping curriculum changes, required principals to become program as well as building managers (Hallinger, 1992). By the late 1970s and early 1980s, principals felt the pressure of managing the daily operations of the campus, the supervision of curriculum and instruction, and the oversight of student programs; principals were being forced to evolve from education managers into instructional leaders (Leithwood & Montgomery, 1982). The need for principals in the 1980s to become effective instructional leaders also resulted in a change to leadership development programs that since the 1950s had been designed to focus on school management and not on curriculum and instruction (Young & Grogan, 2005).

With the implementation of the NCLB accountability and rating system for schools and the use of standardized test scores as the primary rating tool for the state came a shift in principal preparation programs. This change was perceived as necessary to meet the need of school districts to hire qualified education leaders who had a strong instructional base (Kufel & Parks, 2010). Principals often reported that they felt they were constantly in survival mode as they faced multiple challenges and increasing

pressure to meet NCLB requirements and avoid sanctions for not doing so (T. N. Miller et al., 2007). For the ill-prepared principal, the demands of fulfilling the NCLB mandate sometimes resulted in taking actions that had unintended negative consequences for teachers and students. Stress increased and morale decreased on many campuses across the nation. High-stress environments, teaching to the test, "gaming the system," and illegal test cheating became a reality during the era of NCLB (Amerin-Beardsley, 2009). Principals not only had to be strong instructional leaders, they had to navigate the political and emotional minefield of NCLB.

Dimensions of the Principalship Addressed by Effective Principal Preparation Programs

Principal as an Instructional Leader

In today's education system, the building management of the past has taken a backseat to instructional leadership (Hallinger, 2005). Through instructional leadership, principals coordinate the instructional program by setting a vision and mission, focusing on aligned and high-quality teacher professional development, working to build community, and distributing leadership among teachers (Bowers & White, 2014). Today's principals are central to the teacher and student success (Bowers & White, 2014). Hall, Childs-Bowen, Cunningham-Morris, Pajardo, and Simeral (2016) described principals as the "gatekeepers for instructional excellence" (p. 51) and listed four criteria for being an effective instructional leader: the principal builds the capacity of the entire staff through professional learning communities (PLCs), builds the individual capacity of each staff member through differentiated coaching, ensures the alignment of a rigorous

curriculum and research-based teaching practices, and promotes a monitoring system that is used for data-driven decision-making.

Principals who create an environment on their campus that fosters PLCs establish a climate that "supports teachers as both learners and leaders" (Zepeda, 2005, p. 63). Without collaboration through PLCs, teachers as educators will eventually reach a point in their growth and development known as the "ceiling effect" (Fullan, 1993, p. 17). Richard DuFour (2002), one of the pioneers of the PLC movement, pointed out that it is the principal's responsibility as an instructional leader to focus on the advancement of teacher learning as well as student learning. Just as a PLC helps to build the capacity of the organization and is vital to school improvement, so is individual teacher coaching crucial to student learning (Hall et al., 2016).

Good or bad instruction in the classroom has more of an impact on student learning than socioeconomic status or funding levels (Schmoker, 2006). As the instructional leader, the principal must visit classrooms, provide timely feedback to teachers, and consistently model reflective practices among staff members. Teachers differ in teaching style, ability level, and needs; thus, principals must differentiate their coaching using all means necessary to help teachers meet their goals (Hall et al., 2016). Coaching teachers on how to identify their professional needs and to build a network of resources to support them as they grow are the most critical tasks of a principal (Wink, 2017). For principals to be competent coaches, they also need to grow as professionals and be a part of a larger district-level PLC that pushes them to reflect on their practice as supervisors of instruction (Marzano et al., 2005).

According to Marzano et al. (2005), principals who have a strong working knowledge of curriculum and instruction will have better results when trying to implement change on their campuses. Principals who are instructional leaders have a strong understanding of effective instructional practices such as differentiation, gradual release, and instructional frameworks (Hattie, 2009). Action steps that are necessary for principals to lead include aligning the curriculum vertically and horizontally, ensuring the instruction is differentiated to meet all student needs, and gathering and analyzing data to help drive curriculum decisions (Desravines & Fenton, 2015). As part of the process for continuous improvement, the principal should encourage a review of student assessment data by PLCs to inform the future instructional needs of students (DuFour & Marzano, 2011). As instructional leaders, principals create the structure, provide the oversight, and support the instructional systems that drive the campus toward success (Hall et al., 2016).

Principal as a Distributive Leader

In the education literature, the term *distributive leadership* has been used as an overarching description of school leadership practices considered to be collaborative or democratic in nature (Harris, 2008). According to Harris (2007), using distributive leadership as a generic term has led to the misconception that within these schools everyone leads. Spillane et al. (2004) suggested distributive leadership in schools is established through the interactions among leadership teams, teachers, and community stakeholders under conditions that are conducive to influencing instructional practice. Principals play an essential role in guiding distributive leadership practices and cultivating a climate that supports those practices on their campuses (Ho & Ng, 2017). The pressures associated with state and federal accountability standards, coupled with the

complex responsibilities placed on today's campus principal, make it nearly impossible

for one person to effectively meet the demands required to move a school forward to

success. Therefore, effective principals rely on the knowledge, experience, and effort of

others to contribute to the success of their schools (Bellibas & Liu, 2018).

As problems arise on a campus, principals practicing distributive leadership

disburse various tasks to those stakeholders who are best suited to contribute to resolving

the problem (Harris, 2004). Effective principals thus indirectly influence student

achievement through the direct influence of the stakeholders in their schools (Harris,

2009). Influencing others to complete a task can be approached in several ways. Being

direct may not be the most effective way to build a campus culture that fosters

distributive leadership practices. Ho and Ng (2017) maintained that staff are more

willing to complete a task for a leader they respect and who has taken the time to create

the buy-in for their vision and approach to leadership. Likewise, Childs-Bowen (2006)

argued that principals need to have the ability to relinquish some control and understand

that sharing some leadership responsibilities will increase rather than diminish their

impact on the campus as a whole. Distributive leadership practices have the added

benefit of building the capacity of staff members and deepening the pool of future

education leaders (Hall et al., 2016). Distributive leaders focus on the greater good of the

campus by sharing their responsibilities and growing their staff. Collins (2001) referred

to this type of leader as a Level 5 leader, who is at the highest level of effective

leadership, has set aside his or her own personal ambition, and places the needs of the

organization first.

Principal as an Ethical Leader

Principals who are viewed as transformational leaders lead schools that experience high staff morale, low staff turnover, and higher student achievement (Griffith, 2004). Research on transformational leadership inevitably connects the moral character and ethics of a leader as the building blocks to becoming a transformational leader (Bass & Steidlmeier, 1999). A principal may or may not be consciously aware that his or her personal goals, values, and ethics have a cognitive effect on his or her decision-making as a leader (Begley, 2008). According to Griffith (2004), a principal should be aware that his or her ethical beliefs have an impact on job performance, and that as the head of a campus he or she sets the tone for the campus ethic philosophy.

In a world of high-stakes accountability, principals must balance the need for high student achievement with the need to apply leadership to improve ethical standards (Klenowski & Ehrich, 2016). When making decisions in an increasingly diverse society, principals need to understand human nature and human motivations within the school setting (Begley, 2008). Principals can affect their school's ethics through creating campus programs to address equitable issues, fostering data-driven decision-making, engaging in moral dialogue with staff and community, leading by example, and finally, by just doing what feels right (Klenowski & Ehrich, 2016). Principals should look beyond a one-dimensional ethical approach to campus leadership and understand that a multi-ethnic approach that focuses on justice, evaluation, and an analytical approach to the interpretation of dilemmas will most likely yield better results (Shapiro & Stefkovich, 2005).

Principal as a Social Justice Leader

Principal preparation programs must prepare future 21st century education leaders to be equipped to meet the needs of communities that are racially and culturally diverse (Brown, 2004). The changing demographics in historically predominantly White neighborhoods have forced current Anglo school leaders to confront their own biases (C. Cooper, 2009). Deficit thinking from a school leader can lead to a school culture that has deep-rooted negative values and attitudes that have a negative impact on an entire school population (McKenzie, Skrla, & Scheurich, 2006). In most cases, principals and teachers do not have a clear understanding of the level of inequality that is present on their campuses (Marshall & Oliva, 2010). Addressing the problem requires facing it head on and being open to discussing the issues and facing their own biases (C. Cooper, 2009).

Becoming a culturally competent principal requires developing an awareness of one's own cultural biases and taking the time to reflect on how beliefs and previous experiences influence leadership (Bustamante, Nelson, & Onwuegbuzie, 2009). Principal preparation programs should provide opportunities for future leaders to "examine their own personal and professional beliefs, participate in conscious raising activities, experience cultural immersion projects, [and] develop skills to identify inequitable policies and practices, and good instructional behavior" (C. Miller & Martin, 2015, p. 147). The level of accountability must be raised for preparation programs to better prepare principals to serve their communities as social justice leaders (C. Cooper, 2009). To improve overall student achievement, principals must be ready to champion inclusive classrooms that provide a rigorous and relevant curriculum for all students (McKenzie et al., 2008).

<center>**National and State Standards**</center>

National Standards

The *Professional Standards for Educational Leaders* provide a framework for educational leaders to guide the development of principal competencies used to prepare future leaders (NPBEA, 2015). Principal competencies are the skills, knowledge, and dispositions education leaders need to possess to lead an effective school (Cheney et al., 2010). Cheney et al. (2010) argued that the most effective principal preparation programs identify and use principal competencies to develop a framework that is the foundation for the recruitment, curriculum, instruction, and evaluation of those programs. Gordon et al. (2017) reviewed the national standards and created a pyramid to represent the capacities addressed by those standards. The pyramid is portrayed in Figure 4.
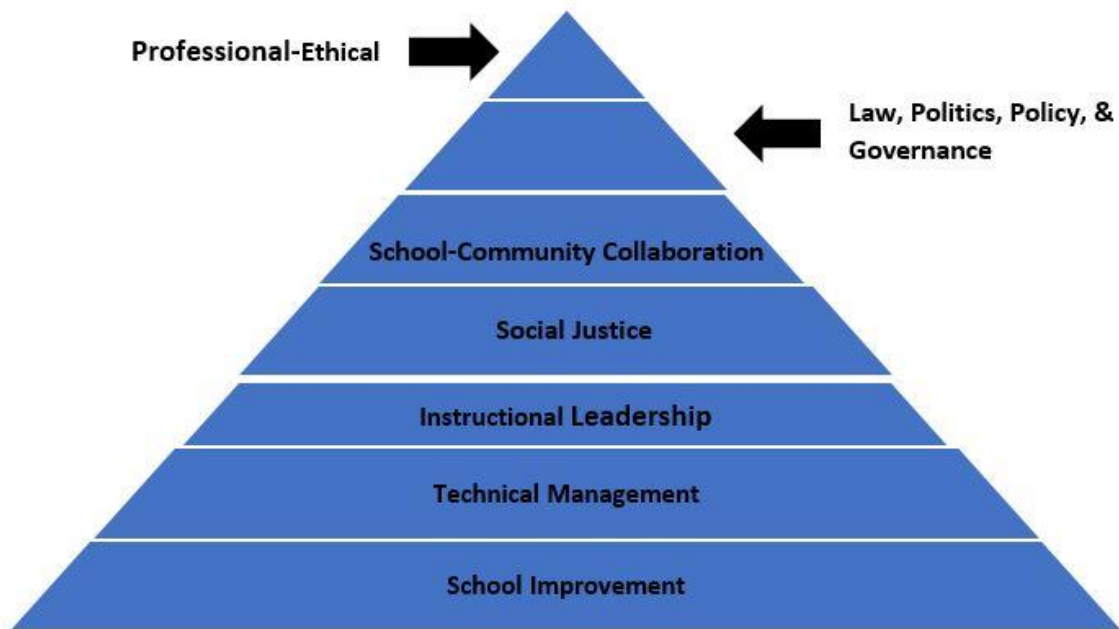
Figure 4. The standards pyramid (Gordon et al., 2017).

The 10 standards address the following: mission, vision, and core values; ethics and professional norms; equity and cultural responsiveness; curriculum, instruction, and

assessment; community of care and support for students; professional capacity of school personnel; professional community for teachers and staff; meaningful engagement of families and community; operations and management; and school improvement (NPBEA, 2015, p. 3).

The first standard states that "effective educational leaders develop, advocate, and enact a shared mission, vision, and core values of high-quality education and academic success and well-being of each student" (NPBEA, 2015, p. 9). Researchers agree that the mission, vision, and core values of a campus or district are necessary for those within an organization to know why it exists and where the organization ultimately wants to go (Desravines & Fenton, 2015; Hall et al., 2016; Marzano & Waters, 2009). Principals thus should have the knowledge and skills required to develop and implement the campus mission, vision, and core values.

The second standard, covering ethics and professional norms, states that "effective educational leaders act ethically and according to professional norms to promote each student's academic success and well-being" (NPBEA, 2015, p. 10). This standard covers not only the leader's ethics but also ethical behavior toward others, good decision-making, social-emotional awareness, and transparent leadership. School leaders face myriad ethical dilemmas in their practice; therefore, they need a strong understanding of their own ethics to respond appropriately (Begley, 2008). Moreover, principals have a responsibility to establish ethical practices and policies for the campus (Hall et al., 2016). Future principals need to incorporate ethical standards within their education philosophy (Klenowski & Ehrich, 2016).

Standard 3 focuses on equity and cultural responsiveness, stating, "Effective educational leaders strive for equity of educational opportunity and culturally responsive practices to promote each student's academic success and well-being" (NPBEA, 2015, p. 11). C. Miller and Martin (2015) noted that "raising school leaders' awareness of their biases and privileges was an essential step in becoming culturally competent and responsive as well as being knowledgeable of instructional strategies and competent in communicating with those who are different" (p. 138). This standard addresses the need for education administrators to have an awareness of and work to eliminate inequalities associated with student discipline and curriculum. Principals are able to improve the quality of education on their campuses when they take the time to identify the racial disparities associated with advanced placement and special services programs as well as student discipline (C. Miller & Martin, 2015).

Standard 4 addresses curriculum, instruction, and assessment: "Effective educational leaders develop and support intellectually rigorous and coherent systems of curriculum, instruction, and assessment to promote each student's academic success and well-being" (NPBEA, 2015, p. 12). At its core, this standard refers to the principal's instructional leadership and the need to align curriculum and teaching to the campus mission and vision. On effective campuses, the principal also fosters a collective understanding of rigorous expectations for each classroom (Desravines & Fenton, 2015). Instructional leaders create campus-level systems that support the academic and social-emotional growth of every student (DuFour & Marzano, 2011).

Standard 5, community of care and support for students, extends the need for the social-emotional support of students to the school level by stating, "Effective educational

leaders cultivate an inclusive, caring, and supportive school community that promotes the academic success and well-being of each student" (NPBEA, 2015, p. 19). This standard addresses the need for principals to build a community in their schools that addresses the whole child rather than being solely focused on academics.

Standard 6, professional capacity of school personnel, and Standard 7, professional community for teachers and staff, support one another. Standard 6 refers to the need for principals to recruit, hire, and train school staff to support the academic success and growth of all students. Standard 7 addresses the need for the school leader to build a campus community that is conducive to personal reflection and improving professional practices (NPBEA, 2015). Without the leadership of the principal to implement and encourage collaboration and reflection among staff, teachers will most likely teach in isolation, which will have a negative impact on student achievement (DuFour & Marzano, 2011). Principals are in the best position to transform a school from a culture of isolation to a culture of collaboration by setting the stage and conditions for professional growth and collaboration (McLaughlin & Talbert, 2006).

Standard 8, meaningful engagement of families and community, provides school administrators with guidelines for building relationships in the community and getting stakeholders engaged in their schools. It states that "effective educational leaders engage families and the community in meaningful, reciprocal, and mutually beneficial ways to promote each student's academic success and well-being" (NPBEA, 2015, p. 16). Successful principals ensure parents and community members are engaged in decisions about the school's curriculum and instruction program, support the school as extended resources, and serve as advocates for the school (Sergiovanni, 2001). Schools and

parents should form a partnership because they have a mutual interest in student success (Marzano et al., 2005).

Operations and management are covered under Standard 9 with the statement that "effective educational leaders manage school operations and resources to promote each student's academic success and well-being" (NPBEA, 2015, p. 23). Successful principals have a good grasp of the needs of their campuses and they effectively manage their budgets to acquire and allocate resources to support student growth and achievement (Desravines & Fenton, 2015). Fullan (2001) noted that school improvement requires additional resources, such as "materials, equipment, space, time, and access to new ideas and to expertise" (pp. 64-65). Along with resource management, principals must be familiar with state and federals laws that concern schools and students, establish communication systems with the community, and foster relationships with the central office, feeder schools, and school board members (NPBEA, 2015).

Standard 10, concerning school improvement, states that "effective educational leaders act as agents of continuous improvement to promote each student's academic success and well-being" (NPBEA, 2015, p. 24). The effective principal establishes a school culture that is data-driven, results-focused, and aligned with the campus vision for success (Marzano et al., 2005). School improvement aligned with the campus vision has a greater potential for success, and it is the school leader's responsibility to refer to the vision consistently (Sergiovanni, 2001). Once a plan for total school improvement is developed, instructional capacity can be increased through systematic coaching practices that support teaching and learning in every classroom (Marzano, Simms, Roy, Heflebower, & Warrick, 2013). The effective principal also forms partnerships with the

central office and outside resources to support the facilitation of total school improvement (Marzano & Waters, 2009).

Texas Principal Standards

One of the most influential sources principals reference on a consistent basis is the professional standards for their state (Gordon et al., 2017). For the purposes of this study, I use the professional standards from the State of Texas as an example of one state's framework for the preparation of educational leaders. Within Chapter 149 of the Texas Commissioner's Rules Concerning Educator Standards, Sub-chapter BB states, "The standards, indicators, knowledge, and skills identified in this section shall be used to align with the training, appraisal, and professional development of principals" (Texas Education Agency [TEA], 2014, Administrator Standards, line a). It is evident from the first line of the Administrator Standards that they are to be used as a guide for the preparation of principals within the State of Texas. Standard 1, Instructional Leadership, aligns with what the literature has identified as one of the most critical roles of today's campus leaders (Kufel & Parks, 2010). According to the TEA (2014), principals must ensure instruction is a priority, aligned to the Texas Essential Knowledge Standards (TEKS), and continuously monitored. Teachers should be able to explain the lesson cycle, know how to deconstruct the TEKS, consistently review data, and engage students with sound instructional practices. Standard 1 requires the school administrator to possess the ability to implement the TEKS and College Career Readiness Standards in a rigorous environment by promoting the growth of the school's teachers.

The education field is a people business, which is why Standard 2, Human Capital, is included in the Administrator Standards. The staff on a campus can determine

the success or failure of a school. The importance of the principal's responsibility to human capital is emphasized by the statement, "The principal is responsible for ensuring there are high-quality teachers and staff in every classroom and throughout the school" (TEA, 2014, Standard 2, Human Capital). The TEA outlines in depth the responsibility of campus leaders to strategically hire effective staff members who are goal driven and have a vision that aligns with the goals and vision of the campus. Furthermore, principals have a responsibility to provide support to their teachers through coaching and frequent feedback. Principals are the instructional leaders of their campus; therefore, they should be the facilitators of professional development and PLCs. The evaluations of the staff should be data-driven and gathered from multiple sources of data to provide an accurate picture of their job performance. The TEA explicitly outlines the expectation for principals to build capacity in their staff through delegating leadership tasks and creating leadership opportunities for teachers to grow as campus leaders. The indicators under Standard 2 include a systematic evaluation system, staff collaboration, and the retention of effective staff members.

Under Standard 3, Executive Leadership, the human capital role of the principal is expanded to include the building of relationships, soft skills, and consistent reflection of the education leader. The TEA (2014) explained, "The principal is responsible for modeling a consistent focus on and commitment to improving student learning" (Standard 3, Executive Leadership). Standard 3 calls for the principal to be committed to ensuring the success of the campus by keeping the staff focused and motivated and inspiring all stakeholders to reach their full potential by striving for excellence. This standard requires the principal to have communication skills and the ability to gather

feedback on the needs of stakeholders. Principals should be reflective in their practices, open to personal growth, and able to adjust their leadership style to meet the needs of the campus. Indicators of effective executive leadership under Standard 3 include resiliency and change management, a commitment to being a continuous learner, communication and interpersonal skills, and having strong ethics.

Standard 4, School Culture, states, "The leader is responsible for establishing and implementing a shared vision and culture of high expectations for all staff and students" (TEA, 2014). This standard is based on the assumption that high expectations and school improvement drive the leader's ability to leverage the campus culture. When the standard is met, campus decisions are based on the elements found within the school's shared vision, positive feedback is consistently provided to support the expectations for staff and students, the social and emotional needs of the students are a focus of the campus, family engagement within the campus is fostered through frequent communication and community events hosted on campus, and communication from families is welcome and considered when shaping or reshaping the campus systems. Under Standard 4, the indicators of an effective school culture are a shared vision, a culture of high expectations, intentional family and community engagement, a safe school environment, and campus discipline.

Standard 5, Strategic Operations, states, "The leader is responsible for implementing systems that align with the school's vision and improve the quality of instruction" (TEA, 2014). Standard 5 calls for the principal to develop a strategic campus improvement plan by reviewing data from several sources in order to set ambitious but measurable goals. Under this standard, the campus leadership team is monitored to

ensure efficiency, instructional time is maximized, teachers can collaborate and review

data frequently, and a yearly calendar is maintained indicating data-driven instructional

cycles and planning time for teachers. Standard 5 also calls for resources and funds to be

allocated efficiently in accordance with the campus vision, goals, and strategic

improvement plan, and for the principal to ensure a partnership of collaboration is

developed with the school district central office staff and other stakeholders throughout

the school district. Standard 5 indicators are a strategic plan for school improvement, a

schedule, and a calendar that reflects maximized learning time, tactical resources

management, and policy implementation and advocacy.

The TEA's Principal Standards are the state's blueprint for an effective principal.

These standards also are the framework for the Texas Principal Certification Exam.

Therefore, all of the principal preparation programs within the State of Texas must

address these standards in the curriculum. The Principal Standards build upon one

another with a more in-depth focus on the principal's roles and responsibilities within

each standard. The common theme throughout each standard is a shared campus vision

with sound data from multiple sources to drive the campus toward success. The principal

must have a keen ability to bring people together and effectively communicate the

expectations to reach the campus goals. Though the Texas Principal Standards are clear

on the expectations of a campus leader, what is not clear is whether all principal

preparation programs can ensure a newly hired principal is prepared to meet those

expectations.

Four Broad Types of Principal Preparation Programs

University-Based Programs

The most successful university principal preparation programs "are research-based, have curricular coherence, provide experience in authentic contexts, use cohort groupings and mentors, and are structured to enable collaborative activity between the program and area schools" (S. Davis, Darling-Hammond, LaPointe, & Meyerson, 2005, p. 8). According to Clark (1999), a drawback to university-based principal preparation programs is that "often the most prolific researchers and authors avoid involvement with students who aspire to a professional position assignment in schools" (p. 231). In programs where Clark's critique matches reality, students are prevented from exposure to the valuable knowledge and insight of expert researchers. Universities, where top scholars are released from teaching in order to conduct research, may be forced to hire practitioners as adjunct professors who may not have done research on educational leadership. On the other hand, the majority of professors employed at comprehensive universities lack the experience as administrators that could provide a practitioner's insight to students (McCarthy, 1999). A report from the School Superintendents Association (ASAA) showed that, despite trying to meld research and theory with the practitioner world, at most universities the majority of courses are still being taught by professors who were never a principal or superintendent (J. Davis, 2016).

Some graduates of university principal preparation programs have a difficult time securing or maintaining employment as a result of their lack of preparation as instructional leaders (S. Davis et al., 2005). Results of one study showed university-based principal preparation programs typically had low admission standards, an

unmanageable number of students within their cohorts, and curricula that did not properly prepare students to become education leaders (Lazaridou, 2015). Another consideration regarding the quality of university-based principal preparation programs is the increased popularity in hybrid or online-only programs (Parylo, 2013). To compete with the 100% online university market, traditional brick and mortar universities have also begun to offer Internet-based and hybrid educational leadership programs, thus limiting or removing altogether the face-to-face component (Choi, Browne-Ferrigno, & Muth, 2005).

State Agency-Based Certification Programs

State agency-based principal certification programs are unique to the region they serve. In Texas, these programs are managed by regional education service centers. Some programs offer to blend the worlds of research and practice. One service center reports on its website that it provides two paths to principal certification: a traditional-track, 15-month program requiring a master's degree, and a university track program that allows the candidate to earn a master's degree from a local university partner (Education Service Center: Region 20, n.d.). Both programs offer an opportunity to receive a minimum of 200 hours of research-based instruction and 200 hours of field-based experience. The Education Service Center: Region 20 (2017) handbook notes that programs offered by the Service Center are unique in comparison to any university program provided in the region because the Service Center offers a mix of theory and field experiences in a mentor-based program. Participants can be enrolled in the program and a local university simultaneously to receive graduate credit toward a master's or doctoral degree (Education Service Center: Region 20, 2017).

The Education Service Center: Region 13 (2018), as another example, offers a 15-month alternative principal certification program that is a blended (i.e., face-to-face and online) cohort model. The curriculum of this program aligns with the State of Texas Principal Standards. The 10 modules covered in the program are: culture; curriculum leadership; instructional leadership; human capital leadership; TExES 268 review; leading groups, change, decision-making; resource management (budget); ethics, equity, and diversity; communication; and school operations and safety (Education Service Center: Region 13, 2018).

Though the design and delivery of each state agency-based program are different, there is one commonality—to be eligible to apply the applicant must have a minimum of 2 years of teaching and 3 years of leadership experience. Cheney et al. (2010) concluded that the most effective principal preparation programs recruit candidates who have a record of working in leadership roles. These candidates may already possess some of the leadership skills that cannot be taught within the 15-month duration of the program; thus, the recruitment standards may be one of the major contributing factors to the success of these programs.

District-Based ("Grow Your Own") Certification Programs

A lack of district funding, coupled with a need for principals who can meet individual school district needs, has prompted some districts to develop in-house "grow-your-own" (GYO) principal preparation programs. An in-house program has the benefit of reducing costs, allowing district administrators to run the program, and allowing future principals to participate in the program who may not have otherwise considered education leadership to be an option (Joseph, 2010).

Kufel and Parks (2010) argued that despite the efforts made by principal

preparation programs to develop instructional leaders, these programs are falling short of

meeting the needs of school districts. A controversial 2006 study conducted by Columbia

University's Teachers College President Arthur Levine showed the quality of most

traditional principal preparation programs was mediocre at best, especially in an era when

high-quality education leadership is essential for schools across the nation (Joseph,

2010). Other research on GYO principal programs is consistent in the finding that the

majority of homegrown district programs do not adequately prepare principals (Joseph,

2010). Nonetheless, some district leaders assert they have a responsibility to fill the gaps

missed by principal preparation programs and train principals to be successful

instructional leaders (Marzano et al., 2005).

University–District Partnerships for Principal Preparation

Universities and school districts have a common interest in ensuring principal

preparation programs develop highly qualified educational leaders (Browne-Ferrigno,

2011). Browne-Ferrigno (2011) stated that within university–district partnerships,

"Professors and practitioners work together to develop curriculum, deliver instruction,

assess learning progress, and supervise internships" (p. 736). The earliest known

university–district partnership occurred in 1892 after the president of Harvard University

called for teachers at the secondary and collegiate levels to collaborate on the

improvement of teaching practices (Cohen, 1974). After WWII, the "baby boom" led to

a rapid expansion of public schools, which resulted in a need for universities and districts

to collaborate on the development of highly qualified teachers (Gooden et al., 2011). In

the late 1980s, the Danforth Foundation established the first initiative for university–

district partnerships formed to work together on the development of future principals (Browne-Ferrigno & Muth, 2009). The Danforth Programs for the Preparation of School Principals initiative supported 22 university–district partnerships developed primarily to focus on the redesigning of educational leadership preparation programs with an emphasis on the recruitment of highly qualified candidates and curriculum changes to include field-based experiences (Gooden et al., 2011). Gooden et al. (2011) stated that university–district partnerships have the elements of action research, with each group having a part in the planning, implementation, and data analysis, ultimately linking university research with the practice in the field of education.

Historically, university–district partnerships have struggled to maintain long-term productive relationships (Gooden et al., 2011). Brookhart and Loadman (1990) noted that university–district partnerships are strained by differences related to professional focus, career reward structures, and unrelated personal power issues and efficacy. Kilbourne et al. (1994) argued that a lack of experience collaborating with an outside organization, the absence of the skills necessary to sustain a dual organizational relationship, and a lack of communication are the downfalls of university–district partnerships. Sanzo and Wilson (2016) discovered through their interviews with district stakeholders that trust within the university–district partnership is essential to the achievement of its purpose. A long-standing relationship between a university and school district had no bearing on the partnership's success when trust was not present (Sanzo & Willson, 2016). Research supports that partnerships between the university and district are difficult to form and even harder to sustain for long periods of time (Gooden et al., 2011). In order to sustain leadership development programs, leaders of both

organizations within the university–district partnership must be fully committed to funding the development of future administrators and to providing the infrastructure to support graduates once in their new roles as leaders (Sanzo & Willson, 2016).

Despite the difficulties associated with university–district partnerships, they have the potential to bring a balance to principal preparation, allowing the students to connect theory and practice (Cleaver Simmons et al., 2007). Partnerships flourish with positive experiences for all stakeholders when a clear and common goal closes the gap between the university classroom and community campus (Sanzo & Willson, 2016). An example of one successful university–district partnership is Kansas State's Master's in Leadership Academies (Mejía, Devin, & Calvert, 2016). The program is designed as a master's cohort. The university and partnering school districts provide liaisons to the program. Each partner has the opportunity to contribute to the course catalog and the major assignments students must complete. The school districts have also agreed to provide students with observation and internship hours to allow them an opportunity to apply what they have learned in the classroom to practice (Mejía et al., 2016). The primary goal of this collaborative partnership is to blend theory with practice and produce an integrated, spiraling curriculum (T. N. Miller et al., 2007). Mejía et al. (2016) surveyed graduates of the Kansas State program and found that graduates reported increases in their leadership effectiveness, ability to think organizationally, and confidence to accept leadership responsibilities.

The University of Washington's Danforth Educational Leadership Program is a 1-year program that requires a 1,000-hour internship that includes 400 documented hours in instructional leadership within a school district (University of Washington, 2018).

Internships are completed by program participants in district roles such as instructional coaches, academic deans, and curriculum developers. The university guarantees area superintendents that graduates of the Danforth program will meet or exceed their expectations; if those expectations are not met, the university will remediate its former students to increase performance (Gordon et al., 2016). Gordon et al. (2016) found in their interviews of program stakeholders that the success of the program is dependent on the commitment of the university to fulfill its guarantee of graduate competency through "partnerships, curriculum, pedagogy, and field experiences" (p. 60). It is these innovative practices that landed this University of Washington leadership development program in the top 10 educational administration and supervision programs (U.S. News & World Report, 2018).

The Leadership Academy program located at the University of Tennessee's Center for Educational Leadership is another innovative example of a successful university–district partnership. The recruitment and screening process is based on program competencies, and program responsibilities are shared by the university and school districts (Gordon et al., 2016). Leadership development programs that have competency-based candidate selection procedures have a higher success rate in terms of identifying candidates who will have the best possible opportunity to graduate from the program and find a future placement as a campus leader (Cheney et al., 2010). The Leadership Academy has a 10% program acceptance rate with a 100% job placement rate for its graduates (Gordon et al., 2016). Gordon et al. (2016) reported that the recruitment process included interview questions that resembled elements of McREL's 21 leadership responsibilities (Waters, Marzano, & McNulty, 2003) and were designed to measure each

candidate's ability to respond to real-world scenarios related to educational leadership. Stakeholders have indicated the Leadership Academy's reputation for having an elite recruiting and selection process has contributed to program graduates having high regard among their peers and future employers and may be a contributing factor to higher student achievement where graduates are campus leaders (Gordon et al., 2016).

A national study of 28 university leadership preparation programs showed that the graduates of those programs were poorly prepared to be principals, but also that when partnered together, school districts and universities have the opportunity to bridge the gap between theory and practice by providing principals with a meaningful experience (Joseph, 2010; T. N. Miller et al., 2007).

> Strong education leaders can be developed by a three-stage process of knowledge and theory acquisition, guided practice, and individual and group reflection. Such concurrent activities do not fit in the structure of leadership programs typically in place today. Knowledge and theory acquisition is the forte of the university. To accomplish the remaining two stages, guided practice, and individual and group reflection on the leadership process, an additional dimension is required. (T. N. Miller et al., 2007, pp. 42-43)

Both universities and school districts have found that their programs are strengthened when partnered together. School district programs have lacked the intellectual resources that are available at the university level, and universities have lacked the interdisciplinary field opportunities that can be offered by a school district (S. Davis et al., 2005). A university–district partnership can provide the missing piece to

formulate an effective school leadership program that allows the participants to put theory into practice.

Summary

This chapter contained a review of the historical progression of the principalship, how that progression has influenced principal preparation, national and state-level standards for principal preparation, and various types of principal development programs. Some implications of this review are that effective principal preparation programs should encompass learning competencies that reflect national and state administration standards, be grounded in research, and include a strong practicum component.

Marzano et al. (2005) concluded that the principal influences student achievement by as much as 25%, indicating the development of future principals is critical. Lortie (2009) found that when polled, the majority of principals felt their principal preparation programs did not provide them with the necessary development to be successful campus leaders. With different philosophies on what is essential for principal preparation, leaders of both university and non-university programs have struggled to meet the needs of school districts for well-prepared campus leaders (Hall et al., 2016). Emerging research on the topic of principal preparation programs indicates the use of university–district partnerships to develop future principals is the ideal scenario (T. N. Miller et al., 2007).

As university–district partnerships for principal development are only beginning to grow in number, there are significant gaps in the literature regarding these programs. The current study was intended to fill that gap and to better inform leaders of universities and school districts on how to partner for successful principal preparation.

III. RESEARCH DESIGN

In this chapter I describe the research framework and methods used to answer the research questions introduced in Chapter 1. The research framework consisted of a constructivist epistemological approach, symbolic interactionism theoretical perspective, grounded theory methodology, and a multiple case study method. The section on research procedures includes descriptions of the research setting, participants, data collection, and analysis. To review, the five questions I attempted to answer through my research were:

1. What are the points of collaboration within the successful university–district partnership?

2. What are the unique program features enabled by the successful university–district partnership?

3. How does the successful university–district partnership affect the university?

4. How does the successful university–district partnership affect the partner district?

5. How does the successful university–district partnership affect the students participating in the principal development program?

Research Framework

Epistemology: Constructivism

Crotty (1998) defined *epistemology* as "a way of understanding and explaining how we know what we know" (p. 3). Ravitch and Mittenfelner Carl (2016) explained that epistemology is how knowledge is created and attained. Creswell (2013) defined epistemology in the context of an "epistemological assumption" (p. 20) that the

researcher applies in an effort to understand the participants being studied. Epistemology is the lens through which researchers view and approach their research. There are three epistemological umbrellas under which researchers work: objectivism, subjectivism, and constructionism (Crotty, 1998). I conducted this research study from a constructionist lens.

Constructionists believe meaning is constructed and does not exist without a human being to interpret that meaning (Crotty, 1998). The constructionist researcher takes into account not only the interpretations of each participant but also considers his or her own bias and experiences that may influence the constructed analysis of the data collected (Charmaz, 2014). This acknowledgment of my personal bias and experiences as an education leader and a former participant in a principal preparation program helped me remain a "neutral observer" (Charmaz, 2014, p. 13) during the research.

My intent in conducting this study was to construct an understanding of how a university–district partnership affects principal development. During this study, I interviewed several stakeholders from various organizations, and each one possessed a diverse background of experiences. Additionally, I gathered and analyzed documents and artifacts from each partnership (Creswell, 2013). A constructionist approach to this research enabled me to focus on how the participants engaged with the programs and how they perceived the impact of those experiences (Crotty, 1998).

Theoretical Perspective: Symbolic Interactionism

The philosophical stance that informs the methodology of a research study and contributes to the framework for the research process is the theoretical perspective (Crotty, 1998, p. 3). Furthermore, the theoretical perspective "states relationships

between abstract concepts and may aim for either explanations or understanding"
(Thornberg & Charmaz, 2012, p. 41). Ravitch and Mittenfelner Carl (2016) noted the
theoretical perspective helps to frame all aspects of a qualitative research study. Though
constructionism guided the overall research process, it was also crucial that the
theoretical perspective complement the chosen epistemology (Crotty, 1998).
Constructionists seek to construct theory by incorporating the researcher's views and
perspectives, experiences, and ideologies with those of the research participants
(Creswell, 2013). As a theoretical perspective, interpretivism seeks to understand how
people construct meaning and action by recognizing the partiality of the participant and
the researcher (Charmaz, 2014). As a subcategory, symbolic interactionism falls under
the umbrella of interpretivism. Symbolic interactionists hold that people interpret the
situation in which they are actors, and from that interpretation construct or recreate the
social structures of their world (Charmaz, 2014). Thus, symbolic interactionism was a
viable theoretical perspective to pair with the constructivist epistemology for this study.

　　　　According to Blumer (1969), interaction is a symbolic process and interactions
among human beings form overall behavior. Rather than accepting that objects are
stable, symbolic interactionists approach concepts and life from the perspective that they
are always changing through practice (Charmaz, 2014). Charmaz (2014) further
explained that meaning is solidified through people's interactions with other people,
objects, or conditions within their environment (p. 269). Through our interactions, we
tend to tailor our actions based on the actions of those around us (Blumer, 1969), and
from those experiences construct our roles within our environment (Charmaz, 2014).
Applying a theoretical perspective rooted in symbolic interactionism to this research

study led to a better understanding of how the interactions of the participants within each university–district partnership and with one another affected the principal development process. Furthermore, symbolic interactionism as a theoretical perspective is supported by scholars as a practical pairing with grounded theory, which was the methodological approach I used for this study.

> Researchers may draw on symbolic interactionism's major strength of combining theory and method into a coherent, unified whole without forcing their data and ideas into a prescribed sent of concepts. Symbolic interactionism and grounded theory methods fit, compliment, and can advance each other. (Charmaz, 2014, p. 277)

Methodology: Grounded Theory

The methodology of a research study is the blueprint that links the various methods employed to reach the desired outcome (Crotty, 1998). The desired outcome for this research study was to develop a theory of how a successful university–district partnership can affect principal development. Clarke (2005) recommended that social situations are best examined through grounded theory; thus, the relationships and social interactions within a university–district partnership are best analyzed using the grounded theory methodology.

Scholars have agreed that two sociologists pioneered grounded theory in 1967, Barney Glaser and Anselm Strauss, based on the need for a viable methodology to study individual participants (Charmaz, 2014; Creswell, 2009, 2013; Ravitch & Mittenfelner Carl, 2016). Grounded theory researchers seek to develop a theory and not to merely use data to describe an event or process (Corbin & Strauss, 2007). Grounded theorists

approach their study with an open mind, collecting data from any source that fits the topic of research and then immersing themselves in that data to better understand the participants and the world in which they live (Charmaz, 2014). Theory development is anchored in data analysis; thus, grounded theory data analysis begins with the first piece of data and emerging concepts are compared continuously throughout the study (Ravitch & Mittenfelner Carl, 2016). Creswell (2013) explained that participants within a grounded theory study have diverse experiences that can contribute to the development of a theory or "provide a framework for future research" (p. 83).

There are two conventional approaches to grounded theory; one is the structured procedures of Strauss and Corbin (1998), and the other is the constructivist lens developed by Charmaz (2014). In this research study, I applied the constructivist grounded theorist methodology. Constructivist grounded theorists take an interpretive approach to qualitative research and focus on applying the opinions, values, beliefs, and experiences of the participants to the development of a theory (Charmaz, 2014; Creswell, 2013). The primary method for data collection for grounded theorists is interviewing (Creswell, 2013). Constructivist grounded theorists have the flexibility to revisit with participants several times depending on where the data lead them, to seek additional data sources, and analyze extensive memos the researcher has scripted throughout the research process as a theory progresses (Charmaz, 2014). The researcher begins attaching scripted memos the moment the first piece of data is collected; detailed memos of reflections are part of the theory development process (Creswell, 2013). As the data are collected they are simultaneously coded through labeling, the creation of categories, sorting, and through the process of analytical questioning (Charmaz, 2014). Charmaz (2014)

emphasized that the researcher should approach data analysis by primarily concentrating on constructing a theory by interpreting the meaning of each category. Theoretical sensitivity influences coding and assists grounded theorists with developing analytical codes that distinguish concepts within the data collected (Charmaz, 2014).

Research Method: Multiple Case Study

This study required the gathering of detailed data about university–district partnerships for principal preparation. Much of the data came from the perceptions and perspectives of university and district program leaders as well as current students and graduates of the principal preparation programs. Therefore, I used a multiple case study approach to explore university–district partnerships (Maxwell, 2005; Yin, 2009). Using a multiple case study approach offered me the opportunity to examine and compare various variables within each program. This particular study involved four case studies conducted on different university–district partnerships and their respective principal preparation programs.

Merriam (1998) noted that data can be analyzed and compared across multiple cases. Yin (2009) stated the multiple case study approach strengthens the data and overall results of a research study. Yin (2009) also noted that a study is more "compelling and robust" (p. 46) when a multiple case study approach is taken.

The benefit of a case study method is that it can fit anywhere within the dominant core of qualitative research (Wolcott, 2009). A researcher who is seeking to develop a deeper understanding of an issue or problem may use case study design as a viable option for illustrating a case (Creswell, 2013). Yin (2009) described a case study as research conducted within a real-life context or environment. I conducted this research study in a

real-life scenario, within a restricted system, over a period of time, and through in-depth data collection from multiple sources, thus rendering case study design an appropriate choice (Creswell, 2013).

<center>**Research Procedures**</center>

There are several types of procedures for conducting a case study; however, two researchers who have developed widely used and respected approaches to case study research are Robert Stake and Robert Yin (Creswell, 2013). An appropriate case study is clearly identifiable and is designed to provide an in-depth understanding of the case (Yin, 2009). Identified cases may focus on one person or many individuals, or be used to analyze a program, an event, or an activity (Stake, 2005). In this study, I used grounded theory to guide the case studies in terms of data collection and analysis as well as the development of a theory on successful university–district partnerships for principal preparation.

Selection of University–District Partnerships

The setting for this research study took place across four university–district preparation programs. Without a preconceived idea of which programs with which to conduct this study, purposeful sampling was the ideal approach (Patton, 2001). Patton (2001) noted the strength of purposeful sampling is the ability to select information-rich cases. Therefore, I employed the purposeful sampling strategy to "yield the most information and have the greatest impact on the development of knowledge" (Patton, 2015, p. 276) for this research study.

I formed a committee of five expert scholars in the field of principal development to identify the initial sample of university–district partnerships. The committee

<center>54</center>

comprised current professors and published scholars in the field of principal development and principal development program administrators. I provided the committee members with the conceptual framework created for this study to assist them with identifying the initial sample of critical cases. The committee identified an initial list of 13 universities that met the criteria as a critical case.

After conducting a thorough search of each university's education leadership development program and a review of published artifacts on each program, I narrowed down the list of 13 nominated programs down to a sample size of six university–district partnerships with well-established and successful programs. I contacted the university administrators from each of the six remaining university education leadership programs to solicit participation in the research study. From the list of six universities contacted, the four universities displayed in Figure 5 with their school district partners agreed to participate in the study.

University–District Partnership Cases
City University of Seattle - Puyallup School District
North Carolina State University - Edgecombe County Public Schools
Texas Christian University - Keller Independent School District
University of New Mexico - Albuquerque Public Schools

Figure 5. Final list of university–district partnership cases.

The program leaders at each university identified a professor, a school district representative, current advanced student, and a graduate from their principal development programs. An introduction e-mail was sent by the university program's point of contact to introduce the researcher and the identified stakeholders. After the initial introduction e-mail, I sent a follow-up e-mail to the nominated stakeholders to solicit their participation in the research study and to schedule separate interviews with each participant. I conducted each interview using questions that were predetermined based

on the five research study questions. The interview protocol questions for each participant are provided in Appendices B, C, D, and E. I asked additional interview questions as spontaneous probing questions to encourage the interviewees to clarify or expand upon their responses to the planned questions.

Data Collection

This study involved an interpretive qualitative approach, which required me to collect quality data in an effort to better understand the participants' worlds (Charmaz, 2014). Collecting data within a case study is typically an extensive process that occurs over an extended period of time (Creswell, 2013). The six recommended types of data that inform a case study are "documents, archival records, interviews, direct observations, participant observations, and physical artifacts" (Yin, 2009, p. 101). For this dissertation, I collected data from documents and archival records, and through interviews with stakeholders at the universities and school districts as well as program participants and graduates.

Artifacts. I gathered documents and other artifacts from the 13 nominated university–district partnerships in the initial phase of the study and used them to choose the partnerships that were examined in the case studies. I also gathered artifacts during the case studies and used both to verify interview data and to generate additional findings. Examples of archival data collected included memorandums of understanding (MOUs) between universities and districts, program curricula, and course syllabi. Artifacts "give alternative insights into the ways people think and act" (Hatch, 2002, p. 117).

Interviews. I interviewed a minimum of four individuals in each case study except one case that had three participants. I used the emerging data collected during the study, along with the dynamics of each individual interview, to determine the number of interviews required to reach sufficient saturation to develop a theory (Charmaz, 2014). In an effort to incorporate various perspectives, I interviewed participants who had the roles of a professor, a district representative, a current advanced student, and a graduate of each principal development program. The selection of participants was purposeful to ensure a diverse sample (Maxwell, 2005); however, diversity may have been limited by who was available to be interviewed at each university and school district. I digitally recorded and transcribed each interview and stored the transcripts and data locally on a hard drive and on a secure online cloud. I reviewed the notes taken during the interviews along with the interview transcripts to construct the story of each university–district partnership (Charmaz, 2014). Glaser (2001) suggested notes taken during interactions with study participants ensure that important details are not lost.

Creswell (2009) defined the qualitative interview as "unstructured and generally open-ended questions that are few in number and intended to elicit views and opinions from the participants" (p. 181). Ravitch and Mittenfelner Carl (2016) noted that qualitative interview protocols employ questions that can fall within the parameters of structured, semi-structured, or unstructured. Similarly, Patton (1987) recommended three approaches to questioning for qualitative interviews: the standardized open-ended interview, the informal conversation interview, and the general interview guide approach.

A standardized open-ended interview allows for very little flexibility for the interviewer to deviate from a scripted set of questions and is preferred if more than one

researcher is working on the same project (Patton, 1987). Also known as a structured

interview, the questions are fixed with probing questions being limited only to the

scripted instrument that is intended to create consistency across interviews (Ravitch &

Mittenfelner Carl, 2016). For this study, I planned to interview stakeholders from a

sampling of different cases to gather multiple perspectives on how a university–district

partnership affects principals' development (Creswell, 2013). Therefore, a structured

interview protocol did not fit the needs of these multiple case studies.

The opposite of the structured interview is the unstructured protocol, which

resembles a conversational style interview that is entirely inductive and personalized to

the interviewees' experiences (Ravitch & Mittenfelner Carl, 2016). Patton's (1987)

informal conversation interview protocol is useful when the researcher is observing the

participants in their natural setting. The flow of questions is natural, resembling more of

an intimate dialogue that may cause the participants to forget they are being interviewed

(Patton, 1987). I conducted all of the interviews for this study by phone during a

predetermined time using some common interview questions; therefore, an unstructured

interview protocol was not ideal for each of the case studies.

The preferred qualitative interview protocol for this research was the general

interview guide approach or semi-structured interview. I developed semi-structured

interview protocols and questions to guide each interview (Maxwell, 2005). A set of

semi-structured protocols enabled me to ask targeted questions tailored to each

participant, coupled with the flexibility to pursue questioning opportunities that emerged

during the interviews (Ravitch & Mittenfelner Carl, 2016). This method allows the

interviewer to take an in-depth investigative approach to the conversation and

simultaneously ensures the structure of the conversation remains within the parameters and focus of the overall study (Patton, 1987). Basic interview questions for each of the four types of participants interviewed are provided in Appendices B, C, D, and E. Additional interview questions were tailored to particular case studies and interviews. Also, I asked some spontaneous probing questions in order to encourage the interviewees to clarify or expand upon their responses to the planned questions.

Data Analysis

I holistically analyzed the data as an embedded analysis of what I discovered from the multiple data sources during the research study (Creswell, 2013). The overall data analysis was based on a modified version of Marshall and Rossman's (2014) analytic procedures, which consist of "(a) organizing the data, (b) immersion in the data, (c) generating case summaries and categories and themes, (d) coding the data, (e) interpretations through analytic memos (f) member checking" (p. 310).

Organizing of and immersion in the data. Marshall and Rossman (2014) emphasized the importance of having a system to organize the data collected and logged by the type of data, date and time received, and source of the data. During this study, I incorporated a few methods to accomplish this task. I used a simple log to list the information suggested by Marshall and Rossman and note cards to create easily accessible reference cards with brief summaries of the data. During the data collection process, I uploaded the data into a web-based qualitative data management system called Atlas.ti to ensure they were secure and easily accessible (Levinas & Silver, 2007). I also stored the data electronically on a password-protected device and on a password-protected cloud-based drive.

Data generated from qualitative studies can be overwhelming, and an accurate interpretation of the data requires an organized structure coupled with a consistent practice of revisiting the data (Patton, 2015). Charmaz (2014) noted that applying the constructivist grounded theory methodology allows for constant interaction and immersion with the data. This is done with the use of data initial coding and recoding practices and memoing that reflect the researcher's interactions with the data (Charmaz, 2014; Marshall & Rossman, 2014). Conducting multicase studies like this research study requires the researcher to diligently work with and review the data from start to finish (Yin, 2009).

Coding. "Coding data is the concrete action taken during analytic thinking" (Marshall & Rossman, 2014, p. 314). Grounded theorists review their data constantly in an attempt to understand the participants' intended meaning; coding supports that process (Charmaz, 2014). Coding is the procedure of grouping text or visual data into classifications of information, looking for evidence of the codes in databases created during the study, and then assigning labels to those codes (Creswell, 2013). Triangulation of the data occurs when evidence that results in a code is produced from different sources (Merriam, 1998).

Gibbs (2015) described grounded theory as a common approach to coding that functions to generate theoretical ideas from the data. He further noted that "as new theories arise out of the data and are supported by the data, they are said to be grounded" (Gibbs, 2015, p. 49). Charmaz (2014) described the constructivist grounded theorist approach to coding as flexible and not allowing the data to be forced into a framework. This approach emphasizes the understanding of the research participants by constructing

a theory versus attempting to provide an explanation (Creswell, 2013). The constructivist grounded theorist coding approach was the method I applied to this research study.

Constructivist grounded theorist coding involves three distinct coding phases: initial coding, focused coding, and theoretical coding (Charmaz, 2014). Initial coding begins with the first piece of information collected and considers each part of text and line within the data (Creswell, 2013). The first phase of the coding process contributes to the development of the study's conceptual categories (Charmaz, 2014). Charmaz (2014) outlined questions that the researcher should consider during initial coding:

1. What is the data a study of?

2. What does the data suggest? Pronounce? Leave unsaid?

3. From whose point of view?

4. What theoretical category does this specific piece of information indicate? (p. 116)

The next phase of the process, focused coding, involves the researcher identifying the most "significant and/or frequent earlier codes to sift through and analyze large amounts of data" (Charmaz, 2014, p. 138). Focused coding allows the researcher to determine whether the initial codes are viable through the comparing of initial codes to the data, codes with other codes, and codes with memos scripted throughout (Charmaz, 2014). Charmaz (2014) listed a set of questions to consider during focused coding:

1. What do you find when you compare your initial codes of data?

2. In which ways might your initial codes reveal patterns?

3. Which of these codes best account for the data?

4. Have you raised these codes to focused codes?

5. What do your comparisons between codes indicate?

6. Do your focused codes reveal gaps in the data? (pp. 140-141)

The final phase, theoretical coding, is a concept that was pioneered by Glaser (1978). Theoretical coding involves identifying potential relationships between categories grounded in theoretical coding families, such as causes, context, or ordering (Creswell, 2013). Charmaz (2014) explained that theoretical coding is different from axial coding (Corbin & Strauss, 2007) in that it relies on analytical strategies rather than following a formal procedural path. This final coding process, similar to axial coding, still includes creating subcategories within a category to identify links within the data (Charmaz, 2014). Glaser (1978) noted that theoretical codes are what brings together a "fractured story" (p. 72).

Analytic memos. During the investigative process, reflecting through writing can move the analysis of data from the ordinary and obvious to the creative (Marshall & Rossman, 2014). Memo writing is a crucial step that keeps the researcher engaged with the data and provides a "place for making comparisons between data and data, data and codes, codes of data and other codes, codes and category, and category and concept and for articulating conjectures about these comparisons" (Charmaz, 2014, p. 163). During this study, I kept and maintained a methodological journal. A methodological journal is an effective way to accelerate the memo writing process and supports thinking through dilemmas and avoiding preconceptions about the data (Charmaz, 2014). Writing memos provided a structure for perpetual thinking during the data immersion process (Marshall & Rossman, 2014).

Case summaries, themes, and categories. The process of writing brief case summaries helps the researcher "identify silent themes, recurring ideas or language, and patterns of belief that link people and settings together" (Marshall & Rossman, 2014, p. 318). The study's research questions were a guiding influence to what ultimately emerged as themes within the data (Ravitch & Mittenfelner Carl, 2016). The essential concepts became the overarching themes for the study (Gibson & Brown, 2009). I actively constructed themes throughout the research study by engaging with the data using coding and strategies such as memo and case summary writing (Ravitch & Mittenfelner Carl, 2016). Furthermore, through the coding process categories developed that clarified concepts, events, or processes within the data (Charmaz, 2014). Charmaz (2014) explained that categories might include themes, vivo codes taken directly from the participants, or codes representative of the researcher's theoretical or substantive interpretation of the data.

Member checking. Member checking is a process in which the participants review and provide feedback about the overall interpretation of the data collected (Marshall & Rossman, 2014). To ensure the validity of the data analysis process, I conducted member checking by sending participants a copy of their transcripts (Charmaz, 2014). Participants were asked to review the transcripts to ensure their intent was captured within the document and were offered an opportunity to correct or clarify anything that did not capture what they were trying to communicate.

IV. RESULTS

The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to examine how successful university–district partnerships for principal preparation were addressing the need to produce effective campus leaders and the impact universities and districts in such partnerships were having on each other and aspiring principals. In this chapter, I answer the study's five research questions based on data gathered through the interviews of 16 stakeholders from four different university–district partnerships, shared artifacts, and online resources. To review, the five research questions that guided the focus of this study were:

1. What are the points of collaboration within the successful university–district partnership?

2. What are the unique program features enabled by the successful university– district partnership?

3. How does the successful university–district partnership affect the university?

4. How does the successful university–district partnership affect the partner district?

5. How does the successful university–district partnership affect the students participating in the principal development program?

City University of Seattle–Puyallup School District

City University of Seattle (CUS, 2016) was established in 1973 and is a private nonprofit university. CUS (2019) asserts that it is the ideal institution of higher learning for the working professional, as it has over 20 locations with face-to-face courses and nearly all of its course offerings are available 100% online. The Puyallup School District

is located 30 miles south of Seattle and is the eighth largest school district in Washington, educating over 22,000 students in 21 elementary schools, seven middle schools, and three high schools (Puyallup School District, 2019).

In 2013, the Puyallup School District began a university–district partnership with Washington State University (WSU) for the purpose of principal development (Selby, 2013). After a successful 4-year partnership with WSU, the partnership dissolved after a newly appointed dean at the university wanted to make changes to the principal development program. According to the Puyallup district administrator who established both partnerships:

> Because of the success in the previous program, we had four universities contact us and say that they were interested in having conversations about how we might partner with them. We met with and interviewed all four and then we selected our current partner, which is City University of Seattle.

The South Puget Sound Principal Preparation Partnership was formed in 2017 as a 2-year face-to-face principal certification program to support the Puyallup School District's leadership pipeline (Walker, 2018). The university–district partnerships exists between CUS and the Puyallup School District, but the program is open to any aspiring administrators who work in school districts in the Puget Sound area (CUS, 2017).

Individual Participants

University administrator. The university administrator who participated in this case study is the current associate program director at CUS. He has a master's of education leadership and was a former assistant superintendent and principal. He is also

a current administrative faculty member at CUS. During the interview, he described his role with the school district:

> As the official liaison between the university and the school district, I visit each class twice a quarter. I usually observe the first class, or the second class, and then one more class sometime during the quarter. I attend the reflective seminars for the internships, the mock interview seminar, and the legislative day that typically happens on President's Day.

University professor/district administrator. One of the features of this university–district partnership is that all of the professors who teach the courses in the program are adjunct professors who are currently practicing school district administrators (CUS, 2017). The university professor/district administrator who participated in this case study has a doctor of educational leadership. He has more than 15 years of experience as a principal and is the district's current chief assessment and accountability officer. Additionally, he has two roles with CUS, as he is the principal certification program coordinator as well as an adjunct professor.

Advanced student. For this case study, the current partnership has not yet had any graduates. The current program student interviewed is the dean of students at a middle school in the Puyallup School District. At the time of the interview, this advanced student only needed to complete one course to graduate and was taking additional courses at CUS toward a doctoral degree. Prior to entering the principal certification program, he served as a counselor for 7 years in the district and had already earned a master's in education.

Points of Collaboration

When asked about the points of collaboration in the university–district partnership, the university administrator noted that CUS provides the "transcripting for courses, grade support, record support, and attendance support." The university conducts all of the record keeping and student data collection along with the end of course evaluations, and provides feedback to the instructors. The university hired all six of the adjunct faculty members. The school district administrator noted that the Puyallup School District superintendent also teaches a course in the program. All of the courses are taught at the Puyallup School District office. The university administrator also spoke of a tuition reduction for students. The university principal certification program is typically a 36-hour program. As an agreement within the partnership, the university charges the students for 22 hours. In return, the district absorbs the facilities cost for hosting courses.

Unique Features of the Partnership

During the interview, the university administrator described the overall design of the program as being a unique feature that stands apart from other principal development programs. He stated, "It is a pretty streamlined model in that the district is in control of how they want to train up their administrators." The school district administrator had a similar response when he described the program as, "a solid kind of partnership program where the classes are all taught here on our campus and they're taught by our faculty that have been hired by the university, that part's unique." He continued to say, "We have created an opportunity for all the students who participate in the program to really get to know the instructors over a 2-year process." The student described the program as being

unique because it is like having 2-year interview: "If your goal is to stay in this district, then you need to do well on all of your papers and interact well in your class." The student noted that if students do not perform well, "it has a pretty real-world consequence."

All three participants mentioned the administrative internship in the second year as a unique way for students to gain real-world experience applying what they have learned in the classroom to their daily work. Additionally, the university administrator and program student described the yearly mock interviews. The student specifically said that something "unique to our program is that once a year we have mock interviews with 15 surrounding districts participating. Oftentimes, they will hire people from one of the mock interviews."

Impact on the University

The university administrator felt the incoming revenue from the partnership was a positive impact on CUS. He explained, "It is about two-thirds of the revenue we would normally get from a student who is enrolled in our regular program, but we do not have the cost associated with it either." The Puyallup administrator felt the partnership would benefit the university because of its success: "What we have done, is we are offering a quality program, which reflects very favorably on the university. The students graduate, they are hired, they are successful, and they stay on the job." The university administrator noted the district was "very invested in the kind of leader that they want. They do an excellent job of it." He felt another impact on the university was the ability to observe how an effective district trains its future leaders:

We are able to observe the kinds of preparation that they do, have discussions

with them about why they do it, and how they do it. Then we take some of what

we learn from the district and we integrate those pieces back into our regular

program where we deem appropriate.

Impact on the District

Regarding the impact of the university–district partnership on the Puyallup School

District, the district administrator responded:

Over the course of the two partnerships, the one with Washington State

University and the one with City University, we have benefited with over 20 of

the graduates in our program. They are currently serving as principals, directors,

or chiefs in our system. That is a huge benefit for us.

The program student stated an impact on the district was the ability to "mold the

leaders that the district wants and weed out those that they would not want to consider."

He also noted the program is helping "to bolster the surrounding districts; like-minded

leadership now surrounds our district. There is a common camaraderie and there is a

bond with the leadership who has gone through the program." The university

administrator reported that the district has benefited from its ability to recruit program

participants from other districts: "They recruit with that program within surrounding

districts," and then the district administration observes the students in the program and

hires the most successful students.

Impact on the Student

The CUS administrator felt students benefit from the vetting process when they

apply for the program. He stated the district administrators "are able to counsel them

coming into program, not just from the perspective of the site coordinator, but they already know about that applicant, so they can give them good counsel as they come into program." The Puyallup district administrator felt the students:

> Get a good feel for what is expected of a principal in the school district before they even start, because they have spent 2 years with our instructors, who are our district superintendents, our HR director, and chief officers as the instructors.

The student felt the program has adequately prepared him to be an administrator. A large portion of that preparation he attributed to the role he is in now as the dean of students. He stated, "It definitely has helped me personally. Professionally, it gave me a broader view of what I was missing. Now I get to see the bigger picture, which I think makes me a better employee."

North Carolina State University–Edgecombe County Public Schools

North Carolina State University (NCSU, n.d.) is a large public university with over 34,000 students located in Raleigh, NC. The partnering school district, Edgecombe County Public Schools (ECPS, n.d.), is a rural district that serves over 6,000 students in 14 schools. The school district is located approximately 1 hour northwest of the NCSU campus. NCSU has several partnerships for principal development. The focus in this case study was on NCSU's Northeast Education Leadership Academy (NELA) and the ECPS partnership.

The NELA was founded at NCSU in 2010 in response to the need for adequate principal preparation in North Carolina's rural school districts (Manna, 2015). The program has received over $22.5 million from donors and state and federal grants (Fusarelli, Fusarelli, & Wirt, 2018). Fusarelli et al. (2018) described NELA with the

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following statement: "This rigorous, research-based leadership development program requires participants to demonstrate their leadership skills through solving authentic school problems with the support of executive coaches" (p. 9).

Individual Participants

University professor. The university professor interviewed for this case study has been an assistant professor of education leadership and policy at NCSU since 2016. He has a PhD in education policy studies. Additionally, he has published book chapters and articles on topics related to education leadership development.

District administrator. The district administrator in this case is the district's director of innovation. She has been in her current role for 2 years and previously served as a principal in ECPS for 5 years. In 2012, she graduated from the NELA program.

Program graduates. Two graduates agreed to be interviewed for this case study. The first participant is a current high school principal in ECPS. He began his career in education as a teacher in 2012. He is a 2016 graduate of the NELA program where he earned his master's of school administration. After completing the NELA program, he was placed in his current role as a high school principal, bypassing the assistant principalship. At the time of his appointment, his campus was rated an F school by the state of North Carolina. After 2 years as the principal, his campus has improved to a C rating by the state.

The second graduate participant interviewed for this case is a first year middle school principal in ECPS. In 2008, she began her career in education as a middle school teacher. She is a 2016 graduate of the NELA program where she received her master's in school administration. After graduation, she was placed as an assistant principal at an

ECPS high school for 2 years prior to being promoted to her current role as a middle school principal.

Advanced student. The student interviewed for this case is currently a magnet school coordinator at an elementary school in her district. She has a bachelor of arts in psychology. Her education career began as a third grade teacher in 2008 and later she worked as a Title I math coach. Her leadership experience also includes roles as a grade chair, PBIS chair, MTSS chair, leadership team member, beginning teacher mentor, SIP math committee chair, and testing co-coordinator.

Points of Collaboration

When asked about the points of collaboration between the university and school district, the professor from NCSU spoke of the Wallace Grant initiative and the program redesign that occurred 2 years ago in collaboration with the school district. He described that redesign process as the following:

We had representatives from each school district in our partnerships, which included principals, assistant principals, and district leaders. We all got together across a 2-day period taking a design-a-studio approach, with design thinking exercises, to build out and help define what an effective school leader needs to know and be able to do. After gathering all that data, we as faculty here at NC State organized it into a set of competencies, skills, and standards based on what the districts said during those 2 days. We sent that back out to the districts for feedback and then cross-walked those standards with state and national standards, adding additional competencies where needed. After that, from that program model we then built out the course scheduling. The districts helped us build the

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model and then we took what we had done traditionally in NELA, mapped that on

to the new standards, and reorganized how we delivered curriculum based on that

model. The partnership laid the foundation for the program design, but the details

of how it is implemented we execute as a faculty, and as a program here at NC

State.

A copy of the framework developed during those collaborative meetings is provided in

Appendix F.

When asked about collaboration within the university–district partnership, the

school district administrator said, "We've been working in partnership with NC State to

select candidates for the North East Leadership Academy Principal Preparation

Program," highlighting the NELA candidate selection process as an important point of

collaboration. She also noted that NCSU "offers weekend workshops, site visits, funding

opportunities, and other ways that graduates can continue building their skills within the

partnership." One of the graduates from the program who is now a middle school

principal felt the most powerful experience she had as a result of the collaboration

between the university and school district was the year-long principal residency. Her

opinion was that the "university did a really good job partnering with the district to find,

at least for me, the right place to go to. It was a huge challenge, but it was the most

growth I have ever had." She felt it is the "the best example of the district and university

partnership actually working together." The ECPS high school principal who

participated in the study also noted the year-long principal residency is an important point

of collaboration. He stated, "Many of the things that were theorized in the classroom we

were able to immediately pull from that learning in the context of our school day." While

working as administrators students can "take stock of the gaps" in their leadership and work on closing them in real time as they worked as administrators, but still under the supervision of the program. The current student in the NELA program also discussed how students, after learning a particular objective in the classroom, are "able to go back to the school that we are working in right now and implement some of the practices that we have learned in our trainings."

Unique Features of the Partnership

The NCSU professor felt a unique feature of the partnership is that the university focuses on delivering a quality program to develop the school leader the district wants and not on the mastery of a fixed set of courses:

I think one of the unique features is we really have thought of this not as a set of courses but as a program. The goal is to have integrated assignments and readings, so that it feels like they are not just attending a discrete set of courses, but rather a coherent program. This semester I am teaching a data course. I am building off of last semester, when they were in their PLC course, and the lecture's topic is on PLC work, or working on creating a data audit of their school. I am having them take that and build that out to create data presentations, both written and visual, around the data they gathered throughout the semester. Then we are also using that same data product to be part of their school improvement course that they are taking this semester, so that it can be integrated into the school improvement process. This helps them find out where they are at as a school. That report will then help inform the school improvement plan which will happen in that course.

When asked about the unique features of the partnerships, the school district administrator continued discussing the recruitment of candidates into the NELA program:

> The fact that the North East Leadership Academy folks come to us and say, "who are your strongest candidates for leadership roles, who should we be really looking at," and the fact that we encourage particular candidates to apply, I think that is huge.

She followed up by noting another unique feature is the year-long internship:

> The fact that all of our Edgecombe County candidates are actually fulfilling that internship requirement here allows us to really help develop them as leaders in our district with our vision and with support from our great leaders that are already in our schools.

Post-graduation support in collaboration with the university was the final unique feature the school district administrator mentioned in the interview:

> One of the leaders of the Northeast Leadership Academy program reached out to me and asked, "What are some ways that you're already supporting your Northeast Leadership Academy graduates, what are the administrative goals, and what other support do you need for them?" Those types of things make it feel like there is really an ongoing partnership and support that is unique, which is not happening when we have candidates who come from other university partnerships. I think that NELA shares those goals, and believes that there is a specific set of skills and dispositions that principals need to have to be successful; particularly in rural context, in turnaround schools, and persistently low-performing schools. We know their focus, so we trust that they are going find

great candidates in partnership with us, put them through a rigorous course of study, and a real authentic internship experience.

The ECPS middle school principal identified an individual whose position is a product of the Wallace Grant and has a 20/80 time split between the school district and university. The middle school principal said this is a unique feature of the partnership because the individual is a district employee and "partners with the university:"

> She is creating amazing professional development that our assistant principals are going through. It is called an AP Institute, and because of this grant, they are learning from people whom are experts in things like design thinking. This type of professional development I did not get when I was an assistant principal.

When asked about the unique features of the partnership, the ECPS high school principal identified the various "layers of coaching" provided to him: "I had a coach at the school level, my mentor principal, and then I had an executive coach who led a lot of my development and coaching throughout the year and beyond." The ECPS middle school principal also discussed the executive coach later in her interview when asked a question regarding how the university–district partnership has had an impact on the NELA student. She identified her executive coach as former Governor of North Carolina James Hunt's education advisor. She continued by stating, "My executive coach, when I was an assistant principal and my first year of being a principal, would come talk with me about once a month. He is this giant in education. I learned a lot from him."

The current student in the NELA program identified school visits as a unique feature of the principal development program:

In the fall semester, we conducted two site visits and we have three more

scheduled for the spring. Our cohort as a whole, and our cohort director, go to

one of the focus elementary schools in our district and we spend the whole day

there talking with the principal, talking with support staff, talking with

instructional leaders, then we visit classrooms, and talk with the kids. Usually we

have an area of focus on the first visit we focus just on school culture and the

second visit we focus on student engagement.

In addition to visits to local schools, her cohort has visited the Ron Clark Academy in

Atlanta, Georgia. The Ron Clark Academy is a national and international recognized

middle school that serves students who come from low socioeconomic backgrounds.

According to the Ron Clark Academy (n.d.):

In the past nine years, more than 38,000 superintendents, district level

administrators, and teachers from 42 states and 22 countries have participated in

the RCA Experience to learn better ways to engage students, promote academic

rigor, and create a climate and culture that promotes success. (para. 2)

The high school principal and 2016 NELA graduate also discussed a trip that his

cohort made to Singapore as part of the partnership:

We went to Singapore to speak with the Education Ministry to learn about what

Singapore was doing radically different from America and how we might take

their approach as we build a new model. Our superintendent was alongside us on

that journey, which is incredibly helpful, because we were able to set the vision

together in Singapore and then race towards that when we got back.

Impact on the University

In response to my question regarding the overall impact of the partnership on NCSU, the professor spoke of the numerous partnerships and principal development programs that were in place prior to the Wallace Grant. He noted the programs in the past functioned separate from one another. He followed up by stating, "Our latest efforts have created one coherent program regardless of where you are. The model has gone from two NC State programs to one. That is what the Wallace work has allowed us to do; create one program."

Impact on the District

The ECPS district administrator felt that one of the university–district partnership's biggest impacts on the district is the "recruitment and hiring landscape for leadership positions." She noted, "Six or seven of our 14 principals, if not more than half of our Northeast Leadership Academy graduates, are people who taught here in Edgecombe or worked here in Edgecombe prior to becoming a principal." Additionally, she felt the partnership has been a valuable recruiting tool to attract leaders from surrounding districts:

> We have really been able to, through our networks, and through the networks of
> our current leaders, been able to recruit folks from other districts to come to
> Edgecombe. Knowing that they are Northeast Leadership Academy graduates,
> we know that they share our vision and our mission for student achievement.

The ECPS district administrator made the statement that, "Overall, Northeast Leadership Academy graduates and their schools are making growth at faster rates than other schools in our district and across the state." The ECPS high school principal's response that his

school "had tremendous results over the past 2 years" echoed this statement. He continued, "We have exceeded growth by doubling our proficiency, and our school has moved from nearly an F school to a C school." The middle school principal also believed the partnership has improved the district's "quality of leaders, which in turn has improved and is impacting the coaching of teachers," thus leading to improved student achievement.

The current student in the NELA program felt one of the benefits to the district is the requirement for participants to remain in the district for 4 years. She also noted, "The program is training and preparing teachers to be in line with what the district wants or needs."

Impact on the Student

From the professor's prospective:

For the students, it really feels to them like this is the district-sanctioned program. They have access to decision-makers, while others might not have that in traditional programs. I think that helps students with their recruitment. That helps students with their job selection on the back end, and I think it helps their quality in terms of working closely with those district partners.

The ECPS middle school principal supported the professor's observation by expressing, "I just feel connected to the district, the vision, and all the other principals." With regard to the partnership's impact on the students, the ECPS district administrator noted:

The Northeast Leadership Academy graduates have stayed in their roles, in many cases, for a longer tenure than other principals have. There has definitely been a correlation between the principals and their effectiveness, the innovative

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approaches they bring, their excitement, their enthusiasm, and their ability to recruit teachers.

The ECPS middle school principal mentioned that without the NELA program, she would have most likely not pursued a principalship. She continued by describing the impact of the program design and district's flexibility with her teaching assignment on her overall growth as a leader:

In the first year, we had to take Tuesdays off to go through the program and be in class. Because of the partnership, our principal and district worked with us. The reason we missed a lot of time during the day was not to go sit in a classroom, it was to visit schools that are doing amazing work and to learn from that work. I do not think that we would have had the learning experiences that we had, had it not been for that. Without that partnership that would not have been possible.

Both the middle and high school principals highlighted their experiences with an executive coach as having an impact on their learning and growth. The ECPS high school principal stated, "NELA sent me an executive coach and a principal mentor who was just doing amazing things for their kids. I had just a ton of support." He continued by stating that the program "wasn't just sitting in classroom talking about theory, we had projects that were problem-based practices, so I had a whole toolkit of resources that I already created by the time I graduated the program." He felt this was impactful because after graduation he was hired as a new principal without the benefit of being an assistant principal first. He emphasized that in his new role he needed some resources that he could use immediately.

The current student in NELA predicted that an impact on the participants will be that they "are going to be better prepared as administrators for the realities of the job in addition to some of the new and innovative things they can do to influence change in schools." She added that, because of the program, she is better able to support teachers in their PLC: "I use the information that I have received in classes, the site visits, and conversations to help teachers to fit into their data or refine best practices."

Texas Christian University–Keller Independent School District

Texas Christian University (TCU) is a private university located in Fort Worth, Texas, with over 10,000 students (TCU, 2019). Keller Independent School District is a large district that serves over 35,000 students across its 51 square mile attendance zone (Keller ISD, 2019). Keller ISD is approximately 25 miles northeast of TCU.

In 2011, in an effort to improve principal development, the Principal Leadership Fellows Program was developed by the TCU education leadership team. The program has a "focus on personalized learning, mentoring and coaching; 10-15 candidates are selected each year following a highly selective application process and independent assessment" (TCU, 2016, para. 3). The TCU professor interviewed for this case study reported that the program has been able to operate successfully with the support of monetary donations from local philanthropists, stating once "students are named fellows, they only end up paying one-third of the TCU tuition, one-third is paid for by a benefactor, and then one-third is paid for by TCU."

Individual Participants

University professor. The TCU participant for this case study is an associate professor and director of the Center for Public Education. She is a former principal with

over 20 years of experience in Texas public schools. Her published work is on instructional leadership, campus leadership, and several other topics in education research. She has a PhD in educational administration.

District administrator. The Keller ISD administrator who participated in this case study is an area superintendent and a current TCU doctoral student. He earned his master's of education in education leadership from the University of Texas at Arlington. Previously, he worked as the executive director of leadership and as an elementary principal.

Program graduate. The program graduate who participated in this case study is a middle school principal and recent graduate of the TCU program where he received his master's in education. He began his education career in 2011.

Advanced student. The TCU Principal Leadership Fellows Program student interviewed for this case study is working in Keller ISD as an administrative assistant. Administrative assistants are the designated leadership positions reserved for program participants. Prior to beginning the TCU program, he was an inclusion teacher in Keller ISD. He has a bachelor of science in advertising.

Points of Collaboration

When asked to describe the points of collaboration within the university–district partnership, the TCU professor responded, "We collaborate on the identification of the students, we provide a 36-hour program, the districts then provide the student in the second year of their program a full-time paid principal practicum." The Keller ISD administrator also felt the vetting of potential program students was truly a collaborative process in which TCU considered the needs of the district when selecting the fellows.

The professor also discussed how TCU meets with the district to discuss district needs:

> The course topics are then designed with the district's needs in mind. Some of the topics we received from our partner districts were things like working successfully with students who have experienced trauma, better educating African American girls, initiating and launching an Early Learning Center, and exploring a newcomers centers. These are the research topics that we got from the districts and are specific to their needs. Once we have the topics, we write in that course for students to work in teams. They write a literature review that they turn back around and hand to the district. They do an on-site presentation for district officials. It is a way that our students get to practice being educational researchers, but they also focus on needs and topics that are of interest to the school districts.

Unique Features of the Partnership

When asked about the unique features of the partnership, the middle school principal mentioned the year-long principal practicum outside the classroom and access to district-level administrators: "We met and spoke with the upper administrative leadership quite frequently. That allowed us to get a deeper perspective of what the district wants from their leaders."

The current student in the TCU program felt the overall day-to-day experience in the program has been unique because of the principal practicum, which currently allows him to be an acting administrator. He said he has experienced "anything from providing student support, to attending district PD alongside my content teachers in order to get a

greater understanding of what the teachers are doing in the classroom, to attending

ARDs, to sitting on committees to rewrite policy."

The Keller ISD administrator felt the partnership was unique in terms of the

collaborative process in which they identified program fellows. He stated, "We are not

looking for just assistant principals, we are looking for future principals. Our

expectations of these participants, as they come through, because of the investment we

have in them, is that they will one day become principals." The TCU professor

mentioned this process, "I think it's really powerful to say 'let's join hands and try to

identify the people who we believe have the gifts and have the potential to serve as

successful leaders in the various districts'." The TCU professor continued, "We are

creating a shared vision for what we want future leaders to know and be able to do, [a

vision that is] guided by both state and national standards, and the literature that we have

on principal preparation." Furthermore, she noted that every year, with the help of

program benefactors, all fellows attend the national conference of the University Council

for Educational Administration and a state conference, the Texas Association of

Secondary Administrators Midwinter Conference.

Impact on the University

When discussing the partnership's impact on the university, the TCU professor

stated, "It has been a university initiative to have more partners out in communities." She

spoke specifically about new partnerships and projects that have come to fruition out of

the university–district partnerships for principal development. Project Link is a study by

TCU on the effects of having multiple recesses in collaborating leadership development

districts. Superintendents in partner school districts have volunteered to serve on boards

and committees at the university. She noted several of the projects have been covered by the press, which has resulted in positive marketing opportunities for TCU: "We are finding ways that we can build off of these partnerships to benefit other facets of the institution." Additionally, the TCU professor discussed the benefits of the university being connected to the needs of the district:

> The needs of public schools helps us to keep our ear to the ground about what is happening in schools and helps to keep us relevant. It also helps us to share what is in the literature with our practitioner partners, as they do not often have the opportunity read the professional literature. I think that it helps us to sustain our shared vision for outstanding leadership for surrounding public schools.

The TCU professor also said the partnership has been a recruiting tool for the university doctoral program: "We are actually starting to hang on to a few of those students who were fellows and now they have come back as doctoral students, so that's been another unique impact."

Impact on the District

When asked to describe the impact of the partnership on Keller ISD, the administrator noted, "The biggest thing is that we have a candidate pool every year now." He also felt the program allows the district to get to know the candidates before they are hired as administrators. He mentioned, "We get to know the candidates, we know their strengths and weaknesses after a year, and when they become assistant principals we're able to determine the best fit for them."

The Keller ISD middle school principal said an impact on the district has been the retention of quality leaders. Fellows are required to stay with Keller ISD for a minimum

of 2 years after they graduate. Beyond the formal commitment to stay, graduates feel connected to the district. This is reflected in the graduate's statement:

> The partnership has kept us in the district, because the district has been so willing to work with us. It has made me feel, personally, very connected to the district. It has made me not even want to look anywhere else.

He continued to say that there is a bond that has been formed by the fellows alumni:

> At this point, there are 12, or maybe 14 administrators in the district that were trained through this program. I have found that very useful, because I know what they went through and the perspective they have been offered in the program, which has created some good administrators for the district.

The Keller ISD administrator made a similar observation, saying that regardless of when the fellows graduated from the program, "They have had that shared experience and they lean on each other. That is a good thing because they have a built-in support system."

The current TCU student felt an impact on the district is the improved climate on campuses where program graduates are assigned: "Speaking to people who work with the principals that graduated from this program, they all enjoy working alongside leaders who graduated from the TCU preparation program." He continued to say, "I can say that on certain campuses where TCU graduates are leaders student achievement has increased."

Impact on the Student

When asked about the impact of the partnership on students, the current TCU fellow felt the district's flexibility to allow the students to be out of the classroom and be

immersed in administrative activities and professional development was crucial to his

own development:

> TCU takes a great interest in reflection and builds that into the coursework, the
> requirements, and the assignments. There is always an opportunity to reflect on
> what we are doing and what is working. That is truly what I think allows people
> to change and go through a transformation of what they believe and how they act.
> It is that inclusion of reflection.

The Keller ISD administrator revealed that in assistant principal candidate

interviews the TCU graduates stand out: "There is a clear difference in preparedness

between someone who has been through the TCU program and a candidate who is

coming out of the classroom or graduated from a different principal development

program."

The TCU professor felt the impacts on program graduates include the alumni

events and professional development opportunities that keep them connected to the

university. She noted that the university has "been striving to try to provide professional

development opportunities for [alumni] over time." The middle school principal also

mentioned the university has had an impact on him as an alumnus. He said, "I have been

asked back to professional development. The university always keeps us in mind for

many different things to continue to grow us."

The fellows program graduate discussed the impact the cohort model had on him

as a student:

> We ended up talking far more in the parking lot afterward about what we learned
> and what we were experiencing in our internships. That was invaluable, because

it allowed us to have a ready-made PLC that allowed us to reflect. I think that was really, really, valuable as a student

University of New Mexico–Albuquerque Public Schools

The University of New Mexico (UNM, 2019) is a large public university with nearly 25,000 students located in Albuquerque, NM. Albuquerque Public Schools (APS, n.d.) is one of the largest school districts in the nation, educating approximately 84,000 students in 143 schools. According to the APS district administrator interviewed for this case study, UNM and APS have been partners in some capacity for over 30 years. She noted that over the long partnership, "Both teachers and principals have had opportunities to work with UNM faculty to inform their practice and make them stronger teachers and stronger principals."

UNM's New and Aspiring Principals Program (NAPP) is in its third year as a 1-year principal licensure partnership with APS. Previously, there was a different principal development partnership between UNM and APS that lasted for 6 years and had a different funding source. The NAPP program is offered at half the cost to the participants and is now funded with APS Title II funds. APS teachers who have already earned a master's degree and have received their Level II or Level III teacher license may apply for the program. New Mexico has a three-tiered teacher's licensure program. Level I is a provisional license, Level II requires the completion of an approved mentorship program and a minimum of 3 years of teaching, and to advance to Level III a teacher must complete 3 years of teaching as a Level II teacher and earn a master's degree or National Board Certification (UNM College of Education, 2018). For the first half of the program, the participants attend classes and remain in the classroom or in the role they are in when

they enter the program. In January, when the second half of the program begins, the participants leave their current roles and work as administrative interns under an appointed principal.

Individual Participants

University professor. The UNM professor who participated in this case study has an EdD in organizational learning and transformational leadership. He has been a lecturer at UNM since 2016. Additionally, this participant has experience as a public school teacher and an educational administrator with the New Mexico Public Education Department, and from 2007 to 2015, he worked as the accountability manager for APS. He has published and presented several works on education leadership.

District administrator. The district administrator's official title is director of the New and Aspiring Principal Support Program for the APS. Her main job is recruitment and professional development and support for principals in their first and second years. She supports principals who graduate from NAPP and those who are hired outside of the UNM program. She has a master's of art in elementary education and teaching. She has been an educator for 38 years. She taught primary grades for 15 years and then worked at the UNM in the College of Education before returning to public schools for 8 years as a principal. She has been in her current role for 8 years.

Program graduate. The NAPP graduate interviewed for this case study completed his licensure program in 2018. Currently, he is a middle school principal with APS. Prior to applying for the NAPP program he had worked as a teacher for 8 years and earned a master's degree in environmental education.

Advanced student. The advanced student who participated in this case study was an elementary teacher for 8 years prior to acceptance into NAPP. She is a New Mexico Level III teacher and has a master's in education and reflective practice. At the time of her interview, she was beginning the second semester of her licensure program, which involved shadowing a principal and completing minor administration duties.

Points of Collaboration

When asked about the points of collaboration, the UNM professor highlighted the recruitment and selection process and the facilitation of courses as examples of the two partners collaborating. He described the NAPP as "the Cadillac of principal preparation programs," primarily because the courses are co-facilitated by a UNM professor and an experienced APS principal. "The professor emphasizes theory, primarily in research, and the co-instructor, who is a sitting principal selected by the district and approved by the university, provides the practical side of that theory in her/his school." The APS administrator spoke of the collaboration in the courses, noting that the purpose is to bridge "theory and practice in that co-teaching relationship." She also mentioned that APS was included in the overall design of the program. The program graduate and current student also spoke of the co-facilitation of courses as an important point of collaboration. The current student said one of the reasons why she chose the NAPP program was the opportunity to learn from a UNM professor and an APS practitioner "because they are bringing in real-world experience and PD that we need to be prepared to be a principal."

Unique Features of the Partnership

The middle school principal highlighted the co-teaching of courses, the half-year full-time internship, and alumni support as unique features of the partnership:

It is unique that every class you take has the professor from the university as well as an acting principal to get that perspective. I believe the full-time internship is unique. [APS] allowed me to keep my salary and they paid for the sub in my room for that whole semester. I did not have to worry about my classroom. I was able to fully immerse myself into the internship. After graduation, there is still the NAPPs seminar that I still could be a part of as a principal. We meet bimonthly to make sure the support we are getting is the support that we need.

The UNM professor noted that in addition to how the coursework is delivered to the students, a unique feature of the program is the course content, which includes a district focus or initiative incorporated into each course. One example is a data course, described by the UNM professor as follows:

The first part of the course looks at how the school grading system in New Mexico structures the data that is used for accountability purposes. This really helps the interns understand how that whole system works and helps them explain it to other people. The second element, and the major focus of the course, is on using the Data Wise System from Harvard University for analysis of data. APS has a Data Wise initiative and it is the primary data analysis system that schools in the district use. Then the final portion of the course is focused on the planning tool that schools use, which in New Mexico is called the 90-day plan. Students in the course analyze data and put together their own mock 90-day plan. Everything

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in the course is aligned to the data initiatives that are taking place in the APS district.

The UNM professor also felt the financial support provided by the district is unique because it enables the interns to "go through the program without being required to pay the full cost of the program" and "the students have a full semester of release time to spend in the internship in a full-time capacity at their school interim site." The APS administrator described in detail the funding commitment of the district:

The district has made a conscious decision to allocate funding in order to run this program. A portion of that Title II money is carved out specifically for this program, because it falls within the ESSA [Every Student Succeeds Act] guidelines of how those funds can be allocated. The funding pays for the salary of my position and it also pays 50% of the tuition for the aspiring principal. The district has allocated funds to provide professional materials for the first-and second-year principals. We extend that out in terms of our funding annually and this is our third year that we will be able to do this. We have funding set aside to plan a professional conference for all of our principals. We have 142 elementary through high school principals. Including the assistant principals, we invite about 220 administrators to this conference. In allocating funding, there is a commitment to recruit future leaders from our schools and grow our principals. We are keeping a principal pipeline going in our district through this program.

Impact on the University

The UNM professor noted the impacts on the university are that the enrollment numbers at the university stay steady, there is an anticipation that additional districts will

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want to have a similar partnership, it has provided data to inform the New Mexico legislators on exemplar leadership partnerships, and it keeps the university informed with the needs of the district. The professor commented:

> We have been at it a while together, so we really understand the needs that the district has. We work closely together and keep the relationship strong by listening to each other and by responding to the needs of both the university and the district.

The APS administrator also highlighted the benefits of the partnership, stating, "There is a continuous dialogue about how the flagship institution in our state can support the largest school district in the state."

Impact on the District

The APS administrator felt the ongoing dialogue with the university about district needs and how UNM has responded is a positive impact of the partnership. She mentioned that, in addition to the leadership development partnership, a partnership was formed to recruit and train new teachers: "We also need special education teachers, and we need general education teachers; so we're working with the departments at the university to meet the needs in our school district." She continued to state that with regard to student achievement:

> When the university is open and willing to look into the needs that we are experiencing, the kids in classrooms, and respond to that through either teaching people by providing them with experiences, and/or through the ways in which we are preparing principals; for example, the co-teaching model, then I think ultimately it has an impact on student achievement.

The APS administrator also noted that the partnership has allowed the district the opportunity to get to know the candidates before they apply to be administrators. She said:

> We can ensure that the individual will fit well in a particular school setting. That intimate understanding of the experiences, the content, and then the participants themselves have resulted in placements for the exiting aspiring principals into the principalship. It has been highly successful. We are making really good matches between individual strengths, dispositions, and interest in a particular type of school setting.

The middle school principal said an impact from the partnership on the district is the 2-year commitment that program graduates have to make to the district in exchange for the financial assistance. The current NAPP student felt a positive impact on the district is the opportunity to grow "people from the actual classroom in the district to be in administrative positions."

The UNM professor felt a positive impact to the district is that the students have the opportunity to experience 12 different campuses. This is accomplished through the class meetings, which are hosted at the campuses where the interns are serving. The UNM professor described the experience by saying:

> During the seminar, the host cooperating mentor principal will come in and the intern will introduce the mentor principal. Then the mentor principal talks a little bit about her/his school and talks about how they became a principal. We get to know a lot about different schools through this process. Often when we go to one of these schools the assistant principal or the principal is someone who has been

through the program before, so it is also an opportunity to reinforce the network between all those folks.

Impact on the Student

The current NAPP student felt the partnership was affecting her overall preparation to be a principal. She noted that, compared to traditional programs, "In this program these participants are provided with more opportunity to experience what it's really like to be a principal." She continued to say that halfway through the program, she already had over 200 hours of internship hours and she was just starting her full-time internship. She felt the professional development aspect of the program had made her an overall better educator and she wished all teachers could have the same experience. With regard to the impact of the partnership on the student, the middle school principal said, "That year was the best professional development I have ever received. If I were to go back to teaching, I would be a much better teacher." When asked whether the program has made him a better teacher coach he responded:

> Yes, absolutely. The program has solidified things for me. It built the confidence in me to communicate, so that other adults will listen to what I am saying. We are able to build a team and move the school forward.

The UNM professor felt an impact of the partnership is the large network of NAPP participants that continues to grow:

> As they move into principal or assistant principal positions there is a huge amount of networking between participants in the program; mostly with people from their own cohort, but we actively try to connect people from each of the cohorts

together. We can say we have built a network among those who have participated

in the NAPP program.

He continued to say that another impact on the students is that:

Many of them would not have the opportunity to move into school leadership

positions without the program. It has made it possible for them to achieve their

career goals and their vision of where they want to go as educators.

The APS administrator felt that just being selected in the NAPP program has a

positive impact on the student. She said the vetting process to get in the program is

rigorous; therefore, graduates already have an advantage when they apply for a

principalship. She recalled that an associate superintendent commented, "You know the

folks that are selected into the program, because of the rigor of the recruiting process and

the application process, they have really undergone their first vetting into the

principalship." As a result of the reputation of the program she stated, "At the end of a

three semester cycle of coursework, and after they earn their administrative license, 70%

of participants by that fall are in a principal or assistant principal position."

Crosscutting Themes

There were several themes present across the four cases. In an effort to

understand how the partnerships are addressing the problem of effective principal

development, the organization of themes is presented within the conceptual framework

developed for this study, the EDC's quality measures rubric, used to evaluate principal

preparation programs (see Appendix A).

Candidate Recruitment and Selection

The district administrators and university professors from each of the four partnerships discussed the importance of recruitment and the highly competitive selection process for each program. Each partnership has marketing materials along with websites to highlight their programs. Additionally, each partnership has had positive write-ups published in the media or in research (Berard, 2015; Fusarelli et al., 2018; Manna, 2015; Sanzo, 2016; Selby, 2013; Walker, 2018). The applicant requirements were very similar with each partnership. Teaching experience was required, along with a demonstration of leadership experience. Any major differences depended on whether the partnership was a 1- or 2-year licensure program or a 2-year graduate degree program. The CUS–Puyallup School District partnership is a 2-year principal licensure program and the UNM–APS partnership is a 1-year principal licensure program. Both partnerships require applicants to have earned a master's degree prior to applying. The NCSU–ECPS and TCU–Keller ISD partnerships are 2-year graduate degree programs that only require applicants to have an undergraduate degree. All four universities collaborate with the partnering school district to identify the strongest candidates for the program.

When asked why they chose the university–district partnership as their principal development program, the students and program graduates from all four cases mentioned that either they were actively recruited or it was word of mouth from other participants that really sold them on the program. The TCU student said he wanted to be a part of the program because his coworker went through it and benefited greatly. The middle school principal in ECPS said she loved teaching and probably would not be a principal if her superintendent had not talked to her about applying for the leadership program. When

mentioning the superintendent she said, "He was tenacious in recruiting many of us for the program."

Aside from having a connection to someone who encouraged them to apply, the other common factor for each of the participants was the financial assistance. The ECPS high school principal said, "The NELA program was far more enticing than any other program because it's free." The APS middle school principal noted the tuition reimbursement for half of the cost was a benefit to applying to the UNM program. The current TCU student mentioned that he would not have been able to afford the tuition at a private university without the discount.

Content and Pedagogy

In all four cases, the partnering university participants felt the needs of the district are incorporated into the course content. NCSU designed its courses based on the agreed upon leadership development capacities that the school district helped identify in the document provided in Appendix F. The current needs of the district are identified through conversations with district leaders. The TCU professor noted that she spends a lot of time in the Keller ISD and the needs of the school district are incorporated as topics in the students' coursework. She further explained, "What we will do is look at the needs our district partners have expressed and then we will infuse various topics into that seminar course commensurate with what the districts are wanting." Both NCSU and TCU have district administrators frequently speak to the students to help tie together the research to the practice within their district. UNM takes incorporating the needs of the district through course delivery a step further. They have a co-teach model with a UNM professor and a sitting APS principal designing each course and then teaching that course

together. The UNM professor felt that students "probably learned more" from the balance of a co-instructor who is a sitting APS principal and a UNM instructor. According to the CUS administrator, the university has allowed Puyallup School District to have the "autonomy" of course content. Adjunct professors, all current Puyallup district administrators, teach the courses. The students are required to master the State of Washington Standards to earn their principal certification, but how those standards are met is at the discretion of the school district. The Puyallup district administrator/adjunct professor noted that, with that autonomy from the university, "We make our assignments as practical as possible, the readings practical as possible, and all of our instructors are current practitioners."

All four programs deliver the course content face-to-face in a cohort model. When asked to give an example of a course design in the program, each university professor described project-based learning and action research. The CUS professor described the courses as "connected" to the Washington State Standards, with the students using district data to "create their comprehensive school improvement plan." The CUS student said his experience in the courses included a high amount of exposure to "district level things," which has led to the participants learning from "what is happening in the schools within our district."

The NCSU professor described the courses as unique because the professors rotate through each semester providing students with the instruction they need based on where they are in their school improvement project. He said this makes the experience less like a required course and more like a program that builds upon itself. He further explained:

This semester I am teaching a data course. I might visit them once in January, twice in February, and once in March, and then in April. I am building off last semester's PLC course. In that course, students worked on creating a data audit of their school, I had them take that and build that out to create data presentations, both written and visual, around the data they gathered throughout the semester. Then we are also using that same data product to be part of their school improvement course that they are taking this semester, so that it will be integrated into the school improvement process. That report will then help inform the school improvement plan which will happen in another course.

The current NCSU student felt the design of the courses allows the participants to be able to "go back to the schools that we are working in right now and implement some of the practices that we have learned in our trainings."

The TCU professor provided a course example by noting that after identifying the topics that will meet the needs of the district, students conduct research, create a literature review on that topic, and then present that back to the district. She continued, "It is a way that our students get to practice being educational researchers, but they also focus on needs and topics that are of interest to the school districts." The current TCU student spoke about his experiences after completing an action research project in one of his courses. He stated, "From that experience I was really able to understand the value of allowing teachers the opportunity to incorporate looking at data as a part of their own practice."

When asked about courses within the program, the UNM professor described a data course where students take the existing data from their schools and use the APS

approved data analysis program to evaluate the data. This process then informs the school improvement plan they develop. The UNM professor concluded, "Everything in the course is aligned to the data initiatives that are taking place for the APS district." The UNM student felt that having the courses co-taught with a sitting principal and a university professor, coupled with the assignments aligning with what is currently happening in APS schools, creates a "real-world experience" that is better preparing her to be a leader in education.

Supervised Clinical Practice

All four university–district partnerships have an administrator internship for participants embedded into the principal development program. The UNM–APS partnership is the only 1-year program in the case studies. Students in the UNM program spend time outside the classroom the first semester and then leave the classroom full-time in the second semester to shadow a principal and participate in administrative activities. CUS, NCSU, and TCU have agreements with their partnering school districts that include a full-time administrative internship within the district for one school year. The CUS student felt that being able to be in an administrator role has helped him see the big picture as an administrator. The ECPS middle school principal/NELA graduate said, "I think probably the most powerful experience that I had in the university–district partnership was the year-long principal residency." She continued, "If we would have had to just sit in a classroom for 2 years I don't think I would have been nearly as prepared as I am today." The TCU student said that he viewed the year-long internship as a program strength because "it cuts down the learning curve" and helps students understand fully the "responsibility and accountability of a full-time AP." In addition to

the internship experiences in each partnership, interns are assigned mentors or coaches during this period as they continue to attend program courses.

Impact on School, Teacher, and Student Performance

When asked questions related to the impact of the partnerships on schools, teachers, and student performance, participants in all four case studies could not provide any quantifiable evidence. However, through climate surveys, observations, and conversations, the participants have formed several conclusions regarding program impact.

The CUS student said, "I think what ends up being impacted most of the time is not just achievement but those little things that can help support achievement. We train teachers better, so that achievement in the long haul improves." The Puyallup School District administrator commented on participants in the CUS program: "Just by their participation they could become better educators, better teachers, or better in the position that they're currently serving in." The ECPS district administrator said that, as a district:

> We are seeing stronger recruitment [of teachers] at the schools were there are
>
> NELA graduates and stronger retention of those teachers. I think that the school
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> culture at the schools were there are graduates, the culture there is strong. I think
>
> we are definitely seeing positive outcomes.

She added that at the schools where NELA graduates are serving as administrators, student achievement has improved. The ECPS high school principal echoed this when he stated his students have doubled their proficiency over the last 2 years, since he has graduated from the program and become the principal of his school. He continued,

"There are other markers throughout the district that demonstrate the amazing work of NELA graduates. Our district is doing incredibly well."

The student currently in the NELA program stated:

I definitely think that it will help with employee retention and satisfaction. I think we are going to be better prepared as administrators for the realities of the job in addition to some of the new and innovative things we can do to kind of change schools.

The Keller ISD middle school principal stated:

Anytime you have good school leaders, it is going to lead to better student achievement. I think one of the big things that the program does is, it really gives us a good perspective on how to use data and how to use that to better a whole school. When we have 15 to 16 different administrators throughout the district that all have gone through this program, that has to have an impact. The program has us all looking at things beyond just test scores to make decisions on a campus.

The current TCU student said that despite having no hard data to support increased student achievement, his "gut says yes," graduates have contributed to student growth. "I can say that on certain campuses where TCU graduates are leaders, student achievement has increased."

The APS district administrator felt it was difficult for her to say for sure that student achievement has improved without any data, but she thinks it has improved because of the partnership:

When the university is open and willing to look into the needs that we are experiencing, the kids in classrooms, and respond to that through either teaching

people by providing them with experiences, and/or through the ways in which we

are preparing principals—for example the co-teaching model—then I think

ultimately it has an impact on student achievement.

The UNM student also felt the program was adequately preparing students to be effective

principals, and therefore was resulting in improved student achievement and overall

school culture.

V. DISCUSSION

There were two purposes of this qualitative study; first, to examine how university–district partnerships are successfully addressing the problem of principal preparation to produce effective campus leaders, and second, to explore the impact of a partnership between a university and school district on each partner and on aspiring principals. I explored both purposes through the following five research questions:

1. What are the points of collaboration within the successful university–district partnership?

2. What are the unique program features enabled by the successful university–district partnership?

3. How does the successful university–district partnership affect the university?

4. How does the successful university–district partnership affect the partner district?

5. How does the successful university–district partnership affect the students participating in the principal development program?

I conducted each of the four case studies from a constructionist lens. Crotty (1998) defined the constructionist perspective as guided by the belief that meaning is constructed by human interpretation and cannot exist without such interpretation. Therefore, each participant in this study offered his or her interpretation of the university–district partnership and contributed to the data presented in this dissertation (Charmaz, 2014). I interviewed several different stakeholders for each case, including participants in the role of professor, district administrator, graduate, and student. In some cases, participants had roles in multiple categories. I approached this study from a

symbolic interactionism theoretical perspective. Symbolic interactionism complements the constructionist epistemology in that, according to Charmaz (2014), people construct their worlds and interpret each situation based on the role they play. The social interactions of these actors within the university–district partnership were best examined through grounded theory methodology (Clarke, 2005). The focus of this chapter is to apply the opinions, values, beliefs, and experiences of the participants to construct a theory that will be worthy of future research (Charmaz, 2014; Creswell, 2013).

The primary method for collecting data during this research study was through interviews. I interviewed 16 participants across the four cases. I used semi-structured interview protocols (Patton, 1987) to guide each interview and asked spontaneous probing questions to encourage clarification or to ask the participants to expand on their responses.

<div align="center">**Interpretations**</div>

Though there were similarities across the cases, each university and school district had a different disposition. Therefore, I share my overall interpretations across the entire multiple case studies and report on any distinctive partnership characteristics that stand apart from the cases.

NCSU, TCU, and UNM all worked with their partnering school districts during the developmental stages of the partnership to understand the leadership development needs of the district. Each institution came to a consensus with its partner to establish the most effective way to develop future principals through a university–district partnership. This was a crucial first step because strong university–district partnerships have an inherent pursuit of a common goal (Bryne-Jimenez, Gooden, & Tucker, 2017; Reyes-

Guerra & Lockmiller, 2016). The common goal within each partnership was to improve school leadership development.

The CUS–Puyallup School District partnership had a different beginning from the other three partnerships because the school district was able to provide the university with a program framework that had already been successful for the district in the past. The Puyallup School District had a successful partnership with WSU prior to its current partnership with CUS. A change in leadership at WSU resulted in a shift in philosophy from a practitioner approach to principal development to a predominantly research focus. During the partnership with WSU, nearly 20 administrators were successfully placed into leadership positions. Not wanting the successful principal development program to end, district leaders sought a new university partner that would foster the same program model. According to Storms and Gonzales (2006), to sustain, partnerships require at their core a university and district whose leaders are committed to meeting the needs of the collaborating institution. A change in leadership and program philosophy at WSU no longer fit the Puyallup School District's needs. Allowing the school district the "autonomy" it desired is one reason why this partnership has worked.

Many components are present in a university–district partnership. One way that partnerships remain focused on the overall goal is by collaborating to establish the principal competencies. Principal competencies help align the program to the national and state leadership standards, set the criteria for candidate selection, drive the curriculum, and provide the framework for principal support (Cheney et al., 2010). In each case in this study, the university and district consistently communicated to establish and refine competencies to ensure the program recruited and developed educational

leaders and not only met the national and state leadership standards, but also provided the district a quality employee that fit its needs. This collaboration also resulted in the university having a better understanding of what the school district was looking for in its principals. The partnering university then took what they had learned from the partnership and applied it to their other principal development programs. The impact on the university was an improved model for principal preparation that raised the overall quality of the educational leadership program as a whole. The students, in turn, received a high-quality educational leadership experience that had been approved by the district where they were seeking a principalship. Once the competencies were identified, the pedagogical approach, curriculum, and internship experience were then defined by the partnership.

All four partnerships were committed to providing principal development program participants with a real-world experience that allowed students the opportunity to apply their learning in the graduate classroom to the role of an administrator. Each school district supported participants by providing a full-time paid administrative position. In each case, the school district provided a substitute so the students could focus on their administrative duties. The internship model allowed students to connect the research with the practical applications of educational leadership (Cunningham & Sherman, 2008; Gordon et al., 2016). In the internship, each participant was assigned a mentor or coach. The integration of an internship and coaching for principal development is an innovation in comparison to the traditional approach of coursework with little to no incorporation of school-based experiences (Fusarelli et al., 2018). Each student and graduate interviewed expressed that the internship with coaching was the

most impactful experience they had in interacting with the partnership. In two of the

cases, graduates had a successful internship experience that resulted in the opportunity

for them to bypass the assistant principal role, jumping immediately into the principalship

after graduation.

Along with the internships, connections were made to the principalship in the

graduate classroom and during seminar sessions with the inclusion of current

practitioners as guest speakers or as adjunct professors. The curriculum in each program

incorporated the needs and initiatives of the partnering school district. Each partnership

had a curriculum infused with problem-based learning, case studies, and guest speakers

that were relevant to the student's district. Gordon et al. (2016) discovered that students

connect to the educational leadership standards best when they interact with the

curriculum in the real world and in a relevant manner. CUS and UNM students had a

heavy emphasis on practitioner classroom experiences. All of the CUS professors were

adjuncts who were current central office administrators. Each adjunct professor had a

doctorate. The makeup of the faculty thus promoted the integration of research and

practice. UNM assigned a university professor and a sitting principal to co-teach their

students. The professor and practitioner planned and taught courses together, providing

students with a research and practical perspective in every class. The UNM model may

be the ideal scenario to connect both perspectives for future educational leaders. A

pedagogy that can effectively combine the worlds of educational research and the

everyday job of a principal will result in a more efficient and reflective campus leader

(Darling-Hammond et al., 2007). All of the participating students and graduates who

were interviewed advocated for their programs and felt the partnership had adequately prepared them to be educational leaders.

Conclusions

University–District Partnerships

My findings from this multiple case study research support what other researchers have reported in the literature, which is that university–district partnerships for principal preparation are highly effective models for developing future educational leaders (Cleaver Simmons et al., 2007; Gooden et al., 2011; Gordon et al., 2016; Joseph, 2010; Mejía et al., 2016; T. N. Miller et al., 2007; Reardon & Leonard, 2018). A successful partnership bridges the gap between educational research and the practical nature of the principalship (Joseph, 2010; T. N. Miller et al., 2007). Each student and graduate participant echoed that they believed the partnership created real-world opportunities for them to apply what they learned in the classroom to a leadership role. All agreed that their experiences in the partnership had adequately prepared them to be successful leaders in education. Participants also noted that graduates who were practicing principals had made significant improvements to their campuses. University–district partnerships for principal preparation are a viable option to meet the needs of districts that struggle to find effectively trained principals (Hall et al., 2016) by developing confident school leaders who will be ready to lead a campus (Lortie, 2009). Results of the current study indicate all stakeholders involved were positively affected by the university–district partnerships examined.

Leadership

Leaders from the university and school district must be fully committed and involved to ensure the partnership is successful. University–district partnerships are difficult to form and typically do not last for an extended period (Gooden et al., 2011). One of the reasons partnerships fail is a lack of commitment from the leaders in each of the organizations (Sanzo, 2016). The Puyallup School District had a successful partnership with Washington State University (Selby, 2013) that ended after new leadership at the university wanted to increase the research focus of the program and decrease the practitioner experience. Each university participant emphasized the importance of having district leadership committed to the partnership, especially the superintendent. Many of the program participants spoke highly of their superintendents as being supportive and in some cases recruiting for the principal development program. Some of the universities included in this study had other partnerships that were not as fruitful as those included in this study. These universities attributed the less successful partnerships to a lack of commitment of district leadership or a high turnover rate of district administrators. The school district administrators interviewed attributed a large portion of the partnership success to the support and commitment of the university leadership.

Funding

The second major factor in the successful formation or failure of university–district partnership is program funding. According to Sanzo and Willson (2016), both the university and school district must be fully prepared to fund the principal development program for the partnership to sustain. Except for the CUS–Puyallup School District, all

of the partnerships had to secure external funding for their programs. The funds were typically in the form of federal funds, grants, or donations. None of these money sources were guaranteed from year to year and the partnership could be affected if the funds were decreased or cut altogether. Funding was a major concern for all of the district administrators and university faculty members interviewed for this study. Students in the programs depended on the funding to reduce or cover the tuition costs. Program graduates had coaches and mentors to support them upon graduation, made possible by special funding. The universities and school districts depended on funds to cover programming costs and salaries. The CUS–Puyallup School District program may be the ideal model for funding this type of program. In this arrangement, the university had little overhead costs associated with the partnership. Though the university had given up some control of programming to the district, they gained back in what they learned from the partnership and from the students who continued into the CUS doctoral program.

Research to Practice

Future education leaders benefit most from a university–district partnership when they have the opportunity to apply research-based practices to real-world experiences (Cleaver Simmons et al., 2007; Joseph, 2010; T. N. Miller et al., 2007). The graduates and students in this study felt the connections made between the graduate classroom and the principal's job were the most beneficial to their leadership growth. All of the partnerships provided a full-time administrative internship to their students. This experience builds the confidence of the students in a safe setting, which allows them the opportunity to reflect on how the research applies to the administrative role (Cunningham & Sherman, 2008; Gordon et al., 2016). Furthermore, the inclusion of current

practitioners in the graduate classroom exposed the students to both research-based and real-world perspectives at the same time (Cleaver Simmons et al., 2007; Joseph, 2010; T. N. Miller et al., 2007). Students who experienced this arrangement in the case studies appreciated the opportunity to learn from and ask questions of both the professor and principal in the classroom. All the partnerships provided opportunities for students to experience this research to practice connection through guest speakers; however, UNM's co-teach model of a professor and sitting principal in every graduate class may be the ideal way to bridge the gap from research to practice.

Proposed Theoretical Model for Principal Preparation Partnerships

The methodological approach I used for this research study was grounded theory. This research approach is used to develop a theory rather than merely using the data to describe an event or process (Corbin & Strauss, 2007). The desired outcome for this research study was to develop a theory of how a successful university–district partnership affects principal development. Through this research study, a theoretical model of a university–district partnership for principal preparation emerged that addresses the problem of effective principal development. This theoretical model, shown in Figure 6, is explained in further detail in this section.
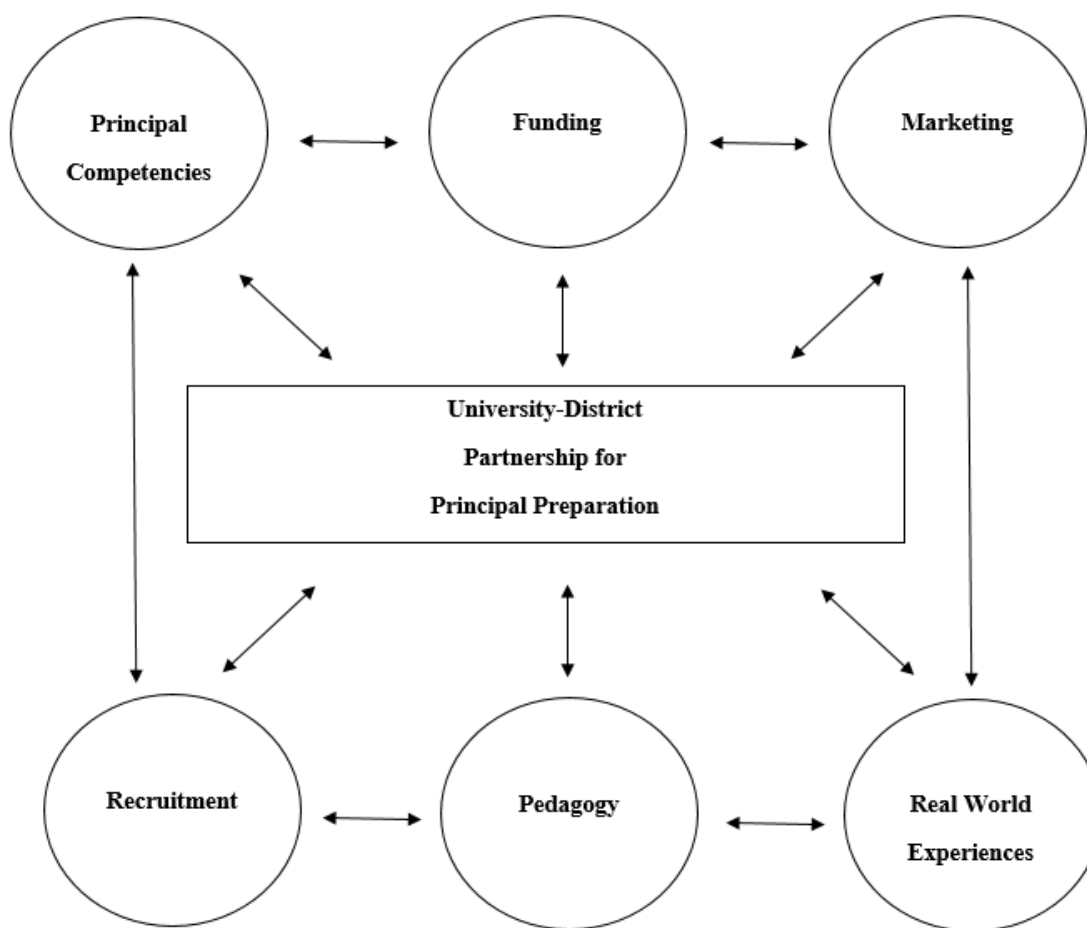
Figure 6. Theoretical model for principal preparation partnerships.

Each component of the theoretical model for principal preparation partnerships is essential to a successful partnership, and they individually support the other components. Though the data collected from each case led to the creation of this theoretical model, the description of each component is general. Future partnerships will be able to tailor it to the available resources and needs of the university and district.

Principal Competencies

Each university–district partnership will use national and state leadership standards to begin developing the principal competencies. The partnership will need to collaborate to define what an effective principal looks like for the partnering school

district. Together, national, state, and local principal competencies for the partnership will drive the recruitment of students, program pedagogy, and the type of real-world experiences the students will have in the program.

Funding

Everything has a cost to someone. When beginning a university–district partnership, the costs associated with the program and where those funds will come from will need to be identified. Possible funding sources are grants, private donors, federal funds, the students, the university, and the school district. There will be a cost to market the program and for recruiting. If private donors are the targeted funding source, then there will be a cost associated with soliciting and keeping them. Instructor salaries will need to be covered along with any expenses related to the real-world experiences that are part of the program. One experience that is a necessity in university–district partnerships is a full-time internship, and it will require the most funding support.

Marketing

A solid marketing plan is essential to the success of the university–district partnership. Marketing helps with the recruitment of students, staff, and donors. A program website, marketing materials to distribute, and press releases are just a few items that will be needed to create a buzz about the program. Events for potential students and donors will need to be scheduled annually. After the program has been established, the best marketing tools will be word of mouth and evidence of graduate outcomes.

Recruitment

In a university–district partnership, the reputation of the program will depend on the success of its graduates once they become principals. Therefore, a rigorous

recruitment process will be necessary to identify the best possible candidates for the program. The university and district should collaborate on the recruitment standards and during the recruitment process. Using the principal competencies, the recruitment committee can identify candidates who already possess certain leadership qualities that will garner success in the program. Applicants should provide evidence of their prior leadership experiences and demonstrate how they will contribute to the overall success of the cohort. When accepting students into the program, a critical criterion should be that they have qualities indicating the potential to be a good principal. The university and district should both have a role in the recruitment process. The university will be able to identify the students who will be able to handle the academic workload and contribute to the classroom. The district leadership has an intimate working knowledge of the employees in their district and will be able to identify those who have the potential to take on a campus leadership role.

Pedagogy

University–district partnerships are innovative programs that do not look like the traditional classroom. Though the strong research-based content remains the same, there is an infusion of a real-world application that is present in the learning outcomes. Courses build upon one another using relevant topics and data from the school district to reinforce learning in the classroom. Project-based learning, group projects, and presentations to the school district provide students with a working knowledge of district expectations and requirements. Course content and delivery include the principal's perspective to ensure students have the opportunity to reflect and bridge the gap that can

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be present from research to practical application. The curriculum and proficiencies in the classroom should tie into a real-world experience created for the students.

Real-World Experiences

For the students, the real-world experiences or simulations of such experiences in the university–district partnership allow for the concepts from the classroom to become applicable. Experiences can come in the form of classroom guest speakers, seminars, observations in the field, working with current district data, mock interviews, and internships. A full-time internship allows students to work as an administrator with the guidance of a mentor or coach to support them. Students have the opportunity to reflect on their administrative experiences in the classroom through discussions with their cohort and professors. It is strongly recommended that internships be one school year; however, there are successful partnerships that have only a 6-month internship. The internship has a lasting impact on the students as they grow into productive and reflective school leaders. The school district also benefits from the experience by having the opportunity to observe the students in an administrative role before offering them a permanent administrative position.

<div align="center">Limitations of the Study</div>

The first limitation was that there were only four university–district partnerships for principal development examined in this study and the conclusions made regarding university–district partnerships can only be associated with the partnerships included in this study. A larger sample of university–district partnerships would need to be included in future studies to have a better idea of the overarching impact of successful university–district partnerships on principal development.

A second limitation wat that the stakeholders who participated in this research study were chosen by a contact from each of the partnering universities. As the researcher, I had no control over the selection of the participants beyond my request for participants in particular roles within the partnerships.

A final limitation was that it was difficult to obtain artifacts for this study. The willingness of stakeholders to share artifacts was limited and varied from partnerships to partnership and between individual stakeholders. The majority of artifacts used for this study were located online or through a few stakeholders who had access to them. This study could have benefited from the equal access to artifacts across the different case studies.

Recommendations

Recommendations for Teachers Considering Enrolling in a Principal Preparation Program Based on a District–University Partnership

The students and graduates who participated in the study all felt their university–district partnership had adequately prepared them for the principalship. Each one stated the most impactful part of their program was the hands-on experience they received while completing their administrative internship. Each partnership allowed students to work as full-time administrators for a period while they kept their teaching salary. Additionally, participants referenced the support that followed the completion of the program as a contributing factor to their growth as developing administrators. Therefore, my recommendation to teachers seeking a partnership for principal preparation is to consider a partnership that offers a full-time paid administrative internship with a reprieve from their regular teaching duties. The administrative internship allows students the

opportunity to apply the knowledge they gained in the classroom to a real-world experience. Coursework that also includes field experiences provides students with the opportunity to grow into more effective and reflective principals (Darling-Hammond et al., 2007). Students should also consider the levels of support that will be provided by the university and school district during the program and after graduation, and if that support will be ongoing.

Recommendations for School Districts Considering Entering Into a Principal Preparation Partnership With a University

Leaders of a school district seeking a partnership with a university for principal preparation should have an understanding of the district's needs and the district's level of commitment before forming the partnership. Each school district that participated in this study frequently communicated with the partnering university to ensure the curriculum reflected the district's expectations for the type of leadership they desired. In this study, the school districts actively recruited new participants for the programs. Nearly all of the students and graduates interviewed reported that a district leader asked them to apply for the principal development program. District leaders need to ensure highly qualified educators are selected for the program by being a part of the screening and acceptance process. Districts should know how the program will be funded and have a plan to continue the program if the funding stops. The district should be prepared to commit district funds and resources to the partnership. An administrator should be appointed to represent the district within the partnership and efforts should be made to limit leadership turnover for that position. Though each participating district emphasized how difficult it was to maintain a successful partnership with a university, it was also evident that the

quality of leaders who had graduated from the partnership program and were now leading

their campuses and district made it worth the effort.

Recommendations for Universities Considering Entering Into a Principal

Preparation Partnership With a School District

University participants in this study identified two critical factors in the success of

the university–district partnership: the district's commitment to the program and funding.

The university should consider the number of resources a district is willing to contribute

to the partnership and if the institution will be able to provide support in areas where the

district cannot. District leadership turnover can have an adverse effect on the partnership

or end it altogether. Likewise, changes to university leadership can change the direction

of the partnership. Funding sources were a concern in all but one partnership. TCU

spent countless hours seeking funding from private donors to reduce tuition costs. NCSU

relied on grant funding to cover the cost of the program and to provide students with free

tuition. UNM used grant funding in the past; however, when that ended, APS funded the

program with Title II funds. The UNM participant noted that the district's funding

support could end at any time. CUS reduced the required number of hours for principal

certification and employed district administrators as adjunct professors, which eliminated

the need to find outside funding. Universities seeking district partnerships should expect

that their district partner will desire curriculum focusing on the practical responsibilities

of the principalship. The university should be prepared to be flexible and allow for the

inclusion of district expectations in the program, which may require some buy-in from

professors and the college dean. The university also should be prepared to have several

collaborative meetings with school district stakeholders to make certain both partners'

needs are appropriately addressed in the program. Each university participant described a

very fruitful relationship with their partnering school district that is replicable if the

university is willing to be flexible, collaborate with the school district, and seek the

funding necessary to sustain the program long term.

Recommendations for Future Research

Based on this study of university–district partnerships, several recommendations

for future research are presented below.

- Participants in this study could not provide quantifiable data that showed the

  impact program graduates are having on student achievement. All

  participants believed graduates had a positive impact on student achievement.

  However, they also confirmed that student achievement had not been used as

  an indicator of program effectiveness. Instead, there was a focus on

  qualitative measures, such as climate surveys or observations from mentors.

  A deeper dive into campus student achievement data may yield stronger

  evidence of the effectiveness graduates are having on their schools. Marzano

  et al. (2005) concluded that the campus principal affects 25% of student

  achievement; therefore, a review of student achievement data would be a

  viable option for measuring the effectiveness of university–district

  partnerships for principal development.

- When asked about partnership strengths, one participant from the NCSU–

  Edgecombe partnership felt the long-term impact would be best measured

  when the graduates who are now principals begin to ascend to the level of

  superintendent. There is a dearth of research on principal development and

even less on superintendent preparation (B. S. Cooper, Fusarelli, Jackson, & Poster, 2002). Some university–district partnerships have been producing principals long enough that the first graduates may already be superintendents. It would be interesting to follow graduates' progression to the superintendency and to study whether what they learned from their principal development program has followed them to their new position.

- One of the interview questions asked during this study solicited information regarding the strengths and weaknesses of the university–district partnership. Participants in three of the partnerships felt a weakness was the potential for "groupthink" because the majority of current and future school district administrators attended the same classes, adopted the same values, and had worked in the same district. Groupthink can hinder an organization's growth because there is a lack of diversity of opinions, ideas, attitudes, viewpoints, and beliefs (Hess, 2016). As more leaders graduate from the university–district partnerships, future research is warranted on the potential for groupthink, its effects, and ways school districts can work to prevent its occurrence.

- The university contact in each partnership recommended the participants in this research study. All of the students and graduates interviewed had a record of accomplishments as high performing educators. Several times during the study, the university and district participants referenced the selection process and how it was capable of identifying the top applicants for the program. Future researchers may wish to examine whether the university–district

partnership is developing high performing principals or if the participants

have existing capacities to perform at high levels. Expanding the number of

participants to include a random sampling of participants may help with

research in this area.

Concluding Comments

When my journey began in the Texas State University School Improvement

Program, I was a brand new assistant principal at one of the largest high schools in

central Texas. Two short years later, I found myself as the seventh principal in 9 years at

one of the lowest performing elementary schools in our district. During my 2 years as the

principal, I approached our school improvement process by trying to apply what I learned

at a different Texas university principal preparation program, our district pipeline

program, and a year-long regional service center principal preparation program. Overall,

I honestly felt I was not fully prepared for my first principal job; a sentiment shared by

87% of principals (Lortie, 2009). It felt like a piece of the puzzle was missing. While

researching principal development, the topic of university–district partnerships continued

to surface as a best practice. This discovery, along with recognizing that there is a

scarcity of research on the subject, led me to choose university–district partnerships for

principal preparation as my dissertation research topic. This experience has been more

rewarding than I could have ever anticipated.

This research study confirms that university–district partnerships for principal

preparation can bridge the gap between the research-based instruction in the graduate

classroom and the realities that principals experience each day, resulting in more

effective and well-rounded educational leaders. Furthermore, the participants were

inspirational to me. All of them have achieved success in their work. There is so much more that can be learned from further research on this topic, motivating me to continue my research and to explore how a university–district partnership may help move my current and future district forward.

Nearly 4 years since beginning my doctoral program, I am now a central office director with aspirations to be a superintendent one day. Firmly believing that one of the keys to school improvement is a strong campus instructional leader, my research has provided me with a framework I can use as a superintendent. As a future superintendent, I anticipate exploring a partnership with a university to prepare the leaders of that district and collaborating on the best possible scenario for the district and educational leaders. I hope readers will also find that this research is beneficial to the needs of their organizations and can lead to a fruitful university–district partnership.

Domain 1: Candidate Admissions		LEVELS OF EFFECTIVENESS			
QM INDICATORS	QM CRITERIA	4 – Meets ALL Criteria	3 – Meets MOST Criteria	2 – Meets SOME Criteria	1 – Meets FEW/NO Criteria
1 Marketing Strategy	A comprehensive marketing strategy is based on the following data: 1) an in-depth analysis of the current and future market for school principals in the region; 2) an assessment of program strengths and weaknesses; 3) the identification of market opportunities and threats that will positively or negatively impact efforts to attract the best, brightest, and most diverse talent to apply for admission to your program.				
2 Recruitment Practices	Recruitment practices are part of a strategic plan that builds on program strengths and opportunities identified in the market analyses. Practices are designed to attract applicants who have the maximum potential for becoming effective school leaders in chronically low-performing schools. Practices include: social media, a digital presence (website with analytics), and event-based outreach that involves direct interaction with prospective students. There is evidence that intentional strategies are being implemented to expand the ethnic and gender diversity of candidate pools.				
3 Admission Standards	Admission standards for the program include a requirement that applicants provide documented evidence of prior experience in leading change, fostering collaboration, and contributing to the professional growth and development of others.				
4 Applicant Screening	Applications are screened to ensure that applicants meet admission standards including evidence of prior experience leading change, fostering collaboration, and supporting the growth and development of professional staff.				
5 Predictor Assessments	Screened applicants participate in a combination of cognitive ability, personality, simulation, role-play, and multi-rater assessment instruments and techniques as the final step in the applicant screening process				
6 Candidate Selection	Candidate final selection processes include a formal interview of finalists by a committee comprised of program faculty and school district staff to confirm that applicants are: 1) genuinely motivated to lead a chronically low performing school, 2) likely to successfully complete program requirements, and 3) are viewed as potential hires by the school district.				

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| Domain 2: Course Content | | LEVELS OF EFFECTIVENESS | | | |
QM INDICATORS	QM CRITERIA	4 – Meets ALL Criteria	3 – Meets MOST Criteria	2 – Meets SOME Criteria	1 – Meets FEW/NO Criteria
1 Standards	Courses are based on leader performance standards and designed to develop leader competencies including: 1) agency for change; 2) parent-community school partnerships; 3) professional capacity building; 4) student centered learning; 5) instructional guidance and support; 6) culturally responsive teaching and learning.				
2 Learning Goals	Courses articulate clear learning goals for candidates that identify both the leader behavior to be developed and the context within which the behavior will be performed.				
3 Course Design	Course designs explicitly connect course content, learning activities, resources and materials, and course assessment measures				
4 Course Evaluation	Course evaluations are audited on a regular schedule to ensure that assessment tasks and criteria clearly and directly relate to intended learning outcomes.				
5 Course Coherence	Courses are organized and logically sequenced to ensure that: concepts, knowledge, and skills build upon each other in a structured progression of learning; and learning in one course mirrors learning in the same course taught by a different instructor including methods used to evaluate learning.				

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Domain 3: Pedagogy-Andragogy						
		LEVELS OF EFFECTIVENESS				
QM INDICATORS	QM CRITERIA	4 – Meets ALL Criteria	3 – Meets MOST Criteria	2 – Meets SOME Criteria	1 – Meets FEW/NO Criteria	
1	Active Learning Strategies	Courses consistently use active learning strategies including project-based and case-based instruction to engage candidates in the content being studied.				
2	Experiential Learning Activities	Courses include structured experiential learning activities in which learners apply new learning and become familiar with various real-world contexts and associated skill requirements.				
3	Reflective Practices	Courses incorporate reflective practices as a standard of practice in developing the essential habit of self-examination and continuous improvement of one's practice.				
4	Formative Feedback	Courses use formative feedback as an essential tool in guiding learning toward stated goals, objectives and performance benchmarks.				
5	Performance Benchmarking	Courses provide candidates with performance benchmarks of best practices for use in reflecting upon and refining specific competencies being developed.				
6	Culturally Responsive Pedagogy	Courses use culturally responsive methods to develop leader competencies at the personal, instructional, and institutional level.				

Domain 4: Clinical Practice			LEVELS OF EFFECTIVENESS			
QM INDICATORS		QM CRITERIA	4 – Meets ALL Criteria	3 – Meets MOST Criteria	2 – Meets SOME Criteria	1 – Meets FEW/NO Criteria
1	Clinical Design	Clinical designs are co-developed by academic faculty, prospective employers, and candidates. They are anchored to academic coursework and articulate clear and specific learning and career development goals/targets for each candidate.				
2	Clinical Quality	Clinical experiences are guided by criterion standards and data systems that produce actionable information on the quality and efficacy of clinical experiences. Standards include expectations for the duration of the clinical experience, relevant high-level leadership tasks; high-quality onsite guidance and modeling; coordination between academic program and school sites to ensure high-quality learning experiences for candidates.				
3	Clinical Coaching	Candidates receive detailed, high-quality feedback and coaching support, from both academic staff and senior level professionals, on a variety of authentic, professional-level tasks.				
4	Clinical Supervision	Candidates are supervised throughout the duration of their clinical experience, by both academic staff and a school-site supervisor(s). Performance expectations and evaluation criteria are clearly defined, prior to beginning the clinical experience, by academic staff and school site supervisors				
5	Clinical Placements	Clinical placements are identified by academic program staff and ensure that school sites are adequately resourced to provide candidates with a high-quality clinical experience.				
6	Clinical Evaluation	Candidate clinical evaluations are based on systematically developed program assessment criteria and used to guide field supervision and evaluation appropriate for a specific clinical context.				

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Domain 5: Performance Assessment

QM INDICATORS		QM CRITERIA	LEVELS OF EFFECTIVENESS			
			4 – Meets ALL Criteria	3 – Meets MOST Criteria	2 – Meets SOME Criteria	1 – Meets FEW/NO Criteria
1	Assessment Purpose	Assessments are designed to collect evidence of candidate progress toward proficiency that is then used to inform instructional decisions.				
2	Candidate Performance Targets	Candidate performance targets are clearly articulated and align with high priority leader performance standards that form the foundation for candidate assessments.				
3	Assessment Quality	Assessments facilitate valid evaluation of complex competencies, promote learning, and are complemented with exemplars and/or models of performance. Assessments make expectations and criteria explicit which enables feedback and promotes self-assessment				
4	Assessment Methods	Assessment methods are tightly linked to learning targets and collect both formative and summative data that provide a sufficient sample of candidate performance data to reliably infer levels of proficiency for a particular performance target.				
5	Communication of Assessment Results	Methods for communicating candidate assessment data produce accurate, timely, and immediately usable information about the level of candidate mastery of performance target(s).				
6	Assessment Impact	Candidates use assessment data and continuous improvement processes to take charge of their own progress toward performance mastery and growth over time.				

Domain 6: Graduate Performance Outcomes		LEVELS OF EFFECTIVENESS			
QM INDICATORS	QM CRITERIA	4 – Meets ALL Criteria	3 – Meets MOST Criteria	2 – Meets SOME Criteria	1 – Meets FEW/NO Criteria
1 Exit Competencies	Candidates demonstrate program exit competencies required to become education leaders, based on program exit exams, professional standards for educational leaders, and local school district performance expectations for principal and assistant principal.				
2 State Certification	Program graduates are certified and licensed by the state upon program completion or advanced to the next level of the state certification process.				
3 School District Eligibility	Eligible program graduates are admitted into one or more school district applicant pools and are eligible to be interviewed for principal and/or assistant principal positions.				
4 School District Hiring	Eligible program graduates are hired as principals and/or assistant principal leadership positions within one year of program completion or progress to the next level of the hiring process.				
5 Job Placement and Retention	Program graduates hired by a school district are placed in vacancies in chronically low performing schools and remain in the same position for at least three years.				
6 Job Performance	Program graduates placed in leadership positions either meet or exceed expectations on district performance evaluations during their induction period.				

APPENDIX B

INTERVIEW GUIDE PROFESSOR

1. How does the university collaborate with the partnering school district?

2. What role do you as a university professor play in collaborating with the partnering school district?

3. What are the unique features of the university–district partnership that stand apart from traditional university principal development programs?

4. Could you describe two or three courses in the principal development program, and how the unique features you previously listed impact that course?

5. What impact has the university–district partnership had on the university as a whole? The principal development program?

6. What are the strengths that you see with the university–district partnership? What, if any, are the weaknesses?

7. How has the university–district partnership impacted students who participate in the program? Recruitment quality? Experience for the student? Student outcomes?

8. Are there a procedures in place to follow up with students who have completed program? If yes, how has the university–district partnership impacted graduate outcomes?

9. Is there something else you think I should know to better understand the university–district partnership better? Are there any artifacts or documents you can share that would help me to better understand the partnership?

APPENDIX C

INTERVIEW GUIDE SCHOOL DISTRICT ADMINISTRATORS

1. How does the school district collaborate with the partnering university?

2. What role do you as a district administrator play in collaborating with the partnering university?

3. What are the unique features of the university–district partnership that stand apart from traditional principal development programs?

4. Could you describe for me how the school district supports the goals of the principal development program? How have the unique features of the partnership you previously discussed impacted the district's goals for principal development?

5. What impact has the university–district partnership had on the school district as a whole? On the quality of school leadership in your district? Has there been an improvement in overall student achievement? Employee retention? Employee satisfaction?

6. What are the strengths and weaknesses that you see with the university–district partnership?

7. Has the university–district partnership had an impact on employees who participate in the program? Recruitment quality? Employee outcomes or production?

8. Are there procedures in place to support employees who have completed program? If so, would you describe those procedures?

9. Is there something else you think I should know to better understand the university–district partnership better? Are there any artifacts or documents you can share that would help me to better understand the partnership?

APPENDIX D

INTERVIEW GUIDE CURRENT PROGRAM STUDENT

1. What is your current role in the school district? What is your current status as a student in the university principal development program?

2. What experiences have you had participating in the principal preparation program that required interaction the school district or school within the district?

3. What other experiences that you have had in the principal preparation program that are unique to your program and are the result of the university–district partnership?

4. Have you participated in other principal development programs? If yes, what is the differences between this program and other programs? Did you explore other principal development programs? If yes, why did you choose your current program over other programs?

5. What impact has the university–district partnership had on the school district as a whole? Has there been an improvement in overall student achievement? Employee retention? Employee satisfaction?

6. What are the strengths that you see with the university–district partnership? weaknesses?

7. How does the university–district partnership support you as a student and employee?

8. How has the university–district partnership impacted you as an employee? As a student? Do you feel that the program is adequately preparing you as an education leader?

9. Is there something else you think I should know to better understand the university–district partnership better? Are there any artifacts or documents you can share that would help me to better understand the partnership?

## APPENDIX E

INTERVIEW GUIDE PROGRAM GRADUATE

1. What is your current role in the school district? When did you graduate from the university principal development program?

2. What experiences did you have participating in the principal preparation program that specifically involved the university and district acting as partners? Have any of those experiences continued after graduation?

3. What other experiences did you have in the principal preparation program that were unique to the program and were the result of the university–district partnership?

4. Have you participated in other principal development programs? If yes, what is the differences between this program and other programs? Did you explore other principal development programs prior to choosing this program? If yes, why did you chose this program over other programs?

5. What impact has the university–district partnership had on the school district as a whole? Has there been an improvement in overall student achievement? Employee retention? Employee satisfaction?

6. What are the strengths that you see with the university–district partnership? What, if any, are its weaknesses?

7. How did the university–district partnership impact you as a student? How has it impacted you as an employee? Do you feel that the program has adequately prepared you as an education leader?

8. How did the university and district support you as a student and employee? Has some types of support continued after graduation?

9. Is there something else you think I should know to better understand the university–district partnership better? Are there any artifacts or documents you can share that would help me to better understand the partnership?
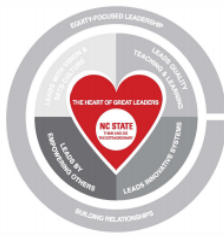
NC STATE PRINCIPAL PREPARATION

Developing *Excellent Leaders,* *Effective Schools,* **and** *Enriched Communities*
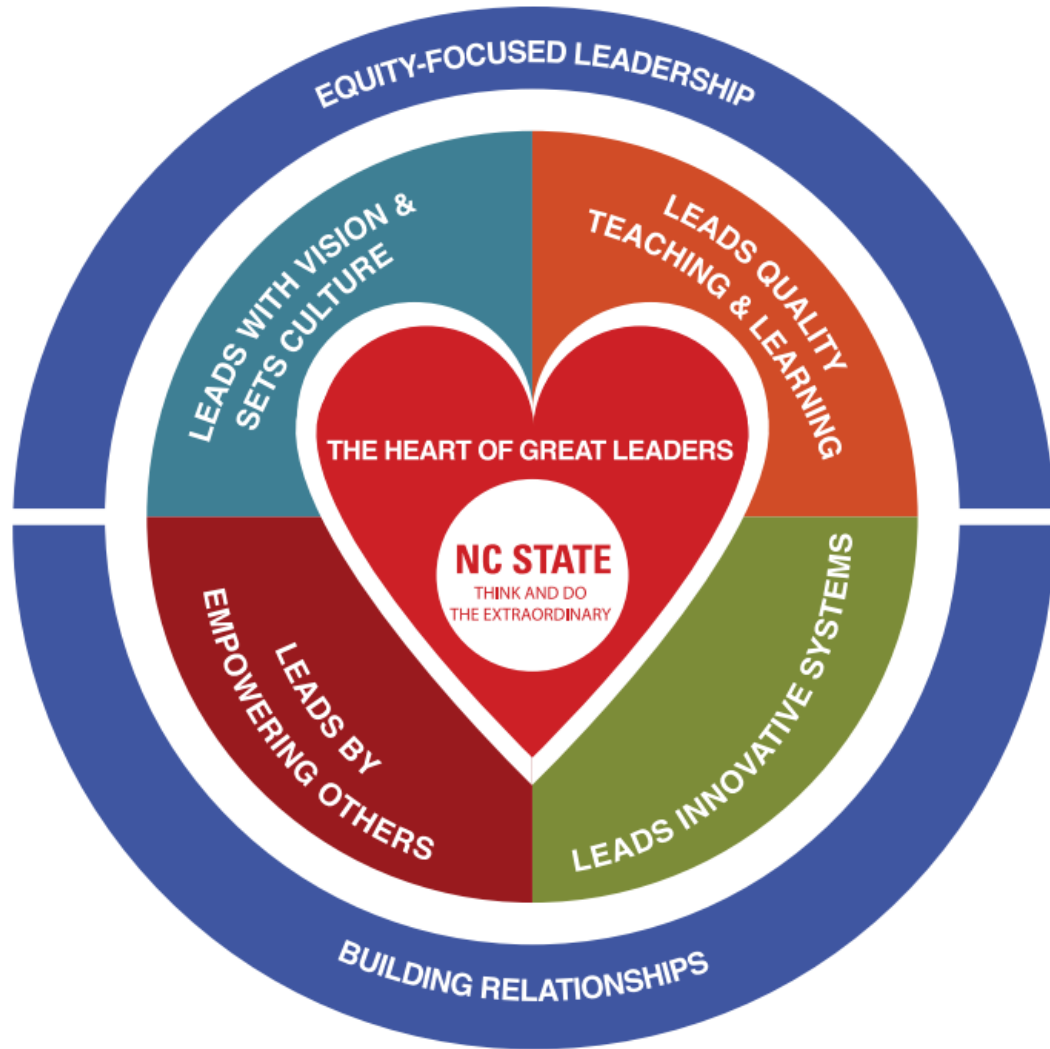
THE HEART OF A GREAT LEADER

CHIEF CARETAKER AND ADVOCATE
* Keeps children at the heart of the work
* Safeguards, values and promotes equity
* Demonstrates core values that reflect compassion, empathy, and an appreciation for individuals' experiences and perspectives
* Serves with humility, joy, and hope
* Knows and believes in *each* student and advocates for the "whole" child
* Advocates for and responds to the needs of the school community
* Uses judgement, professional morals, ethics, and integrity
* Builds trusting relationships
* Exemplifies servant-leadership

LEADS WITH COURAGE
* Commits to addressing the challenges of the context in which they are working
* Exhibits and encourages risk taking
* Engages in the relentless pursuit of excellence
* Demonstrates a sense of urgency, resilience, courage, and grit
* Engages in crucial conversations
* Embraces the role of the principal as a public figure

LEAD LEARNER
* Exhibits self-awareness and seeks, responds, and adjusts to feedback
* Is observant and reflective
* Has a growth mindset for self and others
* Practices and models a healthy, balanced lifestyle
* Understands the depth of responsibility and remains accountable for the results within the school community
* Understands intra- and inter-personal relationships

ENTREPRENEURIAL AND VISIONARY
* Frames his/her purpose in service to others (i.e., the "why" for the work)
* Is comfortable with ambiguity, uncertainty, and major changes in how processes are implemented
* Encourages innovation and creative leadership
* Establishes and nurtures multiple networks
* Demonstrates a willingness to "fail forward"

LEADS WITH VISION & SETS CULTURE
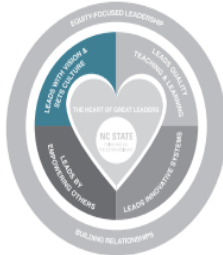
FOSTERS AND MODELS HIGH EXPECTATIONS
* Models expectations through role-plays with teachers and students
* Makes teacher and student learning public
* Develops and promotes inquiry, experimentation, and innovation (i.e., utilizes a growth mindset)
* Promotes and communicates high expectations for student learning
* Commits to the development of the "whole child"
* Exhibits that "failure is not an option" for students and staff
* Ensures all children are supported, challenged, encouraged, and empowered to reach their full potential

CONTINUALLY EVALUATES AND SHAPES A HEALTHY SCHOOL CULTURE
* Prioritizes purposefully time tasks and demands by protecting teachers and other staff members work and learning from disruption
* Strategically plans to achieve data-informed, measurable, and targeted goals through the school improvement process
* Develops safe, nurturing, and culturally responsive learning environments (i.e., well-being, high academic press, high support, equitable)
* Facilitates and leads a shared vision and mission
* Leads with purpose and intentionality
* Ensures every student has a quality teacher
* Skilled in teacher evaluation to implement data-informed talent management, including recruitment, strategic retention, development, and exiting persistently ineffective employees
* Rewards and celebrates exemplary performance
* Establishes systems and structures to support social/emotional health
* Builds productive teams and culture of collaboration

COMMUNICATES EFFECTIVELY
* Communicates timely and regularly in a variety of ways with all stakeholders
* Communicates vision, values and culture
* Influences through written and interpersonal communication
* Celebrates successes
* Seeks input from stakeholders and partners, including recognizing and honoring student voice
* Prevents and diffuses escalated situations
* Engages in crucial conversations

BUILDS TRUSTING RELATIONSHIPS
* Consistently demonstrates cultural competence, transparency, fairness, empathy, active listening, and confidentiality
* Is visible and engaged in the school and community
* Demonstrate care for the lives of their students, staff, and community members
* Promote adult-student, student-peer, and school-community relationships that value and support academic learning and positive social and emotional development.
* Knows how to restore and repair non-productive relationships with the community, teachers (all—high and low performing, new, etc.), families, caregivers, and students.

ENVISIONS THE FUTURE
* Leads change by seeing beyond constraints and building a shared vision and mission (i.e., cage-busting
* Develops robust mental models of school conditions, environments, policies, etc.

LEADS QUALITY TEACHING & LEARNING

INSTRUCTIONAL LEADER FOR THE CLASSROOM
* Facilitates, models, develops and ensures quality instructional practices in the building
* Knows quality curriculum, quality instruction, and quality assessment practices
* Priortizes literacy in all of its forms (e.g., linguistic, computational, digital, and visual)
* Prioritizes student achievement
* Employs valid assessments that are aligned to rigorous standards
* Ensures personalization of student learning
* Optimizes educational opportunities and meets the needs of *each* student(i.e., gifted, exceptional children, English learner, etc.) to live productively in and contribute to the diverse cultural contexts of a global society
* Ensures practices are aligned to age-appropriate child and adolescent development
* Leads in digital learning environments
* Leads and advocates for pre-K and early childhood learning
* Develops student efficacy and ownership of their learning
* Assists teachers in setting SMART and stretch goals
* Leads staff in the development of communication, collaboration, creativity, and critical thinking
* Creates processes to provide formal feedback to teachers concerning the effectiveness of their classroom instruction
* Reviews student work to understand the student learning experience

TEAM BUILDER FOR INSTRUCTIONAL IMPROVEMENT FOR THE SCHOOL
* Builds teams to impact student learning
* Develops leadership teams
* Develops teacher teams
* Ensures and supports horizontal and vertical alignment
* Develops capacity in others
* Promotes and supports growth for all students and teachers
* Facilitates and supports collaboration
* Assists teams (e.g., grade-level, subject area, school-wide, etc.) in creating SMART and stretch goals using data

MODELS AND PROMOTES DATA LITERACY FOR CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT
* Collects, manages, analyzes, and uses multiple measures of data (qualitative and quantitative) to improve student learning
* Uses data to develop teachers
* Develops effective data products (i.e., presentations, graphics, walkthrough tools, etc.)
* Leads teachers in developing their capacity for inquiry and data analysis
* Uses data for high quality, personalized professional development and follow-up
* Uses data to identify and effectively address disparities in student achievement
* Develops the capacity of staff to assess the value and applicability of emerging educational trends and the findings of research for the school and its improvement.

LEADS INNOVATIVE SYSTEMS

MODELS SYSTEMS INNOVATION
* Generates curiosity
* Encourages risk-taking
* Thinks critically in solving persistent problems of practice
* Has an entrepreneurial mindset and considers new ways of accomplishing tasks
* Diagnoses problems (problem identification) to enable innovative solutions
* Anticipates outcomes of action (worst case scenario/best case scenario thinking)
* Responds to schools as complex, interconnected systems, connecting to the district and external partners for support in planning, implementation, monitoring, feedback, and evaluation
* Creates strategically aligned systems
* Leverages monetary and non-monetary resources to implement vision and mission
* Advocates for and partners with students, families, and communities (i.e., public and private sectors) to promote *each* student's academic success and well-being
* Markets and promotes school to internal and external communities in order to manage student enrollment

INTEGRATES SYSTEMS OF CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT
* Identifies, interprets, and responds to the micro- and macro-political environment
* Creates, integrates, connects, understands, improves, evaluates, and monitors systems
* Establishes effective systems for managerial tasks
* Creates and uses a supportive professional and social network
* Builds systems of continuous improvement

MANAGES THE INTERFACE AMONG SYSTEMS
* Ensures that internal and external services are utilized to promote the health, safety, and well-being of each member of the school community
* Understands and complies with local, state and federal policies and laws (e.g., School Improvement Plan (SIP) and other statutory requirements)
* Maintains and maximizes the use of facilities to provide the optimal learning environment for all stakeholders
* Leverages human and financial resources across systems to meet the unique needs of the school community
* Develops and manages relationships with feeder and connecting schools for curricular and instructional articulation

LEADS BY EMPOWERING OTHERS

EMPOWERS THROUGH CAPACITY BUILDING
* Develops and promotes educator capacity and leadership
* Develops collaborative relationships with members of the learning community
* Builds effective teams that improve student learning
* Establishes conditions for sustained improvement
* Builds cycles of continuous improvement
* Exercises equitable and restorative student disciplinary practices
* Empowers teachers and students by teaching and modeling positive behavioral expectations
* Promotes mutual accountability among teachers and other professional staff for *each* student's success and the effectiveness of the school as a whole

EMPOWERS THROUGH DISTRIBUTIVE LEADERSHIP
* Understands which roles are unique to the principalship and which can be delegated
* Strategically delegates leadership assignments to the right people
* Ensures the continuous professional development of self and staff
* Balances a sense of urgency and the need for buy-in
* Uses data and professional judgment for strategic talent management and development

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