

**Educational Leadership and the Perceptions of Principals and  
Vice Principals in Manitoba on Their Professional Development**

by

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## **Abstract**

The purpose of this mixed methods study was to determine from public school principals and vice principals in Manitoba their perceptions of the quality of the professional development in which they have participated during their administrative careers, with a focus on the purposes for which they engage in professional development, their perceptions of its effectiveness, and how it has contributed to their development as educational leaders. These experiences were compared by the independent variables of gender, context (rural, urban or northern), position (principal or vice principal) and level of school (early, middle or senior years). This research included both a voluntary online questionnaire completed by 78 principals and/or vice principals (8.2% of the population surveyed) and fifteen interviews, representative samples of the population.

Conceptually, this thesis draws upon the work of Thomas Guskey's (2002, 2003a) four criteria for effective professional development of teachers and applies them to administrators' professional development: a) having as its ultimate goal improving student outcomes; b) an acknowledgement of the importance of context in the design and implementation of the intended learning; c) the utilization of research-based content and decision making; and d) the need for constant evaluation of these professional development opportunities.

The findings of the study show that school-based administrators generally believe that the professional development opportunities available to them have been effective in developing their leadership capacity in the areas of management, leadership, and administration. However, the study found that

professional development activities are rarely evaluated, and that the purpose of student learning comes second to that of administrative management, which may be a reflection of the current accountability climate and the recent turnovers of administrators across the province. Ultimately, the study did not find that all four criteria must be in place at all times for administrators to conclude that professional development activities are effective as defined by the individuals. The findings also suggest that administrators tend to value most highly those professional development opportunities that are individualized and/or localized and supported by the local school or school division. Finally, administrators remain divided on their view about mandatory certification of administrators; however, they are in agreement that the criteria for certification should be revised to include standards of professional practice.

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I extend a thank you to the Council of School Leaders for emailing the web link to the questionnaire to its members. I am grateful to the principals and vice principals who participated in this research and who freely shared their perceptions on the questionnaire and in the interviews.

Last but not least, I am most thankful to my husband, Bill Cann, for his support especially during this last year while I was recovering from encephalitis. He chauffeured me around the province so I could conduct the interviews for this study. I appreciate his unending support.

This thesis is dedicated to my husband, my daughter Nicole Cann, my parents Eileen and Thomas Young who started me on my educational journey so many years ago, and to my extended family and friends for their love and support during my Ph D journey. They all know I truly believe in and practice life-long learning.

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## Preface

Yvonne Highfield is a successful school principal who is admired by her peers for her commitment to professional growth. During her career, she has worked as a classroom teacher, department head and vice principal before moving into the principalship. At all stages, she has engaged in professional development opportunities to improve her expertise and to support the students in the schools where she worked.

Yvonne is married and has two children. She faces many of the stressors lived by career women today: managing a home, a marriage and a family while pursuing her education as a professional and an educational leader. She has been quite successful in balancing home and family partly due to a supportive spouse and support from her extended family.

Living in an urban centre has also assisted her with its ease of transportation and accessibility to professional development activities, including university coursework. The school division in which she works is financially supportive of the participation of its teachers and administrators in professional development activities.

Yvonne has a Bachelor of Education degree in special education and a Master's of Education degree in educational administration. She has also participated in the Leadership Development Program in her school division and holds both Level 1 and Level 2 certificates for school-based administrators from the Department of Education.

Over the course of her career, Yvonne has been very active in committee

work in the Manitoba Teachers' Society (MTS) and the Council of School Leaders (COSL) at both the local and provincial levels. She has been very active in professional development provincially and internationally and has regularly attended the annual professional conferences and/or workshops offered by her division as well as by provincial leadership groups, including the Summer Institute for school administrators. The teachers and vice principal in her school are coached and mentored by Yvonne. She mentors other school-based administrators in her school division and in other parts of the province.

Yvonne has not only participated in professional development opportunities, but has also conducted in-services on various professional topics for others and taught a Masters level course at the university. She does this partly because she believes that she needs to mentor less experienced teachers and administrators as she had been mentored by others over the course of her own career. She designs her professional development sessions with a strong research-based foundation and ensures participants have the opportunity to evaluate the sessions, and ask any questions they may have about the content or the transfer of the content into local school contexts.

Early in her career, while attending an international conference in the United States, Yvonne met Joel Barker, a futurist, who shared the following story with the audience which has guided Yvonne's practices ever since.

#### Making a Difference

During a sunrise walk along the beach a figure was seen in the distance. The youth was picking something up and gently throwing it back into the ocean. Upon approaching the youth, the adult asked, "What are you doing?"

The youth replied, "Throwing starfish back into the ocean. The sun is up

and the tide is going out. If I don't throw them back, they will die.”  
The adult said, “Don't you realize there are miles and miles of beach and hundreds of starfish? You can't possibly make a difference!”  
After listening politely, the youth bent down and picked up another starfish and threw it back into the surf. Smiling at the adult, the youth said, “I made a difference for that one.”

- Anonymous

Yvonne believes that principals have the opportunity to make a difference in this world for children and for teachers. She practices shared leadership in her school and involves her vice principal and department heads in decision making. Department heads collect input from the teachers in their departments. All decisions are centered on making a difference in the achievement of the students in the school.

In fact, Yvonne is not a real person. However, Yvonne's experiences represent a composite picture of many of the administrators who participated in this study, and for whom professional growth is noted to be a key factor for individual career support and for encouraging student learning. This study examines the perceptions of school-based administrators in Manitoba on their professional development experiences. Have they had a similar career path to Yvonne's? Is improving student achievement the main reason they attend professional development activities or are they just trying to survive day to day in the current educational climate? Read on to find out the results of the study.

## **Chapter One: Background to the Study**

### **Introduction**

Leadership influences and makes a difference to student learning. The academic and empirical research on the effect of school leadership on student achievement supports the view that the leadership of the principal has an indirect affect on student learning and is second only to teaching among school-based factors in influencing learning (Leithwood, Louis, Anderson, & Wahlstrom, 2004). However, research findings such as these beg the question of what leadership knowledge, skills and dispositions will most positively affect student learning, and how school-based administrators can learn to lead in these ways. As Darling-Hammond, LaPointe, Meyerson, and Orr (2007) state,

The critical part principals play in developing successful schools has been well established by researchers over the last two decades: committed leaders who understand instruction and can develop the capacities of teachers and of schools are key to improving educational outcomes for all students (p.1).

Thus the professional growth of principals and vice principals is a crucial area of study given its focus on developing the knowledge, skills and dispositions leaders must have to effectively lead schools. That is why there is a need for this research study to be conducted in the Manitoba context.

The breadth and knowledge of skills needed in the principalship today have grown considerably due to the demands in education for accountability and measurable results in student achievement, and these needs have been

underpinned more globally by the encroachment of neoliberal policies of economic growth which affect all educational jurisdictions. The changing demographics of the population resulting in growth in diversity and in student learning needs also have had an impact on the skills needed by effective school leaders. Given this ever-changing and dynamic leadership context, the provision of quality professional development opportunities for principals and vice principals over time becomes a crucial means of building and maintaining the capacity to lead within this culture of diversity and accountability.

Unfortunately, to date the leadership preparation of principals has been highly criticized by leading scholars in the field (English, 2006, 2000; Fry, O'Neill, & Bottoms, 2006; Hess & Kelly, 2007; Levine, 2005; Murphy, 2007; Murphy & Vriesenga, 2006; Young, Crow, Orr, Ogawa, & Creighton, 2005). In the United States, because of the focus on credentialing and the quality of educational administration preparation programs (Barnett, 2004; Levine, 2005; Young, Crow, Orr, Ogawa, & Creighton, 2005), much of the professional development of principals and vice principals has been developed around the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) standards, used by 40 states as a platform for their preparation programs and licensure (Council of Chief State School Officers [CCSSO], 2008; English, 2000; Orr, 2006; Peterson, 2002). The professional growth opportunities for administrators continue to develop as research and scholarship in the area evolve with changes in demographics, educational context, and global changes. Other parts of the world are reviewing the professional development of administrators as well. In England and Wales,

the National College for School Leadership (NCSL) was launched in 2000 as a national program to further enhance the development of educational leadership (Brundrett, 2006). Two of the objectives of NCSL are: “to find, analyse and celebrate good practice in school leadership in order to build a usable knowledge base for school leaders to share; and to demonstrate the impact of the NCSL on school leadership” (Brundrett, 2006, p. 473). Similar national programs have been developed in New Zealand and Hong Kong (Brundrett, Fitzgerald & Sommefeldt, 2006; Wong, 2004).

One of the commonly formalized professional development opportunities includes administrative certification, which requires that administrators engage in formalized learning opportunities related to agreed upon standards, often in conjunction with university Master’s degree preparation programs. Development of uniform approaches to and standards for the preparation of Canadian educational leaders has been shaped by federalism and the fact that education is a provincial policy responsibility. The result is that Canada is the only country in the developed world that does not have a federal department of education, and each province and territory has different jurisdictional requirements for administrative professional development. Research recently has been done on a national perspective on administrative professional development in Canada (Wallace, Foster, & da Costa, 2007). However, unlike the United States (LeTendre & Roberts, 2005) and some provinces (e.g., Ontario) (Wallace, Foster & da Costa, 2007), administrative certification is encouraged, but not required in Manitoba (Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth [MECY], 2008, p. 3).

Manitoba has a Level 1 and Level 2 certification process for principals and vice principals that is optional, though many school divisions have begun to require it as a way of identifying and developing leadership talent and of providing evidence of professional growth in the area of educational leadership. Beyond certificates, there are other professional development activities for principals and vice principals such as conferences, workshops, university courses, professional learning communities, study groups, professional reading and mentoring. This study focuses on all such formal and informal development opportunities for school leaders.

Young, Levin, and Wallin (2007) suggest that school systems must recognize the need for administrators to learn about their work. The effectiveness of administrators does not occur as a consequence of obtaining an administrative position; it is learned over time, as principals and vice principals engage in professional learning experiences which further develop them as leaders (Fullan, 2001). Therefore, one of the limitations of the plethora of work conducted on university preparation programs is that it limits the scope of what constitutes professional development and/or preparation because it takes into consideration formal preparation programs only, and does not analyze the professional opportunities available to school-based administrators over the course of their careers through professional affiliations. In addition, much of the research on professional development focuses on the principalship, and the role of the vice principal remains an under-researched area of study. Greenfield, Marshall, and Reed (1986) and Kwan (2009) argued that those who work in this position have



different expectations and experiences; therefore, the professional development in which they engage should be tailored to their needs, particularly as they are often the selection pool from which principals are drawn and their experiences emphasize managing more so than leading, a distinction which is controversial and will be discussed later in this study.

What constitutes successful leadership and the best preparation for leadership roles is often seen to be dependent upon the context in which leaders work. Context is an elusive, multi-dimensional concept, the meaning of which is discussed more fully below.

In terms of context, in her study of senior educational administrators in Manitoba, Wallin (2010) reported that significant differences in the careers of senior administrators accrue based on gender, years of experience, context (rural or urban), and position (superintendent or assistant superintendent). Given these findings, and the fact that senior administrators are most often selected from candidates who have been principals, these factors, as well as level of school (early, middle or senior years) become independent variables to consider. These may also affect the access to and perceptions of professional development experiences offered by formal educational organizations in Manitoba, including university preparation programs based in the province and professional development opportunities offered by professional affiliation groups.

Conceptually, this study draws upon the work of Thomas Guskey (2002, 2003a) who developed four criteria for the design and evaluation of effective professional development: (a) having as its ultimate goal improving student

outcomes; (b) an acknowledgement of the importance of context in the design and implementation of the intended learning; (c) the utilization of research-based content and decision making; and, (d) the need for constant evaluation of the professional development opportunities. These criteria were developed for the professional development of teachers but in this study they were used as a framework through which to make judgements about the quality and comprehensiveness of professional development activities of principals and vice principals in Manitoba.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this mixed methods study was to determine from public school principals and vice principals in Manitoba their perceptions of the quality of the professional development in which they have participated during their administrative careers, with a focus on the purposes for which they engage in professional development, their perceptions of its effectiveness, and how the professional development has contributed to their development as educational leaders. These experiences were examined using the independent variables of gender, context (rural, urban or northern), position (principal or vice principal) and level of school (early, middle or senior years). The variable of context may be defined quite broadly, but for the purposes of this study, it is limited to geographic location of the school and the grade levels in the school as identified by the respondents. In order to narrow the focus of the study, the research examined informal independent professional development activities individuals participated in and formal professional development activities in Manitoba which are

organized and/or sponsored by the Council of School Leaders (COSL), the Manitoba Teachers' Society (MTS), the Manitoba Council for Leadership in Education (MCLE), the universities in Manitoba offering educational administration programs, and activities offered by school divisions. These activities represent approximately 95% of the professional development activities in which school-based administrators participate.

### **Research Questions**

The following four questions provide the focus for the research:

- 1) What benefits do principals and vice principals in Manitoba perceive have accrued in their development as educational leaders, as a consequence of the professional development in which they have participated?
- 2) What types of professional development do principals and vice principals in Manitoba perceive as being the most beneficial for developing effective educational leaders and/or improving student achievement, and why?
- 3) In what professional development experiences in the areas of leadership, instruction, management and personnel (areas designated by Manitoba Education as being important for the certification of administrators) have principals and vice principals in Manitoba engaged, for what purpose and in what context?
- 4) How might formal leadership organizations in Manitoba more effectively create meaningful formalized professional development opportunities for

the development of effective school-based administrators?

These research questions provide the focus for this study and were used to guide the literature review in Chapter Two; in determining the methodology for this mixed methods study presented in Chapter Three; and in focusing the findings in Chapter Four and the conclusions and recommendations in Chapter Five.

### **Significance of the Study**

This study attempted to offer insights into the nature of professional development of principals and vice principals and their perceptions of its effect on their development as effective educational leaders in Manitoba. Currently there is very little research on professional development of principals and vice principals in Manitoba. The study did not set out to study the actual impacts of professional development. The claims made by the principals and vice principals in this study about the benefits and/or limitations of professional development experiences could not be directly verified.

The study added to the scholarly literature in the field by extending the Canadian perspective on professional development of administrators. The analysis of the data extended a previous pilot study (Young, 2009) and provided a glimpse into the perceptions of Manitoban principals and vice principals concerning the nature of professional development. Since this was a mixed methods study it adds to the research literature on mixed methods. Conceptually, this study was an opportunity to extend Guskey's theory from its focus on professional development, in general, to professional development for

administrators so that they in turn have the capacity to lead teachers and schools towards greater student learning and achievement.

Practically, this study has implications for those organizations providing professional development for administrators as these organizations spend considerable time and resources planning and organizing professional development sessions which could be affected by the results of this study. This study also provides data on the issue of administrative certification, which currently is a hotly contested topic in the leadership research community. Finally, it may be that the results of this study could foster change and growth of professional development opportunities currently in existence in Manitoba, which may lead to an increase in the number of teachers interested in becoming administrators.

### **Assumptions**

Heck and Hallinger (1999) examined the role of school leaders using diverse methods and lenses. In their review of the literature of the 1980s and 1990s, on the effects of leadership on student achievement, Hallinger and Heck (1996a) “found that three major approaches dominated the research: direct effects, mediated effects, and antecedent effects” (cited in Heck & Hallinger, 1999, p. 144). Although there are both conceptual and analytical debates, there is general agreement in the literature that quality leadership has a positive effect on student achievement. Heck and Hallinger (1999) reviewed the role of methodology in the studies of leadership and school improvement as well as reviewing the trends in both quantitative and qualitative methods. The authors

developed “an organizing structure for the study of school leadership in the future” (Heck & Hallinger, 1999, p. 142). They developed a theoretical framework divided into three broad conceptualizations of knowledge (positivist, interpretive, and critical-contextual) which scholars are using in their research on school leadership. The framework is of value to researchers studying design issues in educational leadership and conducting empirical research particularly as it related to the conceptualization of knowledge, the lens researchers use to conduct their research, and the methodologies that correspond. Heck and Hallinger’s framework is useful in identifying the assumptions that underlie this research study in this thesis which uses a constructivist lens.

### **Knowledge**

Using an interpretivist perspective, knowledge is grounded in the realities of the day to day world. This perspective provides both ontological and epistemological assumptions. Burrell and Morgan (1985) write that “the interpretive paradigm is informed by a concern to understand the world as it is, to understand the fundamental nature of the social world at the level of subjective experience” (p. 28). In this research study, the assumption is made that knowledge is grounded in the lived experiences of the participants, is subjective rather than objective, and is formulated in the human context.

### **Lens**

This research study is viewed through a constructivist lens in which knowledge is constructed by individuals based on their experiences. The participants construct meaning from reflecting on their professional development

experiences. The constructivist lens looks at reality and truth as being subjective and dependent on the observer (Gliner & Morgan, 2000, p. 409). Creswell (2005) states that researchers need to listen to the views of the participants in their studies and ask open-ended questions (p. 43). Assumptions are made in this study regarding the ability of the participants to construct and refine their knowledge. For example respondents with a number of years of experience will tend to be more reflective and informed about their roles than others with less experience. Some respondents may offer politically correct responses based on what is happening in education today.

### **Research Methodology**

The assumption is made that knowledge of professional development experiences may be gathered through a mixed methods study that uses both quantitative and qualitative methods. Quantitative methods were used to provide descriptive statistical information from a questionnaire related to respondents' experiences with professional development compared along the variables of gender, position and level of school administrated, while qualitative methods were used to interpret the responses to the open ended questions and the interview data. Participants were integral to the research process used in this study and their voices were accepted as valid. The interpretivist paradigm with its ontological and epistemological underpinnings affects the research methods and the analyses of the data. The researcher recognizes that the quantitative questionnaire and the qualitative interviews used in this study were based on perceptual data from participants in that they interpret the questions and answers

based on their lived experiences. The analysis by the researcher is grounded in her experiences in administration and in professional development in Manitoba.

Epistemology, “how knowledge is attained and the limits, validity and reliability of knowledge” (Gliner & Morgan, 2000, p. 411), is important to discuss, at this point, as variance exists in how knowledge is gained or created and what knowledge is. How data are collected is not an efficient indicator to distinguish between the quantitative and qualitative paradigms (the philosophy that helps to guide how the research will be conducted). In the social sciences there are two major paradigms: positivism which is the dominant paradigm and is most often associated with quantitative research, and constructivism which is most often associated with qualitative research (Gliner & Morgan, 2000, p. 27). Constructivist epistemology takes into account the roles played by values and language.

Lincoln and Guba (1985) (as cited in Gliner & Morgan, 2000) describe five axioms that separate these two paradigms. 1. Positivists believe that the nature of reality is singular while constructivists believe that there are multiple constructed realities. 2. Positivists believe that in the relationship of knower to known the researcher is totally objective while constructivists believe that the researcher cannot be totally objective because the participants and the researcher interact. 3. In the possibility of generalization, positivists believe that truth statements are free from both context and time; however, constructivists believe that since everything is contextually bound a working hypothesis is the best that can be accomplished. 4. In determining causal links positivists believe



that cause and effect can be determined as a probability while constructivists believe that since we are in a constant state of development cause and effect cannot be distinguished. 5. Positivists believe that inquiry is objective and value free, while constructivists believe that inquiry is bound by conflict, values, theory, choice and inquiry. These dichotomies indicate differences in the paradigms and reflect relative differences in the epistemology. The positivist approach is scientific and the constructivist approach is sequential yet flexible (Gliner & Morgan, 2000, p. 28) wherein the first is deductive and the second is inductive.

Because the theory is grounded in the data, this study is premised on what is known as grounded theory (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007; Creswell, 2005; Taylor & Bogdan, 1998). Since this study is based on an interpretivist paradigm, the questionnaire is based on the perceptions of administrators grounded in their experiences. For this mixed methods study, because descriptive and comparative quantitative methods are being used and not experimental quantitative methods, the analysis also is constructivist and therefore inductive.

### **Delimitations of the Study**

In order to maintain manageability, delimitations of this study were established. The study was confined to one province in Canada, that being Manitoba. Only public school principals and vice principals (642 principals and 342 vice principals, a ratio of 2:1) in Manitoba were sent the questionnaire thus eliminating principals and vice principals of independent schools, also known as private schools, and principals and vice principals of First Nations schools. The interview participants were randomly selected from those who volunteered to be

interviewed and none who volunteered refused to be interviewed. Ten principals and five vice principals (a ratio of 2:1) were interviewed for approximately one hour each and the interviews were audio recorded and transcribed by the researcher. The number of interview participants was deemed to be sufficient to examine the participants' perspectives and reasons for their participation in professional development activities as the interview participants were representative, in terms of the criteria adopted for this study, of the population of school-based administrators (from various parts of the province; male and female; of various years of experience).

### **Mixed Methods**

The research questions were answered in a mixed methods study using quantitative and qualitative methods. Quantitative research has a number of strengths which Creswell (2005) has described. First, quantitative research has “an emphasis on collecting and analyzing information in the form of numbers” (Creswell, 2005, p. 41). Some researchers believe numbers and statistical analyses are easier to interpret with less potential for researcher bias than words. Second, quantitative research has “an emphasis on collecting scores that measure distinct attributes of individuals and organizations” (p. 41). This is used extensively in education to measure the abilities of students. Third, quantitative research has “an emphasis on the procedures of comparing groups or relating factors about individuals or groups in experiments, correlational studies and surveys” (p. 41). Again statistics are used to explain the effects between groups and/or subjects. Quantitative data are said to be objective because they are

“observations of phenomenon, attributes or behaviour, which can be numerically scored, rated, or scaled” (Gliner & Morgan, 2000, p. 420). Quantitative data used in qualitative research can be used to provide descriptive statistical information from questionnaires.

Quantitative research is about variables, both dependent and independent. Hittleman and Simon (2002) write that the researchers’ purpose in quantitative descriptive research is “to answer questions about a variable’s status by creating numerical descriptions of the frequency with which one or more variables occur” (p. 27). In comparative research, “the researchers’ purpose is to examine numerical descriptions of two or more variables and make decisions about their differences or relationships” (p. 27). In quantitative descriptive and comparative research, associations, patterns, and status of variables may be shown but these types of quantitative studies cannot find that one variable (or combination of) influences or causes a change in another variable. In experimental research, however, where causality is attributed, “the researchers’ purpose is to draw conclusions about the influence of one or more variables on another variable” (p. 27). Quantitative research follows a strict method for determining measures such as mean and standard deviation. Each quantitative researcher calculates these measures using the same method. Because this study was premised on an interpretive paradigm related to knowledge, this study utilized quantitative descriptive and comparative research methods, rather than experimental research, to analyze data and make conclusions based on the responses to the questionnaire.

One limitation of quantitative research is its dependency on statistics. If symbols are used instead of words when the results are explained then the understanding of a study is limited to those who understand the symbols, what they mean and why they were used. A second limitation is the dependency on numbers and the errors that can occur if the data are not entered correctly or the appropriate analysis is not conducted which causes erroneous results. A third limitation occurs when the incorrect variables are used to research the problem. Care has been taken in this research study to avoid these limitations by using accepted statistical procedures in analysis of the data from the questionnaire.

Qualitative research has a number of strengths which Bogdan and Biklen (2007) and Taylor and Bogdan (1998) have described. Qualitative research is naturalistic in that it “has natural settings as the direct source of data and the researcher is the key instrument” (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007, p. 4). When conducting this research, the researcher, as far as possible, went to the schools to interview the principals and vice principals in their natural settings. The researcher wanted to understand the way principals and vice principals think; therefore, the researcher needed to interview them in-person to see how they function and to hear them talk. Second, qualitative research is descriptive and uses words rather than numbers. “The written results of the research contain quotations from the data to illustrate and substantiate the presentation” (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007, p. 5) and transcripts are used. The subjects (participants) were not identified by name or by school division thus protecting their privacy. Third, “qualitative researchers are concerned with process rather than simply with

outcomes or products” (p. 6). This research was concerned with the perceptions of principals and vice principals which were obtained from both the quantitative and qualitative aspects of this study. Fourth, qualitative researchers inductively analyze their data rather than statistically: “they do not search out data or evidence to prove or disprove hypotheses they hold before entering the study; rather the abstractions are built as the particulars that have been gathered are grouped together” (p. 6). Through analysis of the text, trends in the data and a theory emerge. Fifth, qualitative researchers are concerned with meaning and it “is of essential concern to the qualitative approach” (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007, p. 7). The research plan was concerned with the interviewees’ perspectives and how they make sense of their professional growth. The researcher was concerned with ensuring that the perceptions of principals and vice principals were captured accurately which is why interview transcripts were sent to the participants so they could be checked for accuracy prior to using them in the study.

Qualitative research has limitations as well. One limitation is interviewing a sufficient number of participants to understand the data and being able to generalize the meaning and experience to the population. This necessitated gathering data from a variety of participants whose experiences were diverse, which in some research contexts may be difficult to achieve. A second limitation is logistical, as qualitative research tends to be time consuming and costly as it often necessitates travel and extended time commitments with participants. Interviews are best done face to face rather than over the telephone or computer

since it is important for the interviewer to build trust with the participant. Thirdly, researcher bias is of particular concern in qualitative research because of its grounding in subjectivity. Qualitative researchers “must attempt to suspend, or set aside, their own perspectives and taken-for-granted views of the world” (Taylor & Bogdan, 1998, p. 7). If the researcher cannot do this, using either quantitative or qualitative analysis, the research will be biased and the conclusions invalid.

The qualitative researcher uses methods that serve the researcher which makes qualitative research interesting and challenging. This research study used acceptable qualitative research methods: in-depth interviewing and inductive reasoning.

As seen above, both quantitative research and qualitative research have both strengths and limitations. In a mixed methods study where both quantitative data and qualitative data are collected, both forms of data are used to provide a better understanding of the answers to the phenomena being investigated.

### **Limitations of the Study**

The researcher was an experienced teacher, vice principal, principal and assistant superintendent in Manitoba with over 40 years of experience and has a past connection to many of the potential study participants. The researcher was and continues to be an advocate for professional development, mentoring, and improving student outcomes. Therefore, researcher bias may affect the interpretation of data, the findings and conclusions of this study. This would be a limitation. However, this is also an asset to the study as the researcher has a

profound understanding of and interest in the system. Nevertheless, precautions (e.g., while analyzing data ensuring the results were not directed by researcher bias) were taken to address researcher bias in the analysis of results.

A second limitation of this study was that the knowledge gained from professional development activities is not measured at the end of the activity and the determination of causality between engaging in professional development and links to implementation and student achievement is impossible to “prove” given the plethora of variables at play in an educational environment. Hence, this study used descriptive and comparative statistics within an inductive and constructive interpretive framework for studying and making conclusions regarding the phenomena, but these findings can never be considered entirely conclusive.

A third limitation occurred as a function of the assumptions of knowledge underpinning this study, as it was based on the perceptions of the participants and there was no claim made regarding complete objectivity because they were of a personal nature and varied from one individual to another based on a number of factors including prior learning, attitude, and what might have happened to the individual prior to attending the professional development activity or a mentoring experience. Therefore, the measurement of perceptions may not be accurate. How long ago the individual participated in the professional development or mentoring activity also was a factor influencing the person’s perception. The old saying, “absence makes the heart grow fonder” might come into play here. Memories can fail people and recollection can be selective.

The timing of the study also must be considered a limitation. If the questionnaire had been distributed after many individuals had attended a professional development session that was not beneficial, the individuals would be negatively predisposed to the questions, and, if they responded, the questionnaire results would be skewed negatively. Timing of the distribution of the questionnaire was critical to its positive return. The same case could be made for the timing of the interviews; however, this was a much smaller number of participants. The distribution of the questionnaire and the scheduling of the interviews took into account the dates of major conferences for principals and vice principals (e.g., COSL SAG Conference in October, annual COSL Conference in February). This research plan was cognizant of the limitations described above and took care to avoid them.

### **Definition of Terms**

The following terms were used in this research study.

*Certification*: the acquisition of a principal credential. In Manitoba, certification includes two certificates: Level 1: School Administrator's Certificate and/or a Level 2: School Principal's Certificate.

*COSL*: the Council of School Leaders, the professional association for principals and vice principals in Manitoba to which one may choose to belong.

*Department of Education*: the commonly used name for Manitoba Education or Manitoba Education Citizenship and Youth.

*Leadership*: the guidance and direction of instructional improvement (Fullan, 2001, p. 126). Leadership is distinguished from the terms: management,



administration and governance. Individual administrators have their own personal definition of leadership and may not agree on a common definition.

*Manitoba Education:* Formerly known as Manitoba Education Citizenship and Youth until a name change in October 2009, also known as the Department of Education.

*MCLE:* the Manitoba Council for Leadership in Education, an organization financially supported by Manitoba Education whose focus was to organize an annual summer institute on leadership, but whose focus has now changed to financially supporting, upon application, the professional development programs offered by school divisions and individual requests.

*MECY:* Manitoba Education Citizenship and Youth also known as the Department of Education. The name was changed in October 2009 to Manitoba Education.

*MTS:* the Manitoba Teachers' Society, the union/professional organization to which all public school teachers, principals and vice principals in Manitoba belong.

*Mentor:* a person who agrees to work one-on-one with a principal and/or vice principal to provide guidance, support and feedback concerning on-the-job experiences. Discussions between the mentor and the person being mentored commonly referred to as the "mentee" are considered to be confidential.

*Mentoring*: the on-the-job experiences or guidance from colleagues, who agree to work one-on-one with a principal and/or vice principal and whose discussions are considered to be confidential.

*Principal*: the educational leader who has formal and legislative responsibility as the chief administrator for a school (that includes children in any or all grades kindergarten to 12), its students and staff.

*Professional Development (PD)*: “those processes and activities designed to enhance the professional knowledge, skills, and attitudes of educators so that they might, in turn, improve the learning of students” (Guskey, 2000, p. 16); “professional development is an intentional, ongoing, systematic process that can take a variety of forms” (Guskey, 2000, p. 40) including both formal and informal activities (e.g., conferences, workshops, mentoring, university courses, learning communities, study groups, and professional reading).

*School-based administrators*: a term which in this study may be used in place of and synonymously with principals and vice principals.

*Vice Principal*: the educational leader second to the principal in charge of, and has formally delegated administrative responsibilities for a school (that includes children in any or all grades kindergarten to 12), its students and staff.

### **Summary**

This research focused on the experiences of principals and vice principals in Manitoba public school divisions and the professional development offered by

the formal public education organizations in Manitoba. The study extended the findings of a pilot qualitative study the researcher conducted with retired Manitoba principals (Young, 2009) to include the development of a province-wide questionnaire and semi-structured interviews with ten principals and five vice principals.

This chapter has outlined the purpose for this study, the research questions that guide the purpose of this study and provide the focus for the research, the conceptual assumptions, delimitations, strength and limitations of mixed methods studies, the limitations of this study, and the terminology used in the study. Chapter Two provides a review of the literature and the conceptual framework for the study. Chapter Three describes the methodology for this mixed methods study including the data collection techniques and analysis. Chapter Four details the findings of the study as they relate to the research questions. Chapter Five provides conclusions and recommendations.

## **Chapter Two: A Review of the Related Literature**

### **Introduction**

The leadership of principals and vice principals and its impact on student learning is receiving a considerable amount of study (e.g., Heck & Hallinger, 1999; Davis, Darling-Hammond, LaPointe, & Meyerson, 2005; Leithwood & Jantzi, 2006, 2008; Leithwood, Louis, Anderson, & Wahlstrom, 2004; Leithwood & Mascall, 2008; Leithwood & Riehl, 2003; Leithwood & Wahlstrom, 2008; Robinson, Lloyd, & Rowe, 2008; Wahlstrom, 2008). Increasing demands in education for accountability and measurable results in student achievement and a global context of neoliberalism have affected the breadth and knowledge of skills needed in the principalship today. The changing demographics of the population and growth in diversity and student learning needs also have had an impact on the skills needed by effective educational leaders resulting in the need to focus on the provision of quality preparation programs and professional development opportunities for principals and vice principals.

Educational leaders are charged with the responsibility of “educating” children and in order to do so they must understand the changing global, national and local contexts. The research of Darling-Hammond, LaPointe, Meyerson, and Orr (2007) emphasizes the crucial role principals play in improving student achievement by being “committed leaders who understand instruction” and who “can develop the capacities of teachers and of schools” (p.1). Thus the professional growth of principals is a crucial area of study given its focus on developing the knowledge, skills and dispositions leaders must have to

effectively lead schools.

The following sections will outline the academic and empirical research describing current leadership theory, the relationship between leadership and student learning, how professional development affects leadership, definitions or correlates of effective professional development and a framework for administrative professional development.

### **Leadership Theory and Links to Student Learning**

There are multiple theories and models of leadership and much of the theory of educational leadership is contained in the first and second editions of *The Handbook of Research on Educational Administration* (Boyan, 1988; Murphy & Louis, 1999). The second edition of the *Handbook* (Murphy & Louis, 1999) differs from the first in that it does not emphasize the traditional administration tasks of organizing, budgeting, personnel, evaluation and planning but rather as Hoyle, Björk, Collier and Glass (2005) point out “recognizes the importance of administrators to improving learning and teaching and reflects a shift in emphasis from school management to transformational leadership” (p. 14). Hoyle et al. (2005) also point out that the second edition of the *Handbook* “affirms that research and practice are not mutually exclusive but contemporary dimensions of effective leadership” (p. 14) and it integrates research findings into discussions of school and district problems. Björk and Kowalski (2005) note that there is a “shift away from conventional emphasis on school management to an emphasis on leadership that reflects emerging work in decentralized systems characterized by shared governance, participatory decision making, and school-based councils”

(p. 51). Therefore, there has been a major effort to re-culture the profession of educational administration, to move it away from its preoccupation with managerial and organizational issues and move it toward a greater emphasis on the promotion of student learning, school improvement, democratic community, and social justice. This is a trend towards collective and distributed leadership wherein school leadership involves more than just the principal in the school.

Transformational, instructional, collective and distributed leadership receive the main focus in this literature review as they dominate the empirical research on educational leadership. Kenneth Leithwood's conceptual approach to educational leadership is widely known as transformational leadership (although he did not coin the term). Principals are not necessarily the ones with the most authority and influence in transformational leadership. Instead, "power is attributed by organization members to whomever is able to inspire their commitments to collective aspirations, and the desire for personal and collective mastery over the capacities needed to accomplish such aspirations" (Leithwood & Duke, 1999, p. 49). Leithwood and his colleagues developed a model of transformational leadership in schools that has seven dimensions: "building school vision, establishing school goals, providing intellectual stimulation, offering individualized support, modeling best practices and important organizational values, demonstrating high performance expectations, creating a productive school culture, and developing structures to foster participation in school decisions" (Leithwood & Duke, 1999, p. 49). These dimensions are used by principals in building a culture for learning in their schools.

In their research on school leadership, Leithwood and Duke (1999) identify six major categories (conceptual theories) of leadership that continue to be studied and continue to inform practice: instructional, transformational, moral, participatory, managerial/strategic, and contingency/style. The research of Leithwood and Duke (1999) concentrates further on the conception of educational leadership and the authors propose a conception of leadership based on relationships involving four components: the leaders, the followers, the organization, and the environment (p. 66). The nature of the relationships between these four parts is most important and varies in its complexity. The complexity arising from the potential, multiple forms of interaction among the four components helps to explain the difficulties theorists have experienced in developing a widely accepted understanding of leadership.

The ideas Duke (1999) puts forth regarding organizations extend Leithwood's concept of transformational leadership and are applicable to educational organizations. Duke provides an approach to thinking systematically about organizations and the answer to the question, what is a good organization? According to Duke a good organization must embrace both the morality of duty and the morality of aspiration, in other words, what we should not do ought to be balanced with what we should do. Duke (1999) believes that organizations today "must assume a leadership role in promoting a good society" (p. 11), primarily because in today's world organizations have become the locus of collective action. Duke (1999) states that organizational goodness has three conditions (intentionality, success, and carefulness) and based on these conditions the

good organization: “(1) intends to accomplish good ends, (2) attains a reasonable degree of success in achieving these good ends, and (3) exercises care to prevent negative side effects” (p. 13). A good organization is concerned with preserving democratic principles and ideals and it aligns with the idea of organizations embracing a moral mission along with their goals as well as the aphorism of “do no harm”. Duke supports looking at the nature of good ends, ensuring basic human needs are met, promoting the healthy development of individuals, ensuring that the well-being of society is taken into consideration, and that the ideal of democracy and its principles are upheld. Leithwood’s conception of transformational leadership with its seven dimensions and Duke’s concept of organizational goodness combine to make a nice fit for educational leaders today. They encourage shared decision making and uphold the ideal of democracy. The ideas and conception of Leithwood and Duke would be useful for educational leaders as they reflect on the effect of their decisions on the people in their organizations.

Duke (2004) also conducted research on the mission of principals to improve student achievement, decrease the dropout rate and “narrow the achievement gap separating white and minority students” (p. 13). Duke describes principals who turn around their schools over time as leaders who use a variety of strategies to increase the performance of their students. These principals focus on “motivating teachers; assessing and refining their skills; increasing instructional time for struggling students; establishing and sustaining orderly learning environments; and using various data sources to continually monitor



student progress” (Duke, 2004, p. 13). These intervening variables help to improve student learning and are empirically demonstrable in the research. Principals achieve their goal of improving student achievement by maintaining the focus on the end goal – improving student achievement and by making substantive improvements in the intervening variables.

As cited earlier, Heck and Hallinger (1999) examined the role of school leaders using more diverse methods and lenses and found that leadership has an effect on student achievement. Heck and Hallinger’s (1999) research cites many “blank spots” (e.g., shortcomings such as “in-depth descriptions of how principals and other school leaders create and sustain the in-school factors that foster successful schooling”) (p. 141) and “blind spots” (e.g., epistemological and theoretical biases that limit understanding, such as focusing on principal leadership and ignoring “other sources of leadership within the school”) (p. 141). Heck and Hallinger (1999) found in their earlier research that the leadership of principals “does have indirect effects on student outcomes via a variety of in-school processes” (p. 141). Future research must examine further the blank and blind spots in the knowledge base on leadership and their relationship to student achievement.

Cuban (1988) believes that educators are committed to a common purpose and that schools should be “places where teachers and administrators share common purposes, have the wherewithal and desire to help children grow in mind and character” (p. 249). Cuban also advocates for shared leadership between principals and teachers (p. 182). This includes improving student

achievement. Furman and Gruenewald (2004) argue that currently, in education, the focus on increasing student achievement detracts from the moral purposes of schooling and the well-being of the community. Furman and Gruenewald (2004) believe that: "Socioecological justice is not only about closing the achievement gap...it is about reimagining what we mean by learning and justice in the current context of the places where we and others live" (p.72). Furman and Gruenewald use a moral, transformative and communal perspective on educational leadership.

Marks and Printy (2003) in their study assessed school leadership on measures of both instructional and transformational leadership. Marks and Printy (2003) argue that "when transformational and shared instructional leadership coexisted in an integrated form of leadership, the influence on school performance, measured by the quality of its pedagogy and the achievement of its students, is substantial" (p. 370). They concluded that the best predictor of the intellectual quality of the work of students (in both math and social studies) was a form of leadership that incorporated a strong capacity for developing shared instructional leadership plus transformational leadership qualities. Thus an integrated form of school leadership has a positive effect on student achievement where school leaders and staff work together to review and improve teaching and school performance. The predominant paradigm today emphasizes shared leadership in which school-based administrators and teachers collectively work on school improvement.

Leithwood and Riehl (2003) also studied effective leadership as it relates

to instructional improvement. The authors summarized key well-documented understandings about school leadership. They begin with, “leadership has significant effects on school learning, second only to the effects of the quality of curriculum and teacher’s instruction” (Leithwood & Riehl, 2003, p. 4). The authors further state, “Although leadership explains only about three to five per cent of the variation in student learning across schools, this effect is actually nearly one-quarter of the total effect of all school factors” (Leithwood & Riehl, 2003, p. 4). School leaders have an influence on student learning by making sure that processes and resources are in place in their schools so teachers can teach well and by promoting the vision and goals of the school. Second, “currently, administrators and teacher leaders provide most of the leadership in schools, but other potential sources of leadership exist” (Leithwood & Riehl, 2003, p. 5). The sources of leadership in a school include principals, teachers, students and parents. These sources contribute to shared leadership in schools.

Third, “a core set of leadership practices form the ‘basics’ of successful leadership and are valuable in almost all educational contexts” (Leithwood & Riehl, 2003, p. 5). Leithwood and Riehl divide these practices into three categories with sub-categories: setting directions (identifying and articulating a vision, creating shared meanings, creating high performance expectations, fostering the acceptance of group goals, monitoring organizational performance, and communicating); developing people (offering intellectual stimulation, providing individualized support, and providing an appropriate model); and developing the organization (strengthening school culture, modifying

organizational structure, building collaborative processes and managing the environment). These “basics” are needed by principals and vice principals if they are to be successful in improving student achievement.

Fourth, “successful school leaders respond productively to challenges and opportunities created by the accountability-oriented policy context in which they work” (Leithwood & Riehl, 2003, p. 8). To help schools succeed, Leithwood and Riehl found that the following leadership practices assist leaders to deal with accountability that is so prevalent in education today (in the United States, the United Kingdom and in Canada): creating and sustaining a competitive school (one that people will choose to attend); empowering others to make significant decisions; providing instructional guidance; and strategic planning. Crandall, Eiseman and Louis (1986) indicate that “strategic planning should be sensitive both to *contingencies* and to very specific *local conditions*” (p. 45). Thus strategic planning needs to involve a number of players and follow processes that include stakeholder involvement (Behn, 1988; Duke, 1999; Crandall, Eiseman & Louis, 1986; Mintzberg, 1994, 1996; Young, Levin, & Wallin, 2007). McCune (1986) reports that the effectiveness of strategic planning in education is based on: “the leadership that backs the plan...the quality of the implementation plan, and the persistence in carrying out the plan” (p. 32). Good planning with implementation strategies and measurable outcomes that includes stakeholder involvement and good communication will achieve this.

Davies and Ellison (1998) perceive strategic planning as “journey thinking in which we are extrapolating patterns from the past and projecting forward

several years into the future” (p. 462). Currently, in Manitoba, strategic plans must have measurable outcomes that are SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and timed) (Davies & Ellison, 1998; Manitoba Education, website, n. d.) and are referred to as SMART goals. Guskey (2007) acknowledges that educational leaders must “take the lead in setting clear goals, establishing plans to achieve those goals, using data to monitor progress regularly, and adjusting plans accordingly in a cycle of continuous improvement” (p. 33). In this way educational leaders respond appropriately to accountability measures.

Finally, “successful school leaders respond productively to the opportunities and challenges of educating diverse groups of students” (Leithwood & Riehl, 2003, p. 8) within their schools. Leithwood and Riehl report that based on their research on successful school leaders in highly diverse contexts focus on: building powerful forms of teaching and learning; creating strong communities in school; expanding the proportion of students’ social capital valued by the schools; and nurturing the development of families’ educational cultures. These four claims about school leadership are necessary but are not sufficient for school improvement even if leadership is focused on teaching and learning. There are still many gaps in the knowledge about effective leadership and further inquiry and discourse is needed in this area.

Leithwood and Jantzi (2008) added a fourth category for school leader practices that being managing the instructional program. This was in addition to the practices of setting directions; developing people; and redesigning the

organization. All of these practices lead to school leader efficacy which affects student learning. The authors examined the causes and consequences of school leaders' sense of collective efficacy and found that school leaders are mainly followers of district leadership, thus indicating the importance district leadership has on student achievement. Leadership takes place on a number of different levels within the school system as well as across a number of different domains (e.g., instruction, finance, policy). Leithwood and Jantzi (2008) found that leader efficacy explained "significant variation in annual achievement scores" (p. 518). The authors also found that "district size, school size, school level, and number of principals in the school over the last 10 years were significant moderators of the relationship between efficacy and conditions in the class and school along with student achievement" (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2008, p. 518). Stability of leadership in the school can be very important. The authors suggest that these variables have an effect on leaders' efficacy and student achievement. The authors also found that school leaders' efficacy was strongly influenced by "the district's focus on student learning and the quality of instruction, as well as district culture" (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2008, p. 521). One of the lessons in the Leithwood and Jantzi study is that if the school division focuses on improving student achievement, then school leaders will as well. How school leaders do this and what types of professional development are necessary to build their capacities to effectively lead this work are discussed later on in this chapter.

Leithwood and Levin (2005) in their report on leadership programs and their effects on student learning found that there are many variables and

methodological challenges in measuring the effects on student learning of leadership programs.

Leithwood and Jantzi (2006) found in their research that the degree of transformational leadership exhibited by school leaders explained how much teachers changed; however, the extent of teacher change had no relationship to the gains in student achievement. While Leithwood and Mascall (2008) found that collective leadership has an influence on student learning, they also found that: “The influence of collective leadership was most strongly linked to student achievement through teacher motivation” (p. 554). The greater the collective influence of parents, students, teachers, and administrators, the greater the achievement of the students. Collective/distributed leadership appears to be a good form of leadership for school leaders and has a significant implication for how we prepare individual leaders.

Robinson, Lloyd, and Rowe (2008) examined the impact of school leadership on learning by examining instructional and transformational leadership, as well as the dimensions of leadership and their impact. In their synthesis of the research on leadership, Robinson et al. conducted a meta-analysis that provided strong support for the importance of leadership on student achievement outcomes. They found that the “mean effect size estimates for the impact of instructional leadership on student outcomes is three to four times greater than that of transformational leadership” (Robinson et al., 2008, p. 655). However, there is a wide range of effects for instructional leadership. From their research the authors inductively derived five leadership dimensions (practices)

and their effects on students: establishing goals and expectations; resourcing strategically; planning, coordinating, and evaluating teaching and the curriculum; promoting and participating in teacher learning and development; and, ensuring an orderly and supportive environment. No single school leader should demonstrate high levels of capacity on all five dimensions as no leader can “walk on water”. The authors concluded that “the closer educational leaders get to the core business of teaching and learning, the more likely they are to have a positive impact on students’ outcomes” (Robinson et al., 2008, p. 664). Their study extended the work on leader-student learning connections and strongly supported leaders’ attention to promoting and participating in teacher learning.

Research supported by the Wallace Foundation (Leithwood et al., 2004) suggests that effective leadership has an indirect effect on student achievement. This can be seen when a new effective leader is assigned to a school and while all other variables are held constant there is a marked improvement in student achievement. The principals’ influence on people in the school contributes to student learning indirectly. The authors reviewed both quantitative and qualitative research and report that teachers are very important to student achievement. Evidence suggests that some of the variables that influence student achievement are class size, the instructional practices of teachers, student grouping practices, and how student progress is monitored. The authors reviewed the literature on leadership and learning using a framework of ten interdependent variables which have emerged from empirical research: “the framework assumes that variations in workplace performance ... is a function of the capacities..., motivations and



commitments of workplace personnel, the characteristics of the settings in which they work and the external environment” (Leithwood et al., 2004, p. 17). Leaders are essential in supporting learning, constructing the social environment in the school and dealing with external demands on education.

School leadership “helps to shape the nature of school conditions...such as goals, culture, structure and classroom conditions...the content of instruction, the size of classrooms, the forms of pedagogy used by teachers” (Leithwood et al., 2004, p. 19). Thus leadership is important. The authors also report that: “school and classroom conditions, teachers’ professional community and student/family background conditions are directly responsible for the learning of students” (Leithwood et al., 2004, p. 19). The background of students and their families have a significant effect on learning which is why the school leaders need to “understand how schools and homes interconnect with each other and with the world at large and how their schools can increase the productivity of such interconnections for student learning” (Leithwood et al., 2004, p. 48). Schools in which teachers feel supported by their principals and vice principals will have a positive influence on student achievement. Although few principals teach students directly, their actions as principals affect what happens in the classroom. The actions of principals indirectly affect what happens in the classroom because principals assign, evaluate and manage teachers and construct timetables. Principals influence teacher practices, attitudes and willingness to engage in reform. Leaders that establish “a school-wide culture that makes collaboration expected, inclusive, genuine, ongoing and focused on

critically examining practice to improve student outcomes” (Leithwood et al., 2004, p. 66) will have a positive effect on student achievement. This can be achieved by establishing professional learning communities in the school. School leaders, not just the principal, also will benefit from professional learning communities for leaders. Leadership has both direct and indirect effects on student learning and if leadership is effective then student achievement will improve.

In a further review of the research, there is a growing consensus on the attributes of effective school principals which “shows that successful school leaders influence student achievement through two important pathways – the support and development of effective teachers and the implementation of effective educational processes” (Davis, Darling-Hammond, LaPointe, & Meyerson, 2005, p. 2). The four key findings of the Davis et al., 2005 research study included the essential elements of good leadership mentioned above: leadership development; policy reform; and finances. The research suggests that “effective 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” (Davis et al., 2005, p. 3). More empirical research on the impact of these factors is needed.

Schools are in the business of education and student learning, which includes student achievement. “Second only to the influences of classroom instruction, school leadership strongly affects student learning” (Davis et al.,

2005, p. 4). Therefore, to be effective leaders, school-based administrators must be focused on improving student achievement.

A conceptual framework for improving leadership practice and student learning was developed by Goldring, Porter, Murphy, Elliott, and Cravens (2007, 2009) and focuses on core components (the what) and key processes (the how) which are the two key dimensions of leadership behaviours. The core components are based on characteristics of schools that enhance the ability of teachers to teach and students to learn (Marks & Printy, 2003). The core components are: high standards for student learning, rigorous curriculum, quality instruction, culture of learning and professional behaviour, connections to external communities, and, systemic performance accountability. The key processes are: planning, implementing, supporting, advocating, communicating, and, monitoring (Goldring et al., 2007, 2009; Porter, Goldring, Murphy, Elliott, & Cravens, 2006; The Wallace Foundation, 2009). The key processes are leadership behaviours based on learning-centered leadership. The researchers believe that both individual and team effective leadership require these core components that are created through the key processes, and that the leadership behaviours “defined by the intersection of six core components of school performance and six key processes...together make up our conception of principal and team school leadership” (Goldring et al., 2007, p. 3). The leadership behaviours are shaped by the previous experiences of the leader, the knowledge base of the leaders, the types of personal characteristics the leader brings to the position, and the set of values and beliefs that define the leader (Murphy, Elliott,

Goldring, & Porter, 2007). The leadership behaviours do not have a direct effect on student achievement but they can lead to changes in the performance of schools which leads to student success. The leadership behaviours are developed and enhanced by providing professional development opportunities for school leaders and leadership teams. Guskey (2007) believes that effective principals set clear goals, develop plans to achieve those goals, monitor progress regularly using data, and use continuous improvement to adjust the plans accordingly to improve student achievement.

In summary, the review of the literature on leadership and student learning strongly indicates that leadership is the catalyst for improving student achievement. The research also reports that there are many intervening variables whose relationship with both leadership and student learning are empirically demonstrable; however, when improving student achievement, the leadership of the principal matters and is second only to teaching when school-based factors are considered. Leadership explains three to five per cent of the variation in student learning across schools, but this effect is actually nearly one-quarter of the total effect of all school factors (Leithwood & Levin, 2005, p. 8). There is a trend towards collective and distributed leadership wherein school leadership involves more than just the principal. The literature suggests also that further research is needed on educational leadership and this is supported by Leithwood, Duke, Heck, Hallinger and other researchers reviewed in this chapter. The research reviewed suggests also that principals and vice principals are not prepared well for their leadership responsibilities. As the next section discusses,

administrators are in need of professional development in order to be effective educational leaders for student achievement.

### **Professional Development and Educational Leaders**

Professional development has been defined as “those processes and activities designed to enhance the professional knowledge, skills, and attitudes of educators so that they might, in turn, improve the learning of students” (Guskey, 2000, p. 16); “professional development is an intentional, ongoing, systematic process that can take a variety of forms” (Guskey, 2000, p. 40) including both formal and informal activities (e.g., conferences, workshops, mentoring, university courses, learning communities, study groups, and professional reading). Fullan (2001) writes “that leaders will increase their effectiveness if they continually work on the five components of leadership – if they pursue moral purpose, understand the change process, develop relationships, foster knowledge building, and strive for coherence – with energy, enthusiasm, and hopefulness” (p. 11). Fullan (2001) also states “the litmus test of all leadership is whether it mobilizes people’s commitment to putting their energy into actions designed to improve things’ (p. 9). However, such effectiveness does not occur as a consequence of obtaining an administrative position; it is learned over time as leaders engage in professional development experiences that help develop their knowledge, skills and dispositions for leadership. In fact, Fullan, Hill and Crévola (2006) perceive effective professional development as that which is focused and ongoing, and which promotes authentic learning. On the job learning is also important in developing effective leaders.

Fullan (2001) discusses the professional development of principals and states that:

The single most important factor ensuring that all students meet performance goals at the site level is the leadership of the principal – leadership being defined as “*the guidance and direction of instructional improvement.*” Focusing on selecting principals who are instructionally focused is a necessary first step, followed by creating an intense, comprehensive system of professional development to promote their growth. (p. 126)

To achieve this goal as so well stated by Michael Fullan, this thesis examined the professional development activities of principals and vice principals as reported by them in both a questionnaire and face-to-face interviews .

In order to be effective, the “principals’ professional development must be planned, long-term, embedded in their jobs, focused on student achievement, and supportive of reflective practice” (Fenwick & Pierce, 2002, p. 4). Over the last number of years, there have been three different philosophical orientations that have guided the preparation and professional development of school-based administrators: traditional/scientific management, craft, and reflective inquiry (Fenwick & Pierce, 2002). The traditional method has been used in university preparation programs and examines the research on management and the behavioural sciences. In the traditional method, often the principal is “the passive recipient of knowledge and the source of professional knowledge is research generated at universities. Learning activities are institutionally defined and

generally not tailored to the specific learning needs of the principal or reflective of his specific school context” (Fenwick & Pierce, 2002, p. 2). Principals who participate in university preparation programs often do so to pursue advanced degrees, for personal interest, to renew or upgrade their administrative certification, or a combination thereof.

More recently, school divisions and professional associations have created workshops and courses in which the content is client-driven. Principals who participate in these activities are personally motivated to learn and grow professionally. In the craft method, “the source of professional knowledge is the practical wisdom of experienced practitioners and the context for learning is a real school setting” (Fenwick & Pierce, 2002, p. 3). In this method principals are trained by other experienced school administrators and principals, who are the recipients of knowledge from seasoned administrators via internships and field experiences.

In the third method, reflective inquiry, principals are “encouraged to generate knowledge through a process of systematic inquiry” (Fenwick & Pierce, 2002, p. 3). Principals are active participants in their learning and the focus of this model is on creating principals “who are able to make informed, reflective and self-critical judgements about their professional practice” (Fenwick & Pierce, 2002, p. 3). This method uses mentoring, reflective reading and writing, and networking wherein principals learn to take risks, explore new skills and concepts, reflect on their roles as school leaders, and apply their new knowledge and skills in their school contexts. One of these methods or a combination

thereof is usually reflected in professional development programs for principals.

Professional development that is successful takes time and school-based administrators as well as teachers benefit from professional development that “examines best practices, provides coaching support, encourages risk-taking designed to improve student learning, cultivates team relationships and provides quality time for reflection and renewal” (Fenwick & Pierce, 2002, p. 6). In all three models, continuous professional development opportunities are needed by principals to support them in their efforts to improve student achievement. Guskey (2000) states that, “the primary motivation of most teachers for participating in professional development is a desire to become better teachers” (p. 161). This researcher believes that the same motivation exists for principals, namely to become better principals. Thus, leadership and professional development are inextricably linked and are of importance in the development of effective principals and vice principals. Both Fullan and Guskey speak about various types of professional development activities that are outlined below and which will be part of the context of this study.

### **Conferences**

Conferences are held across the continent on a variety of topics. Some are sponsored by universities and private organizations (e.g., Solution Tree, The Educators Professional Development Provider), but many are sponsored by the leading professional organizations in education: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD); American Educational Research Association (AERA); University Council for Educational Administration (UCEA); American



Association of School Administrators; National Staff Development Council; National Association of Elementary School Principals; National Association of Secondary School Principals, and the Canadian Association of Principals (CAP), to name a few. At the provincial level in Manitoba, conferences and workshops are organized and/or sponsored by the Council of School Leaders (COSL), the Manitoba Teachers' Society (MTS), the Manitoba Council for Leadership in Education (MCLE) and Manitoba Education. Conferences are usually centered on a theme and have both keynote speakers and break-out sessions from which the participants choose those they attend from their interests or needs.

### **Workshops**

Workshops are held across the continent as well, but generally have fewer participants, they tend to be held locally for participants from the province and are narrower in scope than larger conferences. It is often workshops that provide the most practical and contextually focused “hands-on” training for principals. Some school divisions in fact provide workshops, conferences, seminars and leadership development programs not only for principals and vice principals but also for teachers interested in becoming administrators.

Some school divisions are taking a leadership role in the continuing professional development of their principals and vice principals particularly in the areas of instruction, assessment and organizational management to ensure that their educational leaders are capable of working in diverse settings (Grogan & Andrews, 2002; Orr, 2006; Peterson, 2002; Sherman, 2005). In Manitoba, workshops are organized by COSL, the MTS, the MCLE, and by individual

school divisions. The workshops organized by COSL, MTS and MCLE are available to anyone in the province whereas the workshops offered by school divisions are usually available only to individuals working in the division. However, in rural Manitoba where divisions are small, regional workshops are held, often supported financially by MCLE.

### **Mentoring**

Mentoring acts as valuable professional development for administrators, whether it occurs informally or is part of a formal program (Crippen & Wallin, 2008; Hansford & Ehrich, 2006; Kline, 1987; Mitang, 2007; Young, 2009). Mitang (2007) reported that:

Mentoring should be seen as only one stage—albeit an important one—in a continuum of professional development of principals that begins with pre-service training and, ideally, continues throughout leaders' careers. And it is only one piece among many that must be in place if states and districts are to increase the likelihood that principals can eventually become effective leaders of learning. (p. 20)

Mentoring is a structured and coordinated approach “where individuals (usually novices – mentees and more experienced persons – mentors) agree to engage in a personal and confidential relationship that aims to provide professional development, growth and varying degrees of personal support” (Hansford & Ehrich, 2006, p. 41). Mentors coach, model, encourage self-reflection, develop problem solving skills, provide feedback, and gradually remove their support as the competence of the mentee increases (Davis et al.,

2005). Well-designed mentoring programs are beneficial for new administrators, the mentors, and the school divisions. Administrators tend to report positively on the value of being both mentored and a mentor. Silver, Lochmiller, Copland, and Tripps (2009) state that experienced principals acting as mentors have a unique opportunity to pass on knowledge and skills gained over many years to new administrators.

A pilot study the researcher conducted found that in Manitoba “mentoring and being mentored play an important role in the development of effective educational leaders and the benefits are felt throughout the school system” (Young, 2009, p. 20). Both those principals acting as mentors and those being mentored reported that they found mentoring to be an integral part of administrators’ professional learning. Besides providing administrators with technical, content and networking knowledge, mentoring contributes to the development of self-efficacy and collective-efficacy, which assists administrators to become more effective school leaders (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2008). Because of this recognition, many school divisions in Manitoba have developed mentoring programs for their administrators, though few have instituted evaluation procedures to determine their efficacy. Nevertheless, some school divisions in Manitoba currently employ mentors for their administrators (e.g., Louis Riel, Pembina Trails and St. James-Assiniboia school divisions).

### **University Courses and Preparation Programs**

Hess and Kelly (2007) found in their study of preparation programs for principals that principals were being trained for the traditional role of

administrators and were not really being prepared for the role of the 21<sup>st</sup> century leader. Hess and Kelly suggested that the following areas should be included in effective principal preparation: “accountability, managing with data, and utilizing research; ...hiring, recruiting, evaluating, and terminating personnel; ...overseeing an effective instructional program; and...exposing candidates to diverse views regarding educational and organizational management” (p. 246). Hess and Kelly argue that these areas of concern underpin the knowledge and skills that principals of today require while other researchers acknowledge their absence in university and college programs (Murphy, 2007; Murphy & Vriesenga, 2006). This leaves principals unprepared to exercise their responsibilities effectively in the world today. Hess and Kelly (2007) noted that the preparation programs did not pay attention to data, accountability, productivity and how to deal with parents, thus leaving principals unprepared for their responsibilities.

Unlike Hess and Kelly, Darling-Hammond et al. (2007) found successful preparation programs that had common criteria which made them effective. All of the pre-service programs in the study (Darling-Hammond et al., 2007) shared the following elements:

- A comprehensive and coherent curriculum aligned with state and professional standards, in particular the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) Standards, which emphasize instructional leadership;
- A philosophy and curriculum emphasizing instructional leadership and school improvement;

- Active, student-centered instruction that integrates theory and practice and stimulates reflection. Instructional strategies include problem-based learning; action research; field-based projects; journal writing; and portfolios that feature substantial use of feedback and assessment by peers, faculty, and the candidates themselves;
- Faculty who are knowledgeable in their subject areas, including both university professors and practitioners experienced in school administration;
- Social and professional support in the form of a cohort structure and formalized mentoring and advising by expert principals;
- Vigorous, targeted recruitment and selection to seek out expert teachers with leadership potential; and
- Well-designed and supervised administrative internships that allow candidates to engage in leadership responsibilities for substantial periods of time under the tutelage of expert veterans. (p. 6)

Spillover effects for some of these features occurred beyond the programs themselves (e.g., relationships with mentors and advisors; cohort groups becoming peer support networks). The programs worked with school districts to recruit candidates with strong leadership potential who were excellent teachers and who reflected the local population rather than just wait for people to enroll in education programs. The internships were connected to and are integrated with coursework.

In Manitoba, both the University of Manitoba and Brandon University offer

thesis-based and course-based Master's of Education degree programs in Educational Administration. Brandon University also offers a project route program and the University of Manitoba also offers a Post-Baccalaureate Diploma Program in educational administration. The university programs offered by the University of Manitoba and Brandon University are deliberately focused on theory and the dissemination of research and scholarship in the area of educational administration. The Post-Baccalaureate Program at the University of Manitoba tends to be more practical in nature than the Master's degree programs, although attempts are made to link theory to practice in all coursework. School divisions benefit from having well prepared principals and vice principals and some develop partnerships with the universities to establish cohorts so their administrators are able to take university courses. Research supports the collaboration between school divisions and universities (Barnett, 2004; Davis et al., 2005; Lashway, 2003). Further discussion on preparation programs is included in the next section of this chapter.

The preparation of principals in Manitoba differs from the system for preparation in the United States and other parts of Canada in that principals in Manitoba are not required to take any university coursework in educational administration or a preparation program in order to become principals nor do they need to be certified as administrators or principals. In the United States, individuals usually need to complete university preparation programs for administrators and become certified in their State before being appointed to an administrative position.

## **Professional Learning Communities**

Principals and vice principals have formed their own professional learning communities with other administrators. Reeves (2006) indicated that “Leadership is neither a unitary skill set nor a solitary activity” (p. xxiv) and thus being able to discuss problems and ideas with colleagues in a learning community or team assists in the professional growth of the principal. Hess and Kelly (2007) reported that “all but 4 percent of practicing principals report that on-the-job experiences or guidance from colleagues has been more helpful in preparing them for their current position than their graduate studies” (p. 245). Professional learning communities are of value to principals and vice principals for both their own learning and the achievement of their students. Principals have formed professional learning communities with the teachers in their schools and have found them to be mutually beneficial (DuFour, DuFour, Eaker, & Karhanek, 2004; DuFour, DuFour, & Eaker, 2005; Schmoker, 2004). In fact, DuFour et al., (2004) found that: “first, a strong professional learning community was critical to gains in student achievement, and second the principals who led those learning communities were committed to empowering their teachers” (p. 141). Effective professional learning communities use the following three questions to drive their work: “what do we want each student to learn? how will we know when each student has learned it? how will we respond when a student experiences difficulties in learning?” (DuFour et al., 2005, p. 33). Ineffective professional learning communities do not answer the third question. Thus, learning communities can have a positive effect on student achievement.

### **Professional Reading**

Many principals read educational journals and books to keep abreast of what is happening in research in education and to extend their knowledge. Some school divisions have principals read specific books and hold discussions on the books at seminars and meetings. As cited earlier, research suggests that school leaders tend to follow the direction of their senior administration. In school divisions where senior administration is directing the professional reading of principals and vice principals, this type of coordinated effort might lead to concentrated growth and focus in areas of student learning if it were utilized to a greater extent and became a basis for professional learning across a school division's professional development activities,

There are many types of professional development opportunities available to principals and vice principals at the divisional, provincial, national and international levels. Most principals and vice principals participate in activities at the divisional and provincial levels because they require less time away from their schools and are not as costly. The researcher believes that principals and vice principals should be encouraged and financially supported to attend provincial, national and international conferences to broaden their outlook and to assist them in "thinking outside of the box". At times an individual has to be away from a familiar situation for awhile to truly see what is happening and to develop a plan for improvement. This perspective helped to shape the design of the study and the interpretation of the results.

Many of the sessions offered at conferences have keynote speakers who



are highly regarded because of their current research. A number of key-note speakers provide breakout sessions for participants to further their knowledge. Conferences tend to be somewhat more general in their focus. Workshops, on the other hand, appear to provide more contextually-based information. They also tend to occur as a way of extending the “big ideas” begun in conferences, and localized into workshop sessions that carry on the conversations. The researcher believes from her forty years of experience in education that because most sessions encourage dialogue and questions related to context, the sessions allow people to contextualize their understandings, but, further research is needed to determine if this is true. Attendance at these events, however, does not immediately lead to the implementation of the ideas or to strategizing in schools. The link between professional development and the implementation or utilization of the skills, knowledge and attitudes learned is part of the focus of this study.

### **University Preparation Programs and Certification**

#### **As Professional Development**

LeTendre and Roberts (2005) report that “prior to 1900, formal preparation programs for school administrators had not yet developed” (p. 4) and that “1900 to 1945 encompassed a period of vast growth in administrative programs” (p. 4). It was during this time that many states in the United States required that principals be certified (LeTendre & Roberts, 2005, p. 4) as certification was considered evidence of professional growth and training for the position. In 2005, LeTendre and Roberts reported that: “over 90% of the states plus the

District of Columbia require that a principal candidate complete a state-approved preparation program” (p. 9). With the requirement in most states that principals must be certified, research in educational administration has focused on the university and college programs that prepare administrators for certification (Adams & Copland, 2005; Behar-Horenstein, 1995; Peterson, 2002; Wong, 2004). Leadership preparation programs have been highly criticized by leading scholars in the field (e.g., Hess & Kelly, 2007; Levine, 2005; Murphy & Vriesenga, 2006; Murphy, 2003, 2005, 2007). Young, Crow, Orr, Ogawa, and Creighton (2005) wrote their paper in response to Levine’s report.

The major criticisms of educational administration programs and the preparation of administrators come from a review of the university and college education programs in the United States, authored by Arthur Levine (2005). The review discovered that over the next decade it is expected that 40 percent of current principals and a far higher proportion of superintendents will leave their positions. Levine (2005) found that “educational administration programs are the weakest of all of the programs at the nation’s education schools” (p. 13) and none of the programs studied were found to be exemplary. Ultimately, the most fundamental question raised in Levine’s study is whether the content of the preparation courses for principals needs to be rethought.

Other researchers also have been critical of the universities and colleges in the United States offering education leadership programs. Murphy (2007) criticizes universities for spending too much time on theory and not enough time on the domain of practice. In his view, programs are thought to be too theoretical

and not practical enough. Certificate/diploma programs are often seen by participants as being concerned with currently fashionable trends rather than about broader types of learning which are needed in a more complex turbulent world.

The Fry, O'Neill, and Bottoms, (2006) report for the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB), which examined 22 pacesetter universities, offers a step-by-step process to redesign the principal preparation programs at universities. The four core conditions for the redesign of leadership preparation from the report were: university/district partnerships for principal preparation; emphasis on knowledge and skills for improving schools and raising student achievement; well-planned and supported field experiences; and, rigorous evaluation of participants' mastery of essential competencies and program quality and effectiveness. Each of the conditions had a number of indicators for successful programs (e.g., "the program design places greatest emphasis on the principal's role in improving curriculum, instruction and student achievement" (Fry et al., 2006, p. 29). Dave Spence, the President of SREB states that "done right, principal preparation programs can help states put a quality principal in every school who knows how to lead changes in school and classroom practices that result in higher student achievement" (Fry et. al, 2006, p. 3).

Graduate schools of education across the United States continue to review and revamp their programs (Orr, 2006; Orr & Pounder, 2006; Peterson 2002). The Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) Standards are used by over 40 states as a platform for their preparation programs and

licensure, and the ISLLC Standards were integrated into the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) accreditation requirements (Council of Chief State School Officers [CCSSO], 2008; English, 2000; Orr, 2006; Peterson, 2002). The ISLLC Standards formed a basis for effective leadership preparation which is supported by other scholars in the field (McCarthy, 1999; Murphy, 2003; Murphy, 2005). What is evident from the American literature on preparation programs is that most of the authors criticize the universities and colleges that offer education leadership programs. What they do not do is agree on a process to improve them. Nevertheless, the work of Linda Darling-Hammond which indicates programs that have positive results is discussed further on in this chapter.

The debate taking place in the United States because of its size, nature and dominance and its proximity to Canada is occurring as well in Canada, to a limited extent, in universities across the country as educational administration programs are reviewed.

### **The ISLLC Standards**

The Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) was created in 1994 by the National Policy Board for Educational Administration (NPBEA) and consisted of “24 states, most of the members of NPBEA, and other key stakeholder groups, such as the National Alliance of Business, with an interest in the health of leadership in America’s schools and school districts” (Murphy, 2005, p. 155). The Consortium had two objectives: a) to develop standards for school administrators, and b) “to direct action in the academic, policy, and practice

domains of the profession consistent with those perspectives across an array of strategy leverage points (e.g., licensure, professional development, administration evaluation)” (Murphy, 2005, p. 155). At that time there was minimal research and consensus on what constituted good leadership, the role (if any) principals have on influencing student achievement, and exemplars of good practices and policies that would help to increase the number of effective administrators.

The Consortium wanted to influence the leadership skills of current school leaders and the development of prospective school leaders. The Consortium understood leadership as a context-dependent and complex activity that is ever changing. The Consortium believed that “standards provided an especially appropriate and particularly powerful leverage point for reform” (CCSSO, 1996, p. 7). The Consortium found a void in educational administration as no leadership standards existed. Finally, the Consortium believed that a standards approach would drive improvements in licensure, preparation programs and assessment of candidates. The primary motivation of the Consortium was to influence the following: the universities, which prepare leaders; the states, which license leaders; and, the school districts, which hire and evaluate school leaders. These three leverage points are critical in changing the development of effective school leaders and in reforming education. Hale and Moorman (2003) concur as “states control entry into the field of educational administration” (p. 4) because they have adopted policies on licensure and certification. The provinces in Canada have adopted policies in these areas as well.

The field of school administration from the 19<sup>th</sup> century until the 1990s was built around concepts from management and the behavioural sciences. The Consortium wanted to re-focus educational leaders on student learning. The ISLLC Standards, created between 1994 and 1996, were supported by empirical findings from research on effective schools and school improvement, and were a product of a profession-driven model that included the NPBEA, professional associations with ties to school leadership and professors of school administration (Murphy, 2005). The Standards were based on seven underlying principles: the centrality of student learning; the changing role of the school leader; the collaborative nature of school leadership; upgrading the quality of the profession; performance-based systems of assessment and evaluation of school leaders; be integrated and coherent; and be predicated on the concepts of access, opportunity, and empowerment for all members of the school community (CCSSO, 1996, p. 7). These seven principles underlie the six Standards which are broadly stated but the indicators (183) that accompany them are “examples of important knowledge, practices, and beliefs” (Murphy, 2005, p. 174). The indicators were not intended to cover everything there was to know about leadership.

The 1996 ISLLC Standards for School Leaders were:

1. A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by facilitating the development, articulation, implementation, and stewardship of a vision of learning that is shared and supported by the school community.

2. A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by advocating, nurturing, and sustaining a school culture and instructional program conducive to student learning.
3. A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by ensuring management of the organization, operations, and resources for a safe, efficient, and effective learning environment.
4. A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by collaborating with families and community members, responding to diverse community interests and needs, and mobilizing community resources.
5. A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by acting with integrity, fairness, and in an ethical manner.
6. A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by understanding, responding to, and influencing the larger political, social, economic, legal, and cultural context. (CCSSO, 1996)

The Standards quite clearly indicate the change in focus of the profession from management to student learning and contained indicators (knowledge, skills and dispositions and functions) for each standard.

Joseph Murphy has written extensively on educational leadership as well as the ISLCC standards (e.g., Murphy, 2003, 2005, 2007; Murphy & Vriesenga,

2006). In his review of the ISLLC Standards ten years after they were adopted, he perceives them as “a concerted effort to rebuild the foundations of school administration, both within the practice and academic domains of the profession” (Murphy, 2003, p. 1). The ISLLC Standards, since their inception, have exerted considerable influence on educational administration as can be seen from the number of states (over 40) that have adopted them and their inclusion in virtually all educational administration textbooks. One of the biggest critics of the 1996 ISLCC Standards has been Fenwick English who has voiced his criticism in a number of articles (e.g., English, 2000; English, 2006). English’s main criticism was that the Standards are based on a static knowledge base that is tied to a static social system which does not educate administrators for a system that is changing.

The results of a study conducted in England and Scotland by Cowie and Crawford (2007) indicated that “emphasis on competence and attaining an identified standard suggests movement more towards employers, practitioners and other providers rather than universities” (p. 138). Thus the responsibility for providing professional development is moving away from the universities. Nevertheless, the Standards contain a vision which constitutes “a vision of a profession rooted in learning and committed to the well being of youngsters and their families” (Murphy, 2003, p. 39). This vision is supported by the continuing commitment to professional development by administrators. It also is likely to remain a priority of universities since they remain the grantor of university degrees which often dove-tail with certification requirements and remain a



credential of interest for those hiring school administrators. The Standards have advocates (Murphy, 2005, 2006) and detractors (English, 2000), but, there is little doubt that they had a significant impact on the practices and study of educational administration, particularly in the United States.

The ISLLC Standards were revised in 2008 because there had been changes in the field and concerns had been raised from policy leaders and practitioners; however, the principles underlying the 2008 Standards were very similar to the principles underlying the 1996 ISLLC Standards. Some of the concerns raised were: the 1996 Standards were too restrictive and the indicators were limiting (unintentionally); no background research or material was provided with the Standards; leadership preparation programs did not expand on the Standards; and institutions used the Standards differently by confusing practice with policy or program standards. How do the 1996 and 2008 Standards differ?

In 1996 the Standards were titled *Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium: Standards for School Leaders* while in 2008 they were titled *Educational Leadership Policy Standards: 2008*. The titles were different and the purposes were different as well. The 2008 Standards reflect what has been learned about educational leadership in the last decade, and, provide guidance to policy makers in American education (CCSSO, 2008, p. 1). The 2008 Standards are policy oriented because the 1996 Standards were used as a model by states for their education leadership policies. The 2008 ISLLC Standards were intended to influence the entire career of educational leaders from preparation for their positions and for professional development throughout

their careers.

According to CCSSO (2008), “The language and framework of the six ‘broad standards’ are similar, yet not identical” (p. 6). In a comparison of the Standards found in CCSSO (2008) all of the 1996 Standards begin with the stem: “A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by...” whereas all of the 2008 Standards begin with the stem: “An educational leader promotes the success of every student by...” (p. 18). The focus in the revised Standards is on “educational leaders” from “school administrators” and “every student” from “all students”. The major change in the framework was moving from 183 indicators (called Knowledge, Skills and Dispositions) in 1996 to 31 Functions in 2008. One of the reasons for this change is that the “policy standards are there to set overall guidance and vision” (CCSSO, 2008, p. 6) not to be directive down to the last detail and the 31 Functions help to define the Standards.

The 2008 Standards were written for new purposes and audiences but kept the “footprint” of the 1996 Standards. The 2008 ISLLC Standards “will help state policymakers strengthen selection, preparation, licensure, and professional development for educational leaders – giving these leaders the tools they need to meet new demands” (CCSSO, 2008, p. 3). The 2008 ISLLC Standards state that “the ultimate goal of these standards, as with any set of education standards, is to raise student achievement” (CCSSO, 2008, p. 5) including raising student achievement of all students and providing high school graduates with the skills necessary to adapt in an ever-changing world. In the two years that ISLLC used

to revise the Standards for 2008, research from over 100 research projects and studies was compiled and used to guide and influence the revised Standards, and this research, much of which did not exist in 1996, was compiled into a database that is available online for all to use (CCSSO, 2008). The 2008 ISLLC Standards will be used by NPBEA to update the Educational Leadership Constituent Council (ELCC) Program Standards which the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) uses to review educational leadership preparation programs of universities.

The 2008 ISLLC Standards, as a set of policy standards, provides policymakers and educational leaders with the guidance they need to set goals and develop their own standards. The 2008 ISLLC policy Standards: “were updated to provide a framework for policy creation, training program performance, life-long career development, and system support” (CCSSO, 2008, p. 11). Therefore, ISLLC 2008 will continue the good work of ISLLC 1996 and should lead to effective instructional leadership in the United States that has a positive impact on improving student achievement for every student.

The purpose of this study was to determine from principals and vice principals their perceptions of the quality of the professional development in which they have participated during their careers, with a focus on the purposes for which they engage in professional development, their perceptions of its effectiveness, and how the professional development has contributed to their development as educational leaders.

## **The Manitoba and Ontario Certification Systems**

Given that this research study used the Manitoba context and that the research reviewed above has shown that ISLLC has greatly influenced American education, what about Canadian education? What are the certification systems for educational leaders in Canada, Manitoba and Ontario in particular and what if anything has influenced them?

The certification of principals varies across Canada. In their study of existing school leadership, preparation programs, and certification of principals in Canada, Wallace, Foster and da Costa (2007) found “only two provinces and two territories require principals to be certified as a condition of employment: Ontario, New Brunswick, the Northwest Territories, and Nunavut” (p. 189). In the United States, prior to being appointed, over 40 states require their principals to be certified. This section further examines the certification of principals in Manitoba and Ontario.

In Manitoba, a school principal must be a certified teacher but does not need to be certified as a principal (Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth [MECY], 2008, p. 3; Education Administration Act, Regulation 515/88 Part V). The government though does provide Guidelines for the certification of administrators and issues two certificates once the guidelines have been met, Level 1: School Administrator’s Certificate and Level 2: School Principal’s Certificate (MECY, 2008; 2009). Principals can obtain these certificates by participating in professional development opportunities offered and sponsored by a number of different professional organizations and/or school divisions and by

enrolling in Post-Baccalaureate and Master's degree in Educational Administration programs. If a teacher wants to become certified as an administrator, the teacher must first have a minimum of three years of teaching experience. Manitoba is the only province that provides principals with the opportunity to become certified when certification is not a condition of employment.

The Manitoba Guidelines were first approved in 1985 by the Board of Teacher Education and Certification (BOTEC) and were made into a Regulation by the Minister of Education (Education Administration Act, Regulation 137/85). The Board consists of representatives of the Manitoba Teachers' Society, universities, school trustees and Manitoba Education. The rationale for the Guidelines is not on the public record, and, therefore, information is not available on how the Guidelines were developed and on what principles, standards and research they were based. The Guidelines have been updated, most recently in July 2009; however, the updates have been mainly changing the Appendix (course numbers and titles of university courses) for courses that can be counted towards certification. Unlike the ISLLC Standards, the Guidelines contain no underlying principles, no standards, no references to research, and make no mention of improving student achievement as a focus of school leaders.

There are four competency areas in the Guidelines for certification: "leadership, instruction, management and personnel" (MECY, 2009, p. 4) and each competency area contains descriptors (31 in total). For the area of instruction, the descriptors are: "Instructional objectives; curriculum design and

delivery strategies; cognitive development and sequencing of curricula; development of valid performance indicators; use of computers and other technology instruction; developing and using community resources; cost effective analysis and program budgeting; evaluation of instructional program” (MECY, 2008, p. 4). For the area of leadership, the descriptors are: “Leadership style; change/implementation process; organization and policy development; use of research; problem-solving; program planning; group processes; communication; student relations; community relations; mediation and conflict resolution” (MECY, 2008, p. 4). For the area of management, the descriptors are: “School organization; finances; budgeting; policies; record keeping; legislation and regulations; facility planning and maintenance and operation” (MECY, 2008, p. 4). For the area of personnel, the descriptors are: “Staff selection; staff supervision and evaluation; staff development and motivation; human relations; organizational behaviour” (MECY, 2008, p. 4). The Guidelines refer to the use of computers which ISLLC 1996 made no mention of but which was added to ISLLC 2008.

Unlike the ISLLC Standards, there is no explanation on the public record as to how the Guidelines in Manitoba were developed, why they are important, and who was involved in the development. The Guidelines contain no new insights into educational leadership, and only one word descriptors are given rather than descriptive functions. The leadership groups in Manitoba (COSL, MTS, MASS, MSBA, Manitoba Education) tend to offer and design professional development opportunities that will align with these four competency areas so

that those attending have the opportunity to use them as credit for certification. However, this could potentially limit professional development opportunities as they are “pigeon-holed” into particular competency areas that were developed a long time ago rather than being relevant to the current educational milieu.

The certification of principals in Ontario follows a different path. Since 1952 (Fleming, 1971, p. 69) a principal in Ontario must be both a certified teacher and a certified principal prior to being appointed to the position of principal; and a teacher must have five years of successful teaching experience prior to being certified as a principal (Wallace et al., 2007, p. 190) which differs from the three years of teaching experience required and the option to be certified in Manitoba. Certification in Manitoba is awarded by the Minister of Education and in Ontario by the Ontario College of Teachers. The certification requirements are similar in that both provinces require a combination of university coursework and participation in professional development opportunities offered and sponsored by a number of different professional organizations and/or school divisions. That is where the similarities end.

In 2005 the Minister of Education in Ontario launched an Ontario Leadership Strategy after reviewing considerable research on educational leadership by leading Ontario scholars (e.g., Leithwood, Fullan). Some of the reasons the Minister gave for the need for this strategy were: principals and vice principals are the single most significant influence upon students, after the individual classroom teachers; the principalship is more challenging now than it has ever been as schools have to cope with a much broader range of students

needs and abilities; the public expects more from education than it did in the past; during the last decade provincial policies demanded a large number of changes with a reduction in supports thus making the principal's job very difficult; and the number of principals and vice principals working part-time increased significantly (Ontario Institute for Education Leadership, 2006). Many principals and vice principals retired leaving a large number of new and inexperienced administrators. Similar conditions exist in Manitoba but the Minister of Education is not yet exhibiting the same leadership.

The Ontario Leadership Strategy is a comprehensive action plan designed to support student achievement and well-being and to attract and develop skilled and passionate school leaders. The Strategy has a four-point action plan: "1. Establish a common provincial leadership framework; 2. Align leadership development activities within the ministry and with the leadership framework; 3. Provide support mechanisms for leaders; and 4. Support and encourage the work of the Institute for Education Leadership (IEL)" (Newman, Pedwell, & Leithwood, 2008, p. 10). This Strategy shows forward thinking on the part of the Minister. The Strategy is based on guiding principles of partnership, individual and organizational development, alignment, and communication, and was implemented in stages beginning in 2008-09. The IEL models tri-level strategic leadership and is composed of representatives from the Ministry of Education, the principals' associations (e.g., Ontario Principals' Council, Ontario Catholic Principals' Council), the supervisory officers' associations, and, the council of Directors of Education thus providing input from schools, districts and the



Ministry. Interestingly, however, the Ontario College of Teachers and the universities, in particular educational administration departments, have been left out of this strategy, which is surprising especially when theory remains important to practice and when research-based learning is suggested as being very important to leadership development.

The purpose of Institute for Education Leadership is to support the growth and professional learning of school and system leaders through effective practice and research with a goal to improve student achievement. The Leadership Framework was developed by the IEL “to support school leaders in professional learning, provide opportunities for research and knowledge sharing, and ensure overall coordination of leadership initiatives” (McMorrow, 2009, p. 21). The overall purpose of the Framework is “to embed core leader practices and competencies and system practices and procedures into professional learning and day-to-day practice of school and system leaders” (Newman et al., 2008, p. 31). The stated purposes of the Leadership Framework are to:

- Inspire a shared vision of leadership in schools and boards
- Promote a common language that fosters an understanding of leadership and what it means to be a school and system leader
- Identify the practices and competencies that describe effective leadership
- Guide the design and implementation of professional learning and development for school and system leaders (Newman et al., 2008, p. 12)

The Framework has goals as well, the main one being to free principals up to be instructional leaders with the objective of supporting school leaders in meeting all the challenges of school leadership today.

The Leadership Framework for principals and vice principals (began in 2008 and implemented in 2009-10) has two parts: Part 1: Practices and Competencies (Skills, Knowledge, Attitudes); and Part 2: System Practices and Procedures (Indicators) (Institute for Education Leadership [IEL], 2008). The Framework is research-based and Part 1 contains five core leadership practices (with the number of practices for each area indicated in parenthesis): setting directions (7); building relationships and developing people (10); developing the organization (7); leading the instructional program (8); and, securing accountability (10) (IEL, 2008, p. 10-11) for a total of 42 practices. The first four of these leadership practices are very similar to those of Leithwood and Riehl, 2003 and other writings of Leithwood. Part 1 also contains competencies (skills, knowledge, and attitudes) for each of the five core leadership practices totalling 79. Part 2 contains six system practices and procedures (with the number of indicators for each area indicated in parenthesis): school and school board improvement (6); fostering a culture of professionalism (4); leadership development (4); administrative structures (5); parent and community supports (5); and, succession planning, including recruitment, to build capacity and retain and sustain effective leadership (5) (IEL, 2008, p. 14-15). All of the practices and procedure contribute to developing the role of school-based administrators.

The contents of the Framework are similar to the ISLLC Standards which

shouldn't come as a surprise as Dr. Kenneth Leithwood was involved in the development of both. Principals and vice principals in Ontario are fortunate to have a government that is forward thinking and that is prepared to develop its school leaders for the future with a comprehensive leadership strategy and professional development based on academic and empirical research. The Ontario government and school districts provide tangible support for the implementation of the Framework.

The Framework was based on research in educational leadership and has student achievement at its core. Nothing like the Framework has been developed in Manitoba. The Guidelines for the certification of school administrators in Manitoba do not indicate on what they were based nor do they reflect a focus on student achievement.

Currently many school divisions are having difficulty recruiting school administrators for a myriad of reasons (e.g., politics, stress, time, administrivia and remuneration) and there is a principal shortage (Hansford & Ehrich, 2006, p. 37). Cited in Hansford and Ehrich (2006), Hickcox (2002) in his discussion of the principalship in Manitoba stated:

...the principalship is not a sought after goal for many educators. The job has become tangled and difficult. It involves long hours, lots of night work, lots of conflicting demands from various stakeholders. The pay is not that much more than what an experienced teacher receives. (p. 2-3)

Educating leaders for improving student achievement is critical and mandatory certification may be one way to "force" the engagement of school-based leaders

in professional growth opportunities. Ontario's system of certification has been accepted for a number of years and is influenced by the work of Leithwood and Fullan who are respected as researchers at home as well as in the world. In contrast, Manitoba's system has guidelines only for certification with no incentives or financial support in place and does not appear to have at its core a research-based grounding.

### **Developing Criteria for Effective Administrative Professional Development**

What is the current status of leadership development given the daunting role contemporary school administrators play? Darling-Hammond et al. (2007) conducted a study of principal professional development programs which began in 2003. The *School Leadership Study* (herein referred to as the Study) was funded by The Wallace Foundation, and conducted by the Stanford Educational Leadership Institute, in collaboration with the Finance Project. The authors studied the development of strong school leaders by examining eight exemplary principal development programs, both pre-service and in-service: "The programs were chosen both because they provided evidence of strong outcomes in preparing school leaders and because, in combination, they represented a variety of approaches, designs, policy contexts, and partnerships between universities and school districts" (Darling-Hammond et al., 2007, p. 2). The Study included interviews; review of documents, and school data; observations of courses, workshops and meetings; surveys; and observations of principals in their schools. Conclusions were drawn by triangulating data from all sources.

The Study (Darling-Hammond et al., 2007) made five findings: 1)

exemplary pre- and in-service programs share many common features; 2) exemplary programs produce well prepared leaders who engage in effective practices; 3) program success is influenced by leadership, partnerships, and financial support; 4) funding strategies influence the design and effectiveness of programs; and, 5) state and district policies influence program designs and outcomes. For the purposes of this research study, the first three findings will be commented on. The exemplary pre-service programs were commented on in the previous section of this chapter.

The exemplary in-service programs were grounded in both theory and practice and a coherent view of teaching and learning. They had a clear model of instructional leadership. The exemplary programs reported on by Darling-Hammond et al., (2007) also offered additional support to participants (eg. peer coaching, mentoring, study groups, networking, and school visits). The districts' efforts in in-service programs in the Study (Darling-Hammond et al., 2007) were characterized by:

- A learning continuum that operated systematically from pre-service preparation through induction and continuing careers and included using mature and retired principals as mentors;
- Leadership learning that was organized around a model of leadership and grounded in practice, including analyses of classroom practice, supervision, and professional development using on-the-job observations connected to readings and discussions; and

- Collegial learning networks, such as principals' networks, study groups, and mentoring, or peer coaching, that offered communities of practice and support for problem solving. (p. 9)

How fortunate the principals who work in these districts are to have superintendents and boards who believe in instructional leadership for their employees and who are prepared to financially support it. Both students and principals are winners in these districts.

Finding 2 of the Study found there were well prepared principals that were developed by exemplary pre-service and in-service programs who engage in effective practices for school success: "cultivating a shared vision and practice, leading instructional improvement, developing organizational capacity, and managing change" (Darling-Hammond et al., 2007, p. 9). These principals support school improvement and focus on instructional leadership and attribute their success to pre-service and in-service preparation.

Finding 3 of the Study found that the success of the programs was assisted by the leaders, who acted as tireless champions of the programs in forging the inter-institutional partnerships (universities and districts), and by the financial support the participants received to attend the programs (Darling-Hammond et al., 2007). Enlightened leadership that is prepared to develop exemplary programs, get them and the participants financed and who develop meaningful partnerships ensure success for all – universities, districts, principals and most of all students.

Overall, the Study found "that graduates of these innovative programs

report higher quality program practices, feel better prepared, feel better about the principalship as a job and a vocation, and enact more effective leadership practices than principals with more conventional preparation” (Darling-Hammond et al., 2007, p. 5). The participants in the programs in the Study were able to use the practices they learned in their own schools and districts.

The researcher believes that some of the findings of the Study are occurring in Manitoba. The Study should be reviewed by the universities and school districts in Manitoba, as well as the research from this thesis, to determine what is happening in the province and the extent to which these elements of effectiveness are evidenced in the professional development opportunities for principals and vice principals in the province.

The profession of educational administration has been re-cultured over the last thirteen years. The ISLLC Standards have had a profound effect on education and in particular on educational leadership in the United States and parts of Canada. More provinces need to study them and the empirical research upon which they are based and develop their own leadership strategy. In Canada, Ontario’s strategy could be used as a starting point for the study.

The certification of principals in Manitoba remains in the hands of the Minister of Education through Manitoba Education Citizenship and Youth and there does not appear to be any movement afoot either to require principals to be certified or to move the responsibility for certification to principal organizations, universities nor school divisions. The current guidelines appear to be out of date with current empirical and academic research on educational leadership and

student achievement, and out of step with what is happening in British Columbia, Alberta, and Ontario. Are principals and vice principals in Manitoba seeking certification even though this is not a requirement? Would mandatory certification be one way to ensure that principals and vice principals engage in professional development growth opportunities? And even so, is the current framework utilized in the Manitoba context reflective of the growing diversity in the skills, knowledge and attitudes necessary for effective leadership? These questions will be addressed in the findings of this study.

Further research on the certification of principals in Canada is required, especially when one sees the vast differences in Ontario and Manitoba. Moreover, in 1999 the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada (CMEC, 1999, p. 3) agreed on the portability of certification from province to province even though the differences in certification vary greatly across Canada, which has further ramifications for the professional growth needs of leaders in diverse contexts.

Leadership development has progressed in the United States to examine exemplary pre-service and in-service programs. Further research on the preparation and professional development programs in Manitoba is necessary. The next section will review what makes professional development effective and provide the conceptual framework for this research study.

### **Conceptual Framework**

Thomas Guskey is a professor emeritus in the College of Education at the University of Kentucky, and according to the University's website he has written



17 books, 33 book chapters, and over 200 journal articles and professional papers on assessment, standards-based grading, reporting, student-led conferences, mastery learning, student learning and school improvement as well as professional development (<http://education.uky.edu/EDP/guskey>). Thus, Guskey is an acknowledged expert in the field of assessment, evaluation and professional development.

Guskey has developed a five-level model for evaluating professional development. In a conversation with the Harvard Family Research Project (2005/2006), he states that in developing his model his thinking “was influenced by the work of Donald Kirkpatrick, who developed a model for evaluating training programs in business and industry” (p. 1). Guskey used Kirkpatrick’s model with four levels but added a fifth level, organization support, because the professional development efforts were not yielding positive results with only four levels. Guskey’s (2000) five level model of effectiveness criteria included: the need to access participants’ reactions; ensuring participants’ learning; the necessity of organization support and change; participants’ use of new knowledge and skills; and, a focus on student learning outcomes. The information provided at each of these levels can be used in both formative and summative ways and help to evaluate what in professional development activities is done well and, if it was not done well, how it can be improved.

In Guskey’s (2000) model, each level builds on the previous level. He notes that “people must have a positive reaction to a professional development experience before we can expect them to learn anything from it” (Harvard Family

Resource Project, 2005/2006, p. 2). Guskey (2000) strongly supports the idea that professional development must be planned with the end in mind - how will this affect student learning. Only then can practices and policies be implemented to gain that impact and organizational support be garnered to facilitate the implementation. Principals must ensure “that professional development planning focus on two critical questions: How will this help our students? and What evidence will we trust to verify that it does?” (Guskey, 2003b, p. 15). The focus for professional development changes from what educators are going to do to what educators want to accomplish with their students. Thus, educators view professional development as having goals that are purposeful and intentional. It is unlikely that there will be any improvement in the quality of professional development experiences unless the professional development goals are stated and evidence that the goals have been attained is documented.

Guskey (2007, 2009) advocates that principals constantly ask tough questions of their teachers (e.g., what are your students not learning? why?), and have the teachers discuss and share the results of their student assessment. This requires that principals establish a shared responsibility for student learning, and mutual interest in the success of all students needs to be accomplished in an environment that is collaborative, supportive and built on trust. Principals, therefore, need to take responsibility to provide professional development that will make the changes needed to improve the results of student learning. New skills will be needed by principals to improve student learning when they contact the experts, seek their advice, and creatively implement their recommendations.

Once they have shown “that rigorous, systemic, unbiased evidence of effectiveness supports the methods they choose”, principals can “ensure that improvement efforts remain on track while they are adapted to a school’s unique character, culture and context” (Guskey, 2007, p. 33). Guskey (2007) believes that effective principals are the leaders who can set clear goals, develop plans to achieve those goals, monitor progress regularly using data, and use continuous improvement to adjust the plans accordingly.

Who teaches the principals and vice principals these skills? This study is an exciting opportunity to extend Guskey’s work from its focus on professional development in general facilitated by principals for teachers, to professional development for administrators so that they, in turn, have the capacity to lead teachers and schools towards greater student learning and achievement.

Guskey (2000, 2002, 2003a, 2003b, 2009, Guskey & Yoon, 2009) has written extensively on professional development, and he claims that practitioners and researchers do not agree on the characteristics of effective professional development. In his view, time for professional development needs to be purposefully directed, well organized, carefully structured (Guskey, 2003b, p. 12) and “focused on content or pedagogy or both” (Guskey & Yoon, 2009, p. 497). Such structure and organization is also important to foster collaboration on shared strategies, exchange of ideas, and working together. Guskey (2003b) states that “for collaboration to bring its intended benefits it, too, needs to be structured and purposeful, with efforts guided by clear goals for improving student learning” (p. 12). After the professional development activity has taken

place, there must be “significant amounts of structured and sustained follow-up” (Guskey & Yoon, 2009, p. 497) if there are to be positive improvements in student learning.

Effective professional development comes “from the careful adaptation of varied practices to specific content, process, and contextual elements” (Guskey & Yoon, 2009, p. 497) and not from the implementation of “best practices” that have been determined by someone else. Content is important as well and professional development activities help educators to better understand both how students acquire content knowledge and skills, and how educators teach that material. Given the importance of data-based decision-making and student achievement in today’s educational context, it is important to note that in Guskey’s (2003a) review of thirteen different lists of the characteristics of effective professional development for teachers fewer than half included “the importance of using analyses of student learning data to guide professional development activities” (p. 749). However, building leadership capacity was included on many of the lists “and the need for principals to be strong and consistent instructional leaders” (Guskey, 2003b, p. 13) reflects the current trend in thinking about educational leadership.

Since there was no actual agreement on the criteria for effective professional development, Guskey initially developed three criteria of his own, then added a fourth, evaluation, which he indicated was important in any professional development activity.

The fundamental goal and the principal criterion for effectiveness of professional development must be “improvements in student learning outcomes” (Guskey, 2003a, p. 750). The second criterion Guskey (2003a) identifies is the context of learning because: “real-world contextual differences profoundly influence the effectiveness of professional development endeavours” (p. 750). The third criterion is using research-based decision-making. In his earlier work, Guskey (2002) also makes a strong case for the evaluation of professional development as being a key to effective professional development. Guskey (2002) concludes that “by including systematic information gathering and analysis as a central component of all professional development activities, we can enhance the success of professional development efforts everywhere” (p. 51). Though Guskey discusses these criteria as being necessary to professional development in general, they could certainly be applied, in particular, to professional development for principals. The researcher asked Guskey whether his criteria could be applied to the professional development of principals. His reply stated:

I am often asked about this “criterion” of the effectiveness of professional development; that is, must it always be related to improvements in student learning? The question I always ask in response is: “Suppose you did all this excellent professional development for school leaders, but no improvements in student learning occurred. If that were the case, would you consider your work a success?” Inevitably, the answer is a resounding, “No.” Therefore, it

seems to me that indicators of improvement in student learning, broadly defined to include cognitive, affective, and behavioral measures, must be part of your evaluation efforts. (Thomas Guskey, personal communication, January 4, 2010).

Guskey (2003b) states that “principals need to be strong and consistent instructional leaders” (p. 13). Darling-Hammond et al. (2007) supports the professional development of principals, pre-service and in-service, and strongly emphasizes the principal as instructional leader.

Darling-Hammond (2007), in a paper presented at a conference, stated that in the programs she studied, leaders “not only felt significantly better supported than other principals nationally but were significantly more likely to engage in practices known to be linked to school effectiveness and student achievement gains” (p. 22). Fenwick and Pierce (2002) support the need for continuous professional development opportunities for principals and state that principals “should leave these experiences with a renewed sense of faith in the transformative power of schools in children’s lives” (p. 6). In essence these researchers agree that the professional development of principals is important. Guskey’s criteria are appropriate to use in this study of the professional development of school-based administrators.

In order to determine whether or not professional development is effective, then, one could use Guskey’s criteria as a lens through which to make judgements about any particular professional development activity for principals. For the first criterion, one could consider the standards upon which principal

preparation and development are based, and question the extent to which such standards focus on student learning. For example, the 2008 ISLLC standards state that “the ultimate goal of these standards, as with any set of education standards, is to raise student achievement” (CCSSO, 2008, p. 5). In Manitoba, the Council of School Leaders (COSL) developed a position statement on administrative certification which suggested that its focus on leadership standards had the purpose to “guide aspiring, emerging and exemplary Manitoba public school leaders to facilitate continuous improvements to ensure all students succeed, not only today, but well into the future” (Cann, 2005, p. 3). These statements corroborate Guskey’s first criterion that the goal of professional development must be the improvement of student learning outcomes, though the COSL leadership standards appear to be more esoteric and not as immediately focused on student achievement per se.

In terms of the second criterion of the context of learning, principals deal with real-world differences every day that vary depending on the location of their schools. Therefore, effective professional development for principals should take into account the differences between schools and divisions. In Manitoba, there are various organizations with differing mandates that foster leadership development, including provincial groups, regional consortia of school divisions, and individual school divisions that design and provide professional development opportunities that meet provincial, regional and local needs.

The third criterion is in evidence as more research is being based in schools and principals are making data-based decisions (Young, Levin, & Wallin,

2007). Such principals benefit from sharing their information and problem solving with their colleagues during professional development activities. Much of this focus on data-based decision making has been fostered in Manitoba with the provincial mandating of school planning that aligns with school division and provincial goals that are created along the SMART framework (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Timely).

Finally, as Guskey suggests, professional development needs to be evaluated to see if it is effective and to determine if it is meeting the needs of the participants. In this respect, Guskey (2009) states that “no improvement effort in the history of education has ever succeeded without thoughtfully planned and well-implemented professional development activities designed to enhance educators’ knowledge and skills” (p. 226). Professional development, therefore, is essential to the professional growth and progress of educators. Given the millions of dollars spent on professional development, principals and vice principals must become skilled consumers of educational research, demand better research-based evidence from consultants, evaluate all professional development activities, and have “researchers study professional development more rigorously” (Guskey, 2009, p. 228) thus enabling professional development to become an inquiry-based profession, which at the moment it is not.

In order to determine whether or not programs of professional development are effective, then, this research study used Guskey’s criteria as a lens through which to make judgements about any particular professional development activity for principals and vice principals. The four criteria - the



improvement of student learning outcomes; context; research and data-based decisions; evaluation of professional development - can all be used to assess the professional development of principals and vice principals. All of the professional development opportunities principals and vice principals participate in should include an evaluation component. However, the extent to which evaluations are authentic, become embedded within the work of principals and vice principals in schools, or include a measurement of growth or change over time is dubious. This is because conferences and workshops are often “one-stop shops” of professional development.

Leithwood and Levin (2005) support professional development that has “a clear mission and purpose linking leadership to school improvement...and should be continuous or long-term rather than one-shot” (p. 35). Whether what the individuals have learned from their professional development becomes embedded in the daily practice of leaders and/or ultimately promotes student learning is an area that needs extensive study. It is encouraging to note that some school divisions in Manitoba have begun to utilize action research projects that foster professional development within their schools. In addition, data-based decision-making has become a focus for most school planning initiatives, which itself promotes a focus on research-based and data-based learning sensitive to student learning and context. It is evaluative in nature because of its deliberate focus on collecting data to facilitate school growth and change.

### **Summary**

A review of the research (e.g., Leithwood et al., 2004; Leithwood & Levin,

2005; Leithwood & Jantzi, 2006; Leithwood & Riehl, 2003; Robinson et al., 2008) has shown that there are intervening variables whose relationships with both leadership and student learning are empirically demonstrable (e.g., teachers' instructional practices, diversity of students, school and classroom size, school culture, school and classroom conditions, student family background and conditions). Research on educational leadership has focused on a number of school level environmental or cultural variables associated with student achievement (e.g., a safe, orderly learning environment; academically focused rewards and incentives; a learning environment in which children are well-known and cared for; a sense of community among staff; well-developed and academically focused linkages between home and school). Empirical evidence focuses also on the importance of mission (vision) and community. The variables of single parent families, socioeconomic status, English as a second language, race and ethnic background effect student achievement. However, Reeves (2006) found that the professional practices of teachers (classroom instruction) and the decisions leaders make can be more important than the demographic variables.

The major focus areas of professional development in Manitoba include: leadership, instruction, management and personnel. These four foci also are the areas of focus for school-based administrator certification (Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth, 2008). Leadership preparation and professional development are not just the responsibility of the individual; they are also the responsibility of the universities, school divisions and professional organizations.

This chapter has reviewed the research on leadership theory and links to student learning, professional development, preparation programs and certification as professional development, and Guskey's conceptual framework. When professional development activities are provided, they could be, and I argue they should be, evaluated against Guskey's (2003a) criteria for effective professional development: the focus on improving student learning outcomes, linking theory and practice, real world application aligned with contextual need, and include an evaluation component that begins to align systematic professional development opportunities to what is the actual practice of principals and vice principals in schools. The criteria themselves are not complicated, but without them, there is no way to determine whether or not the professional development activities of educational administrators are focused on the priority of students, are adaptable to local context, are based in current research and theory, and can actually achieve what it is they purport to promote. With this in mind, Chapter Three provides the methodology to determine from public school principals and vice principals in Manitoba their perceptions of the quality of the professional development in which they have participated during their administrative careers, with a focus on the purposes for which they engage in professional development, their perceptions of effectiveness, how the professional development has contributed to their development as educational leaders, and the value of certification as a means of developing effective leadership.

## **Chapter Three: Methodology**

### **Introduction**

The research questions for this study drive the methods used to collect the data and lead to the conclusions made by the researcher (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007). The methods used to collect data and evidence have strengths and limitations that affect the analysis and conclusions that the researcher can make regarding the research question. Frequently, researchers utilize a mixed methods approach for data collection in order to address concerns. The most common methods used in a mixed methods approach for data collection combine quantitative and qualitative methods.

The purpose of this chapter is to provide the research plan for this study on effective leadership and the professional growth needs of principals and vice principals in Manitoba for which a mixed methods approach was appropriate. The plan includes: purpose of the study, research questions, methods, participants, ethical and practical issues, validity and reliability, and data analysis. The research plan was based on the research question: as a means of developing effective leadership, what are the perceptions of school-based principals and vice principals in Manitoba of their professional growth needs and of the quality of the professional development programs in which they have participated during their administrative careers? The question focuses on the purposes for which school-based principals and vice principals engage in professional development, their perceptions of effectiveness of the professional development, their perceptions of their effectiveness as leaders, and recommendations for the provision of effective

administrative professional development experiences.

### **Research Design**

This research study used a mixed methods research design for data collection that combined quantitative and qualitative methods. Quantitative research “began in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century and dominated educational inquiry for most of the 20<sup>th</sup> century” (Creswell, 2005, p. 39). Many of the procedures and statistical analyses used by researchers originated in the physical sciences. Gliner and Morgan (2000) define quantitative research as “research within the positivist framework that is usually handled numerically” (p. 420). Data are usually gathered by an instrument and are said to be objective. Creswell (2005) defines quantitative research as “a type of educational research in which the researcher decides what to study, asks specific, narrow questions, collects numeric (numbered) data from participants, analyzes these numbers using statistics, and conducts the inquiry in an unbiased, objective manner” (p. 39). Hittleman and Simon (2002) write that “quantitative research is predicated on the belief that variables should be mathematically measured” and that quantitative research is objective and is considered to be “the scientific method” (p. 27). Therefore, quantitative research is based on objectivity and the statistical analysis of numeric data.

Qualitative research developed in the late 1800s and early 1900s in anthropology and sociology, then moved to other social sciences and has been used in education during the last thirty years (Creswell, 2005). Gliner and Morgan (2000) describe qualitative data as subjective, hard to classify, and the research

in this area as constructivist (p. 9). Qualitative methodology “refers in the broadest sense to research that produces descriptive data – people’s own written or spoken words and observable behavior” (Taylor & Bogdan, 1998, p. 7). In the educational context, Creswell (2005) defines qualitative research as research “in which the researcher relies on the views of participants, asks broad, general questions, collects data consisting largely of words (or text) from participants, describes and analyzes these words for themes, and conducts the inquiry in a subjective, biased manner” (p. 39). Jaeger (1997) writes that if quantitative research can be defined by its pursuit of theoretical or technical knowledge, then qualitative research can be thought of as an orientation to practical knowledge (a form of ethical reasoning) that “connects as well with the modes of interpretation and application called hermeneutics” (p. 189). Bogdan and Biklen (2007) emphasize the characteristics of “naturalistic, inductive, and the concern with process and meaning” (p. 47) as being important to the definition of qualitative research.

Hittleman and Simon (2002) write that qualitative researchers “look to inductively answer research questions by examining students and others who influence them in natural contexts, in interactions with other people and objects in their surroundings...based on broad and comprehensive theoretical positions” and in this way qualitative researchers “describe, interpret, verify and evaluate” (p. 38). Therefore, qualitative research is subjective, is based on text, is inductive, and looks for meaning in ways that are empirical, and phenomenological.

Method and methodology are not synonymous. Methodology is a generic term that refers to the theoretical perspective and logic for a research project, the way in which problems are approached and answers sought (Taylor & Bogdan, 1998), whereas method(s) “is a term that refers to the specific techniques you use, such as surveys, interviews, observation – the more technical aspects of the research” (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007, p. 35). If the research is good, the methods used are consistent with the methodology and the logic embedded therein.

Quantitative research has been long established as an approach and qualitative research has become recognized and appreciated by more and more researchers in education, therefore, mixed methods research has been used as a new approach to research (Creswell, 2005, p. 509). The literature defines a mixed methods research design as: “a procedure for collecting, analyzing, and ‘mixing’ both quantitative and qualitative data in a single study to understand a research problem” (Creswell, 2005, p. 510). In order to use this design, both quantitative and qualitative research must be understood by the researcher and the design explained in the research. When both quantitative data and qualitative data are collected in a research study, both forms of data are used to provide a better understanding of the answers to the research problems than either type would by itself (Creswell, 2005). Quantitative data, such as responses to a questionnaire, can produce numbers that can be statistically analyzed and produce results that can be used to assess the magnitude and frequency of trends.

This study was premised on an interpretive paradigm related to

knowledge. The study was not attempting to determine causality as in the case of experimental research, but rather was defined to utilize qualitative descriptive and comparative research methods to analyze data and make conclusions based on the responses to a questionnaire. Qualitative data, such as open-ended interviews that result in transcripts of the actual words the interviewees used may provide many different perspectives on the topic being studied. In this study, the qualitative data gathered in the interviews were used to extend the findings of the questionnaire to deepen understanding of the phenomena under study and help to provide a rich description of the lived experiences of the participants. By combining quantitative and qualitative data, the research results in a powerful mix.

The research plan in this chapter used a mixed methods approach based on both qualitative and quantitative research methodologies. Greater confidence in the generalizability of the results in the research plan occurred when the qualitative interviews augmented the quantitative questionnaire. The research plan in this chapter used an explanatory mixed methods design (Creswell, 2005) wherein quantitative data were collected and then qualitative data were collected. It is appropriate to use the mixed methods design in the research plan because the quantitative data and results provide a general picture of the answer to the research question and the qualitative data explains quantitative results to clarify the picture and to answer the research question with greater detail.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study was to determine from school principals and



vice principals in Manitoba their perceptions of the quality of the professional development in which they have participated during their careers, with a focus on the purposes for which they engage in professional development, their perceptions of its effectiveness, how the professional development has contributed to their development as educational leaders, and recommendations for the provision of effective administrative professional development experiences. These experiences were compared by the independent variables of gender, context (rural, urban, or northern), position (principal or vice principal) and level of school (early, middle or senior years). The variable years of experience was not used in this study since it makes sense that administrators with more years of experience would have the opportunity to engage in more professional development activities than beginning school-based administrators.

Guskey himself states that context is important. Potentially relevant contextual factors could include: economic and social conditions, technological factors, political system characteristics, societal cultural characteristics and traditions, and geographical location. In this study context is restricted to the criteria rural, urban (Winnipeg, Brandon) or northern (Dauphin and north) and level of school (early, middle and senior years schools) as information on other areas of context (socio-economic indicators, division finances, stability of school leadership, number of funded students, student demographics) were not readily available. Principals and vice principals have different needs by virtue of their duties and roles and thus are important variables. Gender is also an important variable in that women, who tend to have many responsibilities at home in

addition to those at school, may not participate as often in professional development or in the same types of professional development activities as men.

In order to narrow the focus of the study, the research examined formal professional development activities in Manitoba which are organized and/or sponsored by the Council of School Leaders (COSL), the Manitoba Teachers' Society (MTS), the Manitoba Council for Leadership in Education (MCLE), the universities in Manitoba offering educational administration programs, and activities offered by school divisions.

### **Research Questions**

The following four questions guided the purpose of this study and provided the focus for the research: 1) What benefits do principals and vice principals in Manitoba perceive have accrued in their development as educational leaders, as a consequence of the professional development in which they have participated? 2) What types of professional development do principals and vice principals in Manitoba perceive as being the most beneficial for developing effective educational leaders and/or improving student achievement, and why? 3) In what professional development experiences in the areas of leadership, instruction, management and personnel (areas designated by Manitoba Education as being important for the certification of administrators) have principals and vice principals in Manitoba engaged, for what purpose and in what context? 4) How might formal leadership organizations in Manitoba more effectively create meaningful formalized professional development opportunities for the development of effective school-based administrators?

## Methods

This was a mixed methods study in that both a questionnaire (requiring quantitative analysis) and in-person interviews (requiring qualitative analysis) were used. How data were collected is not an efficient indicator to use to distinguish between the quantitative and qualitative paradigms. Creswell and Plano Clark (2007) state that the central premise of mixed methods research “is that the use of quantitative and qualitative approaches in combination provides a better understanding of research problems than either approach alone” (p. 5). The results of this study concur with this point of view.

In the social sciences there are two major paradigms: positivism which is the dominant paradigm and is most often associated with quantitative research; and constructivist (naturalistic) which is most often associated with qualitative research (Gliner & Morgan, 2000, p. 27). Constructivist epistemology takes into account the roles played by values and language. Lincoln and Guba (1985) describe five axioms that separate these two paradigms. 1. Positivists believe that the nature of reality is singular while constructivists believe that there are multiple constructed realities. 2. Positivists believe that in the relationship of knower to known the researcher is totally objective while constructivists believe that the researcher cannot be totally objective because the participants and the researcher interact. 3. In the possibility of generalization, positivists believe that truth statements are free from both context and time; however, constructivists believe that since everything is contextually bound, a working hypothesis is the best that can be accomplished. 4. In determining causal links, positivists believe

that cause and effect can be determined as a probability while constructivists believe that since we are in a constant state of development, cause and effect cannot be distinguished. 5. Positivists believe that inquiry is objective and value free, while constructivists believe that inquiry is bound by conflict, values, theory, choice and inquiry. These dichotomies indicate differences in the paradigms and reflect relative differences in the epistemology.

The positivist approach is scientific and the constructivist approach is sequential yet flexible (Gliner & Morgan, 2000, p. 28) wherein the first is deductive and the second is inductive. This mixed methods study was premised on an interpretivist paradigm, and as such, utilized as epistemology of constructive phenomenology.

For this research study all public school principals and vice principals in the province were emailed a web link to an online questionnaire (Appendix A) that was designed in three parts: Part A requested information about the independent variables under study; Part B requested information related to the nature and quality of professional development activities available in Manitoba using Likert-type scales designed around Guskey's criteria for effective professional development; and, Part C included open-ended questions to probe more deeply into participants' experiences and beliefs about what constitutes effective professional development. Hittleman and Simon (2002) state that scales such as the Likert-type scales "commonly measure variables related to attitudes, interest, personality and adjustment" (p. 108); therefore, since perceptions of principals and vice principals were being measured, the Likert-type scale was

appropriate for this questionnaire. The questionnaire was field tested first for validity and reliability prior to distribution by having principals and vice principals (six people in total), randomly chosen from recently retired administrators, complete the questionnaire and provide feedback to the researcher on the format, structure, wording of questions and ease of completion. No suggestions for changes to the wording of the questions were received, therefore, the questionnaire that was field tested was identical to the one used in this study.

On-line questionnaires are relatively easy to access and complete but they are impersonal. Not everyone likes completing questionnaires but on-line ones are easier to complete than ones on paper because they are finished by just clicking on a submit button rather than having to mail a paper one. However, paper questionnaires can be partially completed and then returned to finish when one has time. Most on-line questionnaires have to be completed in one sitting and if one runs out of time, the questionnaires are not completed and therefore not submitted.

In order to utilize an on-line questionnaire, the support of COSL for this study was requested. COSL was asked to distribute to public school principals and vice principals in Manitoba an invitation to participate and the web link for the online questionnaire (Appendix C). The researcher met with the Chairperson of COSL (December 2009) to obtain, if possible, his permission and support; then attended a COSL Leadership Team meeting (January 2010) to request support; and finally attended a COSL Directors meeting (January 2010) where formal permission from the Directors was approved. COSL support was accessed to the

extent of their approval for the overall project and their distributing the web link to the questionnaire to the principals and vice principals in the public schools in the province of Manitoba. COSL's support of the project did not constitute a coercive or power over position over potential participants as membership in COSL is voluntary.

The second instrument was a semi-structured questioning protocol (Appendix B) used in the interviews. The interview questions were focused on three periods of time: Part A, pre-appointment experiences; Part B, administrative experiences; and Part C, reflections. Potential interview subjects self-selected to be interviewed by responding to an invitation at the end of the questionnaire. Ten principals and five vice principals (15 interviewees) were chosen after they indicated an interest in participating in the interview process by completing the questionnaire then sending an email to the researcher which included contact information. Care was taken to ensure that interviewees were representative of the independent variables and as far as possible were chosen on a "first come" basis. Interviewees received a copy of the interview questions via email before the interview so that they could gather their thoughts. Their responses have been kept strictly anonymous and confidential. The names of the participants do not appear anywhere in the results. The taped interviews were transcribed by the researcher and the transcripts were returned to the interviewees so that they could add, delete, or change their responses to ensure that all the information was correct and all identifying information was omitted. This occurred before the analysis of the data began. Participants were asked to

return the revised transcripts to the researcher within two weeks of receipt.

Data from the questionnaire were analyzed using descriptive statistics including means and percentages using the independent variables mentioned previously, and dependent variables that are judgements around the nature, purpose, and quality of professional development experiences in Manitoba. Reductive analysis of the open-ended questions on the questionnaire and the interviews was used to identify, code, and categorize the data for the purposes of generalization into meaningful units that were used to identify themes and patterns related to the research questions. Only aggregated data were reported to further protect the confidentiality of all participants. An attempt was made to corroborate the responses of participants by asking questions on four fronts: (a) the purposes for which they engaged in professional development experiences; (b) the nature of professional development in which they engaged based on Manitoba Education's four focus areas (leadership, instruction, management, and personnel); (c) reflections on the effectiveness of the professional development using Guskey's four criteria as a lens (improving student outcomes, context, research-based decision making, and evaluation of professional development); and (d) the value of administrator certification as a means of promoting effective leadership.

### **Issues that Arise**

When a research study is undertaken, participant selection and access, ethical, and practical issues may arise as the study progresses. This section discusses how these issues were dealt with.

## Participants

All vice-principals and principals in Manitoba public schools were the target population, and the sample was the participants in the study. In this way, findings of the questionnaire data were generalizable to the principals and vice principals in the province. Though there is usually no attempt to generalize in qualitative methods but rather gather rich data surrounding a phenomenon, there was an attempt to gain representation in the interview participants of the independent variables under study from which readers of the research may find some resonance with their own understandings.

Creswell (2005) states that “survey researchers seek high response rates from participants in a study so that they can have confidence in generalizing the results to the population under study...However, when questionnaires are used, the number of responses returned will vary” (p. 367). Sanders and Piney (1983) in their book state that a return rate of 50 percent is expected depending on the composition of the sample and whether the sample “is composed of persons who are very concerned with the topic” (p. 153) of the study. The researcher believed that a target of 50 percent was unrealistic for the questionnaire in this study. At the time the questionnaire was sent out (April) it was unknown how much interest there was on the part of principals and vice principals on their perceptions of their professional growth needs, their professional development and how important they believe professional development is in relationship to leadership development. As well, April is a busy time for school-based administrators because they are heavily involved in registering students for the next school



year, hiring staff, and timetabling.

The internet link to the questionnaire was emailed to 682 principals and 342 vice principals in public schools in Manitoba for a total of 1024 and a ratio of 2:1. Principals and vice principals self-selected to respond to the questionnaire. The response rate to the questionnaire was 8.2 percent and was considered reasonable since it provided a modest number of returns for statistical analysis and was representative of the general population of principals and vice principals in the province. Possible reasons for the modest return rate include: the questionnaire had to be completed in one sitting; the length of the questionnaire; the time it took to complete the questionnaire; the number of open-ended questions; the time of year the questionnaire was sent out; insufficient reminders were sent; interest in the topic.

For the interviews, from the administrators who indicated an interest in participating in the interview process, ten principals and five vice principals were randomly selected to draw a representative sample (once more a ratio of 2:1). There was no difficulty securing 15 volunteers; however, care was taken to ensure that the 15 volunteers represented the independent variables (position, gender, location, and level of school) and provided a representative sample of the larger population. Unlike elite interviews, where a sample “includes the most important political players who have participated in the political events being studied” (Tansey, 2007, p. 765). Participants emailed the researcher directly indicating an interest in participating in an interview and they provided contact information. The researcher sent, via email, an invitation to participate in the

interviews to those individuals who indicated an interest in participating. All who were invited agreed to participate.

### **Ethical Issues**

Ethics approval for this research from ENREB (Education/Nursing Research Ethics Board) was obtained because individuals were being studied. Applying for approval included “seeking permission from the board, developing a description of the project, designing an informed consent form, and having the project reviewed” (Creswell, 2005, p. 208). The researcher had had two previous studies approved by ENREB and understood the process. The researcher ensured that the ENREB deadlines were met to avoid delays in commencing the research.

A second ethics issue was to ensure the confidentiality of the participants. This was accomplished by not using participants’ names in the study. The researcher was concerned with making sure that the perceptions of principals and vice principals were captured accurately which is why the interview transcripts were sent to the participants so they could be checked for accuracy. The recordings were transcribed by the researcher, once more protecting confidentiality. The informed consent signed by the participants described the procedures to be used and ensured the confidentiality of the participants (Appendix D). The anonymity of the participants who answered the questionnaire was protected by assigning numbers “to them to use in the process of analyzing and reporting data” (Creswell, 2005, p. 225). This helped to focus on the group rather than the individual. There was no deception because the participants were

informed about the purpose of the study. As well, participants received no remuneration for participating in the study. In addition, during any public presentations of the study, the researcher will not disclose the names of the interviewees or other confidential information as this would reflect badly on other researchers and destroy the credibility of the researcher.

The researcher is a retired educator and life-long learner who has spent forty years working in the public school system in Manitoba as a teacher, vice principal, principal and assistant superintendent. Professional development has always been a major focus in her career and the researcher has been fortunate to work in a school division that valued and supported the professional development of its staff. Within the school division, an example of this was the program she developed for beginning teachers that provided meaningful professional development for them that was research-based and focused on student achievement. This program included the mentoring of beginning teachers in their first few years of teaching. This program, at that time, was unique in Manitoba. The emphasis of the program was to develop effective teachers. The program was evaluated and found to be highly valued by the beginning teachers and by the administrators of the schools in which they taught. Subsequently, a similar program was developed for mentoring beginning principals and vice principals. The researcher has taught prospective administrators and administrators both within the division, at conferences, and at the university level. Within the school division a course for prospective administrators was developed which was research-based and focused on improving student achievement.

Individuals were invited to participate and the course was credited towards their administrative certification. At the conclusion of the course an evaluation was conducted which was used to refine the course for the next year, thus following Guskey's criterion that professional development needs to be evaluated to see if it is effective and to determine if it meets the needs of the participants.

The school division also took a leadership role in the continuing professional development of its principals and vice principals. An annual conference was held, frequently in an out of town location, where participants could focus on the professional development activities. The professional development was financed by the school division so the only cost to the participants was driving to the location, frequently Gimli. Some professional development was included in the monthly meetings the school division held for principals and vice principals, and principals were encouraged to have some type of professional development on the agenda of the monthly staff meetings in their schools. The school division developed a partnership with the University of Manitoba and offered a Master's degree in educational administration to a cohort of administrators. Many of the courses were taught in school division facilities. The participants valued the opportunity to further their education within the school division. As well, the school division encouraged administrators to attend professional development opportunities at the national and international levels and very generously supported participants financially even in tough times when other school divisions and Manitoba Education were cutting back on their professional development funding. The school division wanted to ensure that its

educational leaders were capable of working in diverse settings (Grogan & Andrews, 2002; Orr, 2006; Peterson, 2002; Sherman, 2005) and remained up-to-date on research findings and trends. When administrators returned from national and international conferences, they shared their professional learning with the cadre of administrators in the school division thus extending everyone's professional knowledge.

Since professional development has been a major focus in the researcher's career it seemed quite natural to want to research the topic further by doing a literature review on the topic of professional development, leadership preparation, and effective educational leaders as well as to find answers to the many questions the researcher has had on the topic. Which organizations provide meaningful professional development? Are some forms of professional development more effective than others? Why do administrators participate in professional development? Conducting a study of professional development experiences of principals and vice principals in Manitoba appeared to the researcher to be one way of finding the answers to those important questions.

Researcher biases have been acknowledged and taken into account as a method of dealing with them. Bogdan and Biklen (2007) "acknowledge that no matter how much you try, you cannot divorce your research and writing from your past experiences, who you are, what you believe, and what you value" (p. 38). Since the researcher has over 40 years of experience in education as a teacher, vice principal, principal and assistant superintendent, and has a strong belief in developing school leaders through effective professional development which

leads to improving student achievement, the researcher was more conscious and reflective of who she is and how she interpreted the data. The vast amount of professional development in which the researcher has participated has probably affected her as a researcher. The researcher believes that improving student achievement is critical for school-based administrators and that professional development must be focused on this end. Having been a principal in an inner city school and in an upper middle class school, the researcher knows from experience that context is a very important aspect of professional development. Professional development that is based on research and data-based decision making is also essential to the development of administrators. Evaluating professional development is critical to moving forward in professional development and the researcher has extensive experience in developing evaluating instruments for professional development activities. One's past experiences cannot be divorced from one's research and writing.

### **Practical Issues**

Two practical issues related to this research have been discussed previously: securing ENREB approval in a timely manner and securing (non-financial) support for the research from COSL. A further practical issue was developing an on-line questionnaire for participants to log onto from the computers in their offices. All schools included in this study had computers, so it made sense practically, environmentally, and economically to provide the questionnaire to participants over the internet. The researcher had extensive experience in developing questionnaires, and had answered a number of on-line

surveys herself; however, the researcher had no experience in developing an on-line questionnaire. SurveyMonkey which is a commonly used web based source was used. It supported the questionnaire that was developed and provided for advanced validation, and customization of the instrument. It also was provided on a secure server so that anonymity could be maintained at all times. All these practical problems were overcome.

### **Validity and Reliability**

In quantitative research, reliability is expressed in a reliability coefficient which ranges from 0.0 to 1.0, and tells “the extent to which test scores are consistent; that is the degree to which the test scores are dependable and relatively free from random errors of measurement” (Hittleman & Simon, 2002, p. 334). The higher the reliability coefficient the more reliable are the data. Validity on the other hand is “the extent to which an instrument measures what it is intended to measure” (p. 335).

A questionnaire developed by the researcher was used in this study and the researcher established the reliability of the questionnaire before using it: “Reliability refers to the extent to which an instrument measures a variable consistently...instruments are said to have reliability when they are consistent in producing their results” (Hittleman & Simon, 2002, p. 109, 113). Before sending the questionnaire to the population, it was sent to six retired school administrators as a pilot. Because each item of the construct of professional development was measured by raters who are representative of the larger pool of administrators in the province, and because the professional development

experiences of administrators were also a cause for variation and those measured in this study represent a general sampling of the entire “pool” of possible professional development experiences, inter-rater reliability was tested for the items in Part B of the questionnaire utilizing the average measures intra-class correlation coefficient (ICC) using a two-way random effects model with consistent agreement type. This determined the reliability of all the raters averaged together, which is called the average measure intra-class correlation or the inter-rater reliability coefficient. Because this study was exploratory in nature, the consistent agreement type was utilized as it is worthwhile to check for consistency in scores rather than absolute (identical) agreement in the patterns of the scores, particularly as the instrument was in its first iteration. It was anticipated that the average measures ICC would be relatively high considering that the respondents were retired public school administrators who had undertake professional development programs. Generally, a coefficient of 0.5 to 1.0 is considered to be large, particularly in social science research where there may be a greater contribution from complicating variables. In this study, an ICC of 0.56 established good inter-rater reliability. Additionally, a matrix (Appendix E) was created that illustrated the items in the questionnaire and interview questions that relate to the research questions, as well as how they align with the empirical research literature.

Cronbach’s Alpha was used to determine the reliability of the items in the questionnaire for each research question in Part B of the questionnaire and for the items as reflecting the reliability of the instrument as a measure of the



construct of professional development. The Cronbach's Alpha coefficient was 0.56 and suggests that the test has reasonable internal consistency.

A good questionnaire must have validity and reliability (Creswell, 2005; Field, 2005; Gliner & Morgan, 2000; Hittleman & Simon, 2002; Sanders & Pinhey, 1983). Validity refers to "the extent to which an instrument measures what it is intended to measure...Instruments have validity when they are appropriate for a specific purpose and a particular population" (Hittleman & Simon, 2002, p. 109). The instrument's content validity was supported by designing items with particular attention to the research questions, the research literature as well as surveys from recent doctoral studies of a similar nature (Clendenin, 2008; Lutz, 2009; Williams, 2008). It was also piloted with six retired administrators prior to distribution for clarity and so that it accurately reflects the nature of professional development opportunities in Manitoba. The feedback received from the pilot participants indicated that the domain of aspects of professional development had been adequately sampled. The construct validity of the instrument was supported because the study was first conceptualized and designed using Guskey's research and conceptualization underpinning effective professional development. It was also supported because of the mixed methods nature of the research, whereby the researcher had the opportunity in the interviews (which included participants who were representative of the independent variables) to deepen and clarify the constructs measured in the questionnaire to add to the understandings of the phenomena. This design thereby supported the potential of generalizability of the study results.

The accuracy and comprehensiveness of data are of utmost importance to qualitative researchers. Bogdan and Biklen (2007) state that “qualitative researchers tend to view reliability as a fit between what they record as data and what actually occurs in the setting under study, rather than the literal consistency across different observations” (p. 40). This means that reliability would be questioned only if the study yielded “contradictory or incompatible results” (p. 40). Qualitative researchers are concerned with the meaningfulness of their research (some would label this validity); quantitative researchers are concerned with reliability and replication in their research (Taylor & Bogdan, 1998, p. 9). Although qualitative researchers are not usually concerned with the replication of their study, since the real world changes daily, they are concerned with “the trustworthiness of their data. They can keep thorough notes and records of their activities, and they can keep their data in a well-organized and retrievable form” (Hittleman & Simon, 2002, p. 150).

In qualitative research, the following points speak to data reliability: the method is explained and there is an abundance of evidence; the researcher’s qualifications as a participant observer are provided; the assumptions of the researcher are clear; the research questions are clearly stated, and the study seeks to answer those questions and may generate further questions; the data were collected from a number of sources; and the data were saved for reanalysis (Hittleman & Simon, 2002, p. 150). These points were observed in this study, which increased the trustworthiness of the data which was collected. In addition, because the study utilized mixed methods, the open-ended data from the

questionnaires could be compared to that of the interviews to further cross-check the findings.

The interview data must also have validity. Lincoln and Guba (1985, p. 300) have developed specific terms for judging the validity of qualitative research (credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability). Credibility means “the presence of multiple realities and attempts to represent these multiple realities adequately” (Hoepfl, 1997, p. 58). For the interview data collected in this research study, the technique used to establish credibility was member checks (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) where participants were given opportunities to review the interview transcripts thus ensuring the plausibility and integrity of the research study. According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), the researcher must provide sufficient information so that the reader of the research can decide on the transferability of the findings to a new situation. In this study the findings may be generalizable to other provinces in Canada.

Dependability refers to the degree to which the research design is adequate for the purposes of the study when reviewed by others. Lincoln and Guba (1985) state: “Since there can be no validity without reliability (and thus no credibility without dependability), a demonstration of the former is sufficient to establish the latter” (p. 316). For the purposes of this study, dependability was established through the committee review process, in addition to the fact that participants and readers of the study were provided with details of the research design, and the procedures for collecting and analyzing data. Lastly, Lincoln and Guba (1985) discuss confirmability which refers to the degree to which the

researcher can demonstrate the neutrality of the research interpretations. An audit trail was provided that consists of raw data, analysis notes, reconstruction and synthesis products, process notes, and preliminary developmental information (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, pp. 320-321).

By following the procedures outlined above for validity and reliability, this research study meets the criteria as a disciplined inquiry which has both good validity and good reliability.

### **Data Analysis**

Data analysis is a way of making sense of all the information from the research study. Creswell (2005) indicates that “analysis consists of ‘taking the data apart’ to determine individual responses and then ‘putting it together’ to summarize it” (p. 10). When researchers analyze and interpret data they organize data so they can draw conclusions; represent data in tables and figures to summarize data; and explain the conclusions drawn to provide answers to the research questions (Creswell, 2005). Depending on the data collection techniques used in a study, each data set is analyzed in a different way.

Data from the questionnaire were presented as descriptive statistics, means and percentages because the sub-groups were small. The variable “position” (principal, vice principal) was used most often in the analysis because it was meaningful. The anecdotal data from the questionnaire were analyzed and coded according to the research questions in order to determine consistent patterns and themes. Additionally, the data were analyzed using the matrix that was created for the quantitative and qualitative data so that each piece of

evidence was linked to the research questions, both methods used, and the research literature.

Lincoln and Guba (1985) state: “data analysis is not a matter of data *reduction*, as is frequently claimed, but of *induction*” (p. 333). Data analysis for the interview data involved a process of arranging the transcripts to enable the researcher to come up with findings. Bogdan and Biklen (2007) state that “analysis involves working with the data, organizing them, breaking them into manageable units, coding them, synthesizing them, and searching for patterns” (p. 159). Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggest three ways that themes can be identified: (1) consensus themes (when the majority of the participants state the same theme); (2) supported themes (when approximately half the participants state a theme); and (3) individual themes (when only one or two participants state a theme). Inductive and deductive analyses of the data from the interviews of this research study were used for the purposes of generalization into meaningful units that were used to identify themes and patterns in the data related to the research questions.

### **Dissemination of Information**

Interview transcripts were sent to the participants so they could be checked for accuracy. A presentation on the research findings will be made to the COSL at its conferences or seminars or at a Directors’ meeting. School divisions and universities in Manitoba will be informed of the research results through presentations of findings and written reports that will be submitted for presentation at educational conferences. Professional organizations (e.g., MTS,

MCLE, local chapters of COSL) will be provided with opportunities to learn about the research findings through presentations and workshops and a report on this research will be submitted for publication to an educational journal.

### **Time Lines**

This research study was initiated with an invitation to respond to the questionnaire emailed to all principals and vice principals in Manitoba in April 2010. Based on the responses to the questionnaire requesting interview participants, interviews as well as member checks took place from June to September 2010.

### **Summary**

This chapter has presented the research design for the study of effective leadership and the professional growth needs of principals and vice principals in Manitoba. The plan included: research design, purpose of the study, research questions, methods, participants, ethical and practical issues, validity and reliability, data analysis, dissemination of information, and time lines. The research questions were answered in a mixed methods study using quantitative and qualitative methods. Issues such as participant selection and access, ethical and practical issues were stated and solutions were developed. How to ensure valid, dependable, reliable and trustworthy evidence was addressed as well.

## **Chapter Four: Findings**

### **Introduction**

This chapter presents the data collected and analyzed as it related to the four research questions of this study. The research questions were:

- 1) What benefits do principals and vice principals in Manitoba perceive have accrued in their development as educational leaders, as a consequence of the professional development in which they have participated?
- 2) What types of professional development do principals and vice principals in Manitoba perceive as being the most beneficial for developing effective educational leaders and/or improving student achievement, and why?
- 3) In what professional development experiences in the areas of leadership, instruction, management and personnel (areas designated by Manitoba Education as being important for the certification of administrators) have principals and vice principals in Manitoba engaged, for what purpose and in what context?
- 4) How might formal leadership organizations in Manitoba more effectively create meaningful formalized professional development opportunities for the development of effective school-based administrators?

This chapter is organized around the research questions with the findings related to each question reported in a separate section. Some findings overlap research questions and they have been reported in only one section rather than

being repeated. Each section concludes with a summary of the findings and responds as well to the following four areas as they relate directly to the research questions: (a) the purposes for which principals and vice principals engaged in professional development experiences; (b) the nature of professional development in which they engaged based on Manitoba Education's four focus areas (leadership, instruction, management, and personnel); (c) reflections on the effectiveness of the professional development using Guskey's four criteria as a lens (improving student outcomes, context, research-based decision making, and evaluation of professional development); and (d) the value of administrator certification as a means of promoting effective leadership.

This was a mixed-methods study which employed both a questionnaire (Appendix A) and in-person interviews (Appendix B). The matrices (Appendix E) outline which items of the questionnaire and interview questions relate to the research questions, as well as how they align with the empirical research literature. Appendix F contains supplementary tables. Questionnaire data and interview data are provided in each of the next five sections.

### **Characteristics of the Respondents**

The following sections describe the demographic characteristics of both the questionnaire respondents and the interview respondents.

#### **Questionnaire Respondents**

The web link to the questionnaire was emailed by COSL to 682 principals and 342 vice principals in April 2010, who represented the school-based administrators in public schools in Manitoba at that time. The ratio of principals to



vice principals was 2:1. The number of female and male administrators in Manitoba was not available from Manitoba Education, and neither were the years of experience, years in position, level of certification, advanced degrees, the level of schools (early, middle, senior years) or locations (urban, rural, north). Therefore, no ratios for these variables could be determined by the researcher. Manitoba Education could not provide these data. Therefore, the variable position (principals, vice principals) will be the main variable used in the data analysis. Table 1 shows the characteristics of the questionnaire respondents. Data for Table 1 came from Appendix A, Section A, Questions 1 – 6.

**Table 1: Characteristics of Questionnaire Respondents (N=78)**

Characteristics	Principals		Vice Principals	
	Female	Male	Female	Male
Gender	29	34	8	7
Mean Years of Experience	10.015		6.2	
By Gender	8.068	11.353	5.375	7.143
No. with Level 1 Certificate	23		6	
By Gender	9	14	1	5
No. with both Level 1 and 2 Certificates	24		4	
By Gender	9	15	2	2
No. with Masters Degrees	22		6	
By Gender	8	14	3	3
No. with Post-Baccalaureate	17		2	
By Gender	8	9	1	1
Levels of Schools Included: Early Years	21	21	3	0
Middle Years	5	2	2	2
Senior Years	6	10	3	5
Geographic Locations: Urban	11	15	6	3
Rural	15	16	1	3
North	3	3	1	1

Eighty-four school-based administrators began the survey (8.2% of the total sample); however, only 78 (7.6%) completed it. Due to the modest return rate, in some cases incomplete questionnaire data have been used, and

therefore percentages will vary as the number of participants who answered certain questions varied. The respondents to the questionnaire were 80.8% principals, 19.2% vice principals yet in the province, the population is 67% principals and 33% vice principals. The results may appear to be biased towards the perspectives of principals but the researcher has attempted to provide a balanced picture by using data from both principals and vice principals if there are major differences in their perspectives. As well, 47.4% females and 52.6% males responded. The mean years of experience for principals was 10.1 years with a range from one to 25 years while the mean years of experience for vice principals was 6.2 with a range from one to 15 years. No respondents had doctoral degrees, but 35.9% had Master's degrees and 24.4% had Post-Baccalaureate diplomas (Appendix A, Section A, Question 7). The percentage of school-based administrators with Level 1 certificates was 37.2% and those with both Level 1 and 2 certificates was 35.9%, while 26.9% had neither Level 1 nor 2 certificates. The fact that these certificates are not a requirement in Manitoba, and only 25% of respondents do not have at least Level 1 could be reflective of the turnover of administrators who are just now getting administrative positions and are working on their certificates.

The majority (65%) of principals who responded were working in early years schools while the majority (53%) of vice principals who responded were working in senior years schools. Respondents working in either urban or rural school divisions was 44.9% for each context and 10.2% were working in northern school divisions. Generally, the respondents were representative of the

population of principals and vice principals in the province. There was no way of knowing exactly where over-representations or under-representations might lie in this study as the actual data on these categories for Manitoba were not available to the researcher. The researcher has attempted to provide a balanced picture for the province.

As many of the sub-groups are composed of very small numbers, care must be taken when interpreting the results of the questionnaire as they may not be representative of the broad educational community of which they are a part. However, seeing how they compare to the other sub-groups helps to enrich the study findings.

Questionnaire respondents were asked whether and with what frequency they engage in professional development activities. All respondents indicate that they do participate in professional development activities. Table 2 provides the frequency of participation in the professional development activities identified in the questionnaire. The professional development activities listed in Table 2 were used throughout this study in a number of tables. The data for Table 2 came from question B.1.a of the Questionnaire (Appendix A).

Engaging in professional reading of journals and books six or more times a year was reported by 68.9% of respondents. This was the activity that the questionnaire respondents indicated they participated in most frequently. This is an independent activity, easily accessible, and may be engaged in at the convenience of the individual (during the school day, in the evenings, or on weekends). Engaging in school division sponsored workshops for administrators

two to five times a year was reported by 54.7% of respondents. Engaging once a year in school division sponsored conferences for administrators was reported by 44.6% of respondents, in the COSL conference by 47.4%; and in COSL SAG conferences by 45.8%.

**Table 2: Percentages of Respondents Reporting Their Frequency of Participation in Selected Professional Development Activities (N=76)**

Professional Development Activities	Never	Once Every 2 Years	Once a Year	2 to 5 Times a Year	6 or More Times a Year
School Division Conferences	18.9%	5.4%	44.6%	25.7%	5.4%
School Division Workshops	8.0%	4.0%	16.0%	54.7%	17.3%
COSL Conferences	19.7%	32.9%	47.4%	0.0%*	0.0%*
COSL SAG Conferences	23.6%	30.6%	45.8%	0.0%*	0.0%*
COSL Summer Institute	75.4%	20.3%	4.3%	0.0%*	0.0%*
Northern Administrators Summer Institute	95.9%	4.1%	0.0%	0.0%*	0.0%*
Regional P D Activities	20.0%	24.0%	26.7%	28.0%	1.3%
MTS Conferences for Administrators	66.7%	24.0%	8.0%	1.3%	0.0%
MTS Workshops for Administrators	47.3%	29.7%	18.9%	4.1%	0.0%
MCLE Workshops	70.8%	20.8%	6.9%	0.0%	1.4%
Learning Communities	26.4%	11.1%	8.3%	31.9%	22.2%
Study Groups	41.1%	11.1%	19.2%	21.9%	6.8%
Being a Mentor	36.6%	15.5%	16.9%	19.7%	11.3%
Being a recipient of Mentoring	64.8%	11.3%	5.6%	12.7%	5.6%
University Courses in Ed Admin	55.2%	16.4%	11.9%	14.9%	1.5%
Professional Reading	4.1%	1.4%	8.1%	17.6%	68.9%

Note: \*offered only once a year.

Respondents are actively engaged in professional development activities with the most popular being professional reading and learning communities.

### Interview Participants

Interview participants were selected from volunteers who emailed the researcher with their interest in being interviewed after having completed the on-line questionnaire. Ten principals and five vice principals were randomly selected to draw a representative sample. Care was taken to ensure that the 15

volunteers represented the independent variables (position, gender, location, and level of school) and provided a representative sample of the larger population. The fifteen school-based administrators selected for the interviews - ten principals and five vice principals represents a 2:1 ratio similar to the ratio of principals and vice principals in Manitoba at that time. The in-person interviews took place between June and September 2010. Table 3 shows the characteristics of the interview participants. The data for Table 3 came from questions A.2 and B.1 of the Interview Questions Protocol (Appendix B).

**Table 3: Characteristics of Interview Participants (N=15)**

Characteristics	Principals		Vice Principals	
	Female	Male	Female	Male
Gender	4	6	2	3
Mean Years of Experience	8.34		5.1	
By Gender	7.375	7.714	5.25	5
No. with Level 1 Certificate	8		3	
By Gender	3	5	1	2
No. with both Level 1 and 2 Certificates	4		2	
By Gender	1	3	1	1
No. with Masters Degrees	4		2	
By Gender	1	3	1	1
No. with Post-Baccalaureate	5		1	
By Gender	3	2	0	1
Levels of Schools Included: Early Years	2	1	1	0
Middle Years	1	1	0	1
Senior Years	0	1	1	1
Early/Middle Years	0	3	0	1
Middle/Senior Years	1	0	0	0
Geographic Locations: Urban	3	3	1	2
Rural	1	3	0	0
North	0	0	1	1

Those interviewed consisted of 66.7% principals, 33.3% vice principals, 40% females and 60% males. The mean years of experience for principals was 8.3 years with a range from one to 12 years while the mean years of experience

for vice principals was 5.1 with a range from one to 10 years. No participants had a doctoral degree, 40% had a Master's degree and 40% had a Post-Baccalaureate diploma. The percentage of school-based administrators with Level 1 certificates was 73.3% and those with both Level 1 and 2 certificates was 40%, while 26.6% had neither Level 1 nor 2 certificates. Of the principals interviewed 60% were working in early years schools while 40% of vice principals interviewed were working in senior years schools. These characteristics are very similar to the questionnaire respondents. Those interviewed working in urban school divisions was 60%, in rural school divisions 26.6%, and in northern school divisions 13.3%.

The interviews began with asking the participants why they had become administrators. Eight (six principals and two vice principals) wanted to make a difference and influence change. One participant commented: "When I first wanted to become an administrator, I was working with a principal who was very collaborative and who involved me in school plans. I found that that was a way to effect change." Another participant stated: "As a teacher I realized what a big difference a great principal made." A third participant commented: "Through reading and practical experience I knew that the good schools I worked with were always led by a great principal." Seven (three principals and four vice principals) responded that they had been encouraged and/or approached by their administrators to become school-based administrators. One participant stated: "I became an administrator a little bit by accident. An assistant superintendent asked me to become a high school vice principal. I didn't want to go because I

liked my job. In the end I was convinced that it would be a good route for me to go; so I did. It really wasn't the path I had chosen, it was more the path that was thrown in front of me." A second participant commented: "People I'd consider mentors came along and said, 'Have you thought about becoming an administrator?'" Two participants (one principal and one vice principal) commented that they needed a change so they moved into administration. One commented: "I thought I had the skills so I gave it a try."

When asked how prepared they felt for their work as an administrator prior to their appointment, six (four principals and two vice principals) indicated they felt prepared; five (four principals and one vice principal) felt they were not prepared; while four (two principals and two vice principals) felt somewhat prepared. Those that had been vice principals prior to becoming principals felt better prepared than those who had not been vice principals. One principal commented: "Before my appointment I felt prepared. Shortly after my appointment I didn't feel that prepared." A vice principal commented: "I don't think you can ever be prepared for the role of an administrator until you do the role." Participants who had participated in school division leadership development programs felt that these programs helped in their preparation for administration.

### **Research Question #1**

The first research question asked what benefits principals and vice principals in Manitoba perceive have accrued in their development as educational leaders, as a consequence of the professional development in which they have participated. Findings from both the questionnaire and interviews are

delineated below.

### Questionnaire Respondents

The questionnaire respondents in this study were asked to identify the reasons for their participation in professional development activities and were encouraged to indicate all that apply. Therefore the number of reasons and the percentages are higher than they would be if respondents were only allowed to indicate one purpose. The responses from all participants in their order of frequency are reported in Table 4. The data for Table 4 came from question C.1 of the Questionnaire (Appendix A).

**Table 4: Reasons for Participating in Professional Development Activities by Number and Percentage of Respondents (N=54)**

<b>Answer Options</b>	<b>Response Percent</b>	<b>Response Count</b>
To further develop my administrative knowledge and skills	96.3%	52
To improve student achievement	94.4%	51
To learn something new	87.0%	47
To engage in conversations about education with my peers	83.3%	45
To obtain my Level 1 and/or Level 2 Certificate	46.3%	25
It is a requirement of my school division	40.7%	22
To obtain my Master's Degree in Educational Administration	25.9%	14
To increase my salary level	16.7%	9
To obtain my Post Baccalaureate Diploma in Education	14.8%	8
Other	3.7%	2

Of those who responded to this question (N=54), 96.3% indicated the purpose for participating in professional development activities was to develop their administrative knowledge and skills. This included 95.2% principals (90.5% female, 100% male, 100% urban, 94.4% rural, 75% northern, 96.4% early years, 100% middle years, 90% senior years) and 100% vice principals regardless of subcategories. The second most-often cited purpose indicated by 94.4% (N=51)



was to participate in professional development activities to improve student achievement in their schools. This included 92.9% principals (90.5% female, 95.2% male, 95% urban, 94.4% rural, 75% northern, 92.9% early years, 100% middle years, 90% senior years) and 100% vice principals of all sub-groups. These findings become significant given the leadership literature on the nature of professional development for school leaders and will be articulated more fully in chapter five. Those respondents who indicated “Other” gave the following reasons: “To role model to my staff and admin colleagues that professional learning is important.” “It is a very difficult and complicated job. It is impossible to know all that is necessary without input.” “Personal/professional interest.”

Subsequent to asking the reasons for school-based administrators to continue participating in professional development activities, questionnaire respondents were asked to identify, from all of their reasons, the one purpose which was their primary motivation for them to continue with their professional development. Respondents were allowed to indicate one response only. Table 5 presents those results. The data for Table 5 came from question C.1 of the Questionnaire (Appendix A).

Of the 53 respondents to the question, only 30.2% indicated that the primary purpose for them to continue with their professional development was to improve student achievement; a higher proportion of individuals (47.2%) suggested that their primary purpose was to further develop their administrative knowledge and skills. This was puzzling given that the research literature (Guskey, 2003a; Leithwood & Jantzi, 2006, 2008; Leithwood & Levin, 2005;

Leithwood et al, 2004) suggests that improving student learning is the primary purpose. It may be that the day-to-day management of the school, personnel issues and accountability issues are getting in the way of focusing on student achievement.

**Table 5: Primary Purpose for Participating in Professional Development Activities by Number and Percentage of Respondents (N=53)**

<b>Answer Options</b>	<b>Response Percent</b>	<b>Response Count</b>
To further develop my administrative knowledge and skills	47.2%	25
To improve student achievement	30.2%	16
To engage in conversations about education with my peers	9.4%	5
To obtain my Level 1 and/or Level 2 Certificate	5.7%	3
To learn something new	3.8%	2
To obtain my Master's Degree in Educational Administration	3.8%	2
It is a requirement of my school division	0.0%	0
To increase my salary level	0.0%	0
To obtain my Post Baccalaureate Diploma in Education	0.0%	0
Other	0.0%	0

The breakdown for the purpose of student achievement by sub-groups was 36.6% all principals, 8.3% all vice principals, 23.8% female principals, 20.0% female vice principals, 50% male principals, 0% male vice principals, 45% urban principals, 16.7% urban vice principals, 29.4% rural principals, 25% northern principals, 0% rural and northern vice principals, 29,6% early years principals, 0% early years vice principals, 25% middle years principals, 33.3% middle years vice principals, 60% senior years principals, and 0% senior years vice principals. The breakdown for vice principals may seem disturbing but given the expectations of the role of vice principals, it is reasonable to suggest that further developing their administrative knowledge and skills is a higher priority.

Of those responding, 47.2% said that the primary purpose for continuing

with professional development was for further developing administrative knowledge and skills. The breakdown by sub-groups was 41.5% all principals, 66.7% all vice principals, 42.9% female principals, 60.0% female vice principals, 40% male principals, 71.4% male vice principals, 30% urban principals, 83.3% urban vice principals, 47.1% rural principals, 50% rural vice principals, 75% northern principals, 50% northern vice principals, 44.4% early years principals, 100% early years vice principals, 25% middle years principals, 66.7% middle years vice principals, 40% senior years principals, and 62.5% senior years vice principals.

One respondent to the questionnaire commented: "I find that any professional development opportunities that occur in conjunction with other administrators, and that are followed up in a professional learning community tend to be the most productive in influencing student achievement."

Respondents indicated that most of the professional development activities in which they have participated are premised upon a strong research foundation. Table 6a indicates which professional development activities school-based administrators perceive as being premised on a strong research foundation that is evident and/or highly evident in their perceptions. Tables 6b and 6c in Appendix F contain the breakdown by location in the Province and by type of school. The data for Tables 6a, 6b and 6c came from question B.1.f of the Questionnaire (Appendix A).

Rated the highest in all sub-groups was professional reading (N=55; 90.7%) which included professional journals and books. This was not surprising

given that many school-based administrators subscribe to educational journals and many superintendents provide school-based administrators with educational books to read and subsequently discuss.

**Table 6a: Percentages of Respondents Who Perceive that Professional Development Activities are Evidently or Highly Evidently Based on a Strong Research Foundation (N=55)**

Professional Development Activities	All Respondents (n=55)	Principals		Vice Principals	
		Female (n=20)	Male (n=22)	Female (n=6)	Male (n=7)
Professional Reading	90.7%	84.2%	100.0%	83.3%	85.7%
COSL Conferences	65.6%	45.0%	61.9%	50.0%	71.5%
School Division Workshops	61.8%	65.0%	68.2%	50.0%	42.9%
Learning Communities	60.7%	72.2%	55.0%	66.7%	42.9%
School Division Conferences	59.2%	68.4%	59.1%	50.0%	42.9%
Study Groups	50.0%	58.8%	35.0%	66.7%	57.2%
University Courses in Ed Admin	50.0%	44.4%	52.4%	50.0%	57.2%
COSL SAG Conferences	48.1%	38.9%	52.4%	33.3%	71.5%
Regional P D Activities	41.2%	42.1%	42.1%	33.3%	42.9%
Being a Mentor	36.7%	12.6%	60.0%	33.3%	28.6%
MTS Workshops for Administrators	28.5%	17.6%	36.9%	16.7%	42.9%
MTS Conferences for Administrators	26.5%	17.6%	31.6%	16.7%	42.9%
Being a recipient of Mentoring	22.0%	17.7%	15.0%	50.0%	28.6%
MCLE Workshops	21.3%***	12.6%	33.3%	0.0%	28.6%
COSL Summer Institute	20.0%**	16.7%	21.1%	33.3%	14.3%
Northern Administrators Summer Institute	4.0%*	5.6%	0.0%	16.7%	0.0%

Notes: \* 94.0% indicated not applicable.

\*\* 72% indicated not applicable.

\*\*\* 70.2% indicated not applicable.

Also of interest, except for COSL conferences and university coursework, those professional development opportunities that half or more of the respondents suggested had a research foundation were initiatives that tended to be undertaken personally or at the local school division level. There are also means of engaging in professional development in independent, relatively cost-effective, and time-opportune ways on topics of personal or local interest.

Mentoring and being a recipient of mentoring were rated as being based

on an evident or highly evident research foundation by 36.7% and 22.0% respectively of the respondents. The research is very specific on the benefits of being a mentor or being mentored (Crippen & Wallin, 2008; Kline, 1987; LeTendre & Roberts, 2005; Mitang, 2007; Silver, Lochmiller, Copland, & Tripps, 2009); however, participants did not view the activity of mentoring itself as having a research foundation as mentoring usually involves listening to one another and problem solving or offering advice.

The female vice principals' sub-group rated only two activities as having a highly evident research foundation: COSL Conferences and university courses both at 16.7%. All the other activities for this sub-group were rated at 0.0% for highly evident, though higher percentages were listed for the category of "evident" for these activities as found in Table 6a.

The Northern Administrators' Summer Institute was rated very low at 4% for evidence of being based on a research foundation. However, one must bear in mind that only eight respondents in the sample, worked in northern school divisions and it remains unclear if any attended the institute. Of the 50 questionnaire respondents to this question, 94% (N=47) rated this activity as not applying to them while 2% (N=1) was neutral as to whether this activity is based upon a strong research foundation. In addition, MCLE Workshops and the COSL Summer Institute had high rates of "not applicable" responses, which likely suggests that individuals have not attended these events and therefore were unable to comment upon them. The COSL Summer Institute was previously sponsored by MCLE and questionnaire respondents may not have recognized

the more recent sponsor thus indicating the Summer Institute as “not applicable”.

“Not evident” was rated at 0% for 14 of the 16 activities. This should be viewed as positive in that school-based administrators recognize the research foundation of the activities. School division conferences and workshops premised upon a strong research foundation were rated as not evident 1.9% and 1.8% respectively; however, respondents indicated that the strong research foundation was evident or highly evident 59.2% and 61.8% respectively.

In order to ensure that respondents were able to identify other learning opportunities and to offer their own commentaries on those options identified in the questionnaire, an open-ended question was used. In the open-ended question in this section of the questionnaire, one respondent commented: “I attended a strategic planning presentation once and actually was able to utilize the strategies in my own school to diffuse a confrontation between parents and myself.” Another one stated that: “learning how to use data to drive change”, and, “identifying sources of data and interpreting data meaningfully” were benefits accrued in this person’s development as an effective educational leader. A third respondent commented: “I believe that learning is ongoing and administrators must keep abreast of what research is currently advocating as best practice.”

### **Interview Participants**

The interview participants identified multiple benefits principals and vice principals perceive have accrued in their development as educational leaders as a consequence of the professional development activities in which they have participated. All participants indicated that they had benefited to some degree

from the professional development activities in which they had participated. No one indicated that the professional development activities in which they had participated had been a waste of their time. The data for the themes identified came from questions A.2, A.3, B.1, B. 2, and C.1 of the Interview Questions Protocol (Appendix B).

All fifteen principals and vice principals interviewed had been a mentor and were mentored. They indicated that both were very beneficial. One principal commented: “I admired all of my mentors. They had amazing people personalities and understood and appreciated me as a person. Two in particular appreciated how hard people worked but always reminded me to take time for myself and to slow down. I appreciated this especially in my first few years as an administrator. In mentoring others I respond promptly and try to understand them as individuals.” Another principal stated: “I have had several mentors. I also self-reflect as well. I’ve looked to a number of people and I pick on their strengths. We all have strengths. I look at administrators to network with both inside and outside of the division. The demographics have changed over the last number of years so we have to focus on mentorship and the leadership pool.” One vice principal commented: “On the job mentoring from the principal has been the most helpful in preparing me as a vice principal. A retired administrator was a visionary and very creative. This opened my eyes to another way of thinking.”

Being part of the divisional leadership program helped to develop strong networks for school-based administrators. Ten of those interviewed spoke very positively about the leadership development program in their school divisions.

One principal commented: “The best experience that was most helpful to me was the divisional internship program. It helped me obtain my Level 1 certificate. It also helped me develop networks with administrators.” Another principal commented: “The division’s leadership development course was most helpful to me. It was designed to take a look at things you would find in your position. I found the networking and talking with people who were already in administration very helpful. I got a good picture of what it was really like rather than a textbook picture.” A third principal commented: “I started the division leadership courses while I was a teacher and continued them while I have been an administrator. Those were very useful in terms of management and dealing with personnel issues: talking about interviewing, staff issues and how to deal with staff.”

Having a background in special education (resource, counseling, inclusion) was viewed as helpful in the development of educational leaders (N=5). One principal commented: “I don’t see how a person can do the principalship without a really solid grounding in inclusion – in terms of understanding the whole concept of inclusion. The counseling training I have had has been invaluable to me in working with parents who are struggling and staff members who are struggling. I have had a good year because of that solid grounding I have had.” Another principal commented: “The one area that I am really struggling with is resource. I am learning as much as I can about student services because I don’t have the background or training in it.” A third principal commented: “Being a school counselor at both elementary and secondary was sort of like a mini administrator. The only thing you don’t do is the staffing piece,



but you do the timetabling and some budgeting. Counseling also helped prepare me to be a good listener.” A vice principal commented: “I have no background in special education or inclusion. However, the two principals I have worked with have helped me develop a better understanding on inclusion by including me in developing individual education plans for special needs students”.

Professional development activities help school-based administrators to think “outside of the box” meaning creatively (N=3). One principal who was very involved in developing professional development activities for school-based administrators in the division commented: “When I was chair of the p.d. committee I wanted the focus to be creativity so we could look at things in a different way. When I left that committee at the end of last year they continued on with the same thing by looking at opportunities outside of the box.”

Professional development assists school-based administrators in linking research to practice (N=4). One principal commented: “I studied the research on learning styles and multiple intelligences. I use this information with my staff and had them assess their learning styles because if you know that it is much easier to talk to people in a way they will appreciate and understand.” Another principal commented: “The research I have done on restitution has influenced what I do with students in my building.” A third principal commented: “Research on restitution has helped my understanding. I have used restitution every day.” A vice principal commented: “Research on assessment has allowed me to help teachers who were going through the new assessment. I was able to offer and demonstrate different assessment techniques that teachers could use.”

One principal viewed the benefits accrued this way: “It is hard to take something ‘lock stock and barrel’ and use it in your school. Professional development activities bring clarity to me that there is no cookie cutter that works. You have to take all of the pieces and see what makes sense for your school and see what pieces fit.” The school-based administrators interviewed indicated that they apply what they have learned in professional development activities to the improvement of their schools, but this study did not investigate the actual extent to which this took place.

### **Summary**

The most common reasons for participating in professional development activities for questionnaire respondents were to develop their administrative knowledge and skills, to improve student achievement, to learn something new, and to engage in educational conversations with their peers. Interview participants supported these benefits as well. Local and individual professional development opportunities were mentioned by more than half of the respondents as being effective or highly effective in developing school leaders, with the additions of COSL conferences, COSL SAG conferences, and university courses in Educational Administration.

Research has shown that school-based administrators do not have a direct influence on student learning because they are not in the classrooms with the students. According to Guskey (2003a) and the primary educational leadership experts on leadership and student learning (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2006, 2008; Leithwood & Levin, 2005; Leithwood et al, 2004), the fundamental goal and

the principal criterion for effectiveness of professional development must be “improvements in student learning outcomes” (Guskey, 2003a, p. 750). However, only one-third of the school-based administrators involved in this study agreed that the primary purpose for their engagement in professional development was to improve student learning outcomes. Engagement for improving knowledge and skills was higher. In fact the findings of this study suggest that administrators are engaging in professional development for their own benefit over that of the students.

There may be a few reasons for this finding, For example one could speculate that the demographic of administrators in Manitoba could be reflective of a younger, less experienced group of administrators as evidenced in the sample who are living in a “sink or swim” environment of administration (although no comparative data about the experience of administrators from other years were available) or are being affected by increasing accountability and legal restraints. School-based administrators could reasonably believe that developing the “hard skills” of administration will improve the school and meet the expectations/ standards imposed on them by the school division and the Department of Education. They might think that in learning how to deal with system requirements, they will be able to achieve a sense of efficacy and autonomy that will allow them to innovate on behalf of their students. It stands to reason that mixed motives may be at work here, with a combination of engaging in professional development for both personal development and career advancement and the improvement of student learning. For example, a principal

may choose to develop her/his skills in order to move into a larger school with more resources (and a higher salary) and then put efforts into making a difference for students there.

The research of Guskey (2002, 2003a) suggests that professional development should have content based on research data in order to be considered effective. These are the first two of his criteria for effectiveness. Both questionnaire respondents and interview participants recognize the importance of the research foundation for professional development activities and the use of research-based content and data in their decision making. Interestingly, except for COSL conferences and university coursework, participants tend to consider local school division and/or individual opportunities for professional development as those that have the strongest research foundation. The COSL Summer Institute, MCLE workshops and the Northern administrators' summer institute consistently receive the lowest scores, though the data for the latter professional development opportunities are suspect given the very small sample of administrators who self-identified as being from the North and that many respondents had likely not attended these three events as evidenced by the high responses of "not applicable".

### **Research Question #2**

The second research question focused on the types of professional development that principals and vice principals in Manitoba perceive as being the most beneficial for developing effective educational leaders and/or improving student achievement.

## Questionnaire Respondents

The questionnaire used in this study listed the professional development activities participated in by principals and vice principals. Table 7a indicates which activities school-based administrators perceived as being the most beneficial for improving student achievement. Tables 7b and 7c in Appendix F provide the information for the other sub-groups. The data for Tables 7a, 7b and 7c came from question B.1.e of the Questionnaire (Appendix A).

**Table 7a: Percentages of Respondents Who Perceive that Professional Development Activities Have Been Effective or Very Effective in Fostering the Ability to Affect Student Learning (N=58)**

Professional Development Activities	All Respondents (n=58)	Principals		Vice Principals	
		Female (n=22)	Male (n=23)	Female (n=6)	Male (n=7)
Professional Reading	74.5%	70.0%	81.8%	83.3%	57.1%
Learning Communities	64.8%	75.0%	61.9%	66.7%	42.9%
Study Groups	55.6%	70.0%	42.8%	66.7%	42.9%
School Division Workshops	55.1%	77.3%	56.5%	16.7%	14.3%
School Division Conferences	52.6%	71.4%	52.2%	16.7%	28.6%
COSL Conferences	49.1%	54.5%	54.5%	33.3%	28.6%
Regional P D Activities	45.3%	55.0%	35.0%	33.3%	57.1%
COSL SAG Conferences	42.6%	50.0%	47.6%	16.7%	28.6%
Being a Mentor	41.5%	31.6%	57.1%	33.3%	28.6%
University Courses in Ed Admin	33.3%	26.3%	45.4%	33.3%	14.3%
Being a recipient of Mentoring	30.2%	31.6%	28.6%	50.0%	14.3%
MTS Workshops for Administrators	25.0%	36.8%	10.0%	33.3%	28.6%
MTS Conferences for Administrators	23.1%	26.3%	15.0%	33.3%	28.6%
MCLE Workshops	9.6% **	10.6%	15.0%	0.0%	0.0%
COSL Summer Institute	9.4% ***	15.0%	10.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Northern Administrators Summer Institute	5.7% *	10.0%	5.0%	0.0%	0.0%

Notes: \* 88.7% indicated not applicable.

\*\* 71.2% indicated not applicable.

\*\*\* 69.8% indicated not applicable.

It must be noted that the questionnaire did not provide a definition of “effective” educational leaders, thus relying on the perception of the individual respondents to determine what “effective” meant. Rated the highest overall was

professional reading (74.5%) which included professional journals and books. This was not surprising given that many school-based administrators subscribe to educational journals; many superintendents provide educational books to school based administrators; book studies are conducted in some school divisions; professional reading can take place at a time and place convenient for the individual; and assessment of, for and as learning has been a focus of Manitoba Education and thus school divisions for the last few years. In addition, for this question, the only professional development opportunities for which over half of the respondents indicated were effective or highly effective in fostering the individual's ability to affect student learning were local school-division based and individual opportunities.

The female principals and the urban vice principals sub-groups rated learning communities the highest (75% and 71.5% respectively) as being very effective or effective for influencing student learning. The male principals, female vice principals, early years and senior years principals and vice principals, and rural vice principals sub-groups rated professional reading the highest (81.8%, 83.3%, 75%, 90%, 100%, 62.5%, 75% respectively). The male vice principals sub-group rated both professional reading and regional professional development activities the highest at 57.1%. Urban principals rated school division workshops the highest at 80.9% while urban vice principals rated learning communities, study groups and professional reading the highest at 71.5%. This represents quite a variation between the sub-groups.

For all respondents, the Northern Administrators' Summer Institute and

MTS conferences and workshops for administrators had 0% ratings for being very effective in fostering their ability to affect student learning. No reasons were given for why the MTS conferences and workshops were not rated as very effective for fostering the individual's ability to affect student learning. The respondents also found the activities to be of some use as 12 of the 16 activities had 0% for very ineffective. In addition, the Northern Administrators' Summer Institute, MCLE Workshops and the COSL Summer Institute were rated most lowly in effectiveness, but as in the prior section, findings should be interpreted with caution given the high response rates for the category of "not applicable."

Table 8a indicates which activities school-based administrators perceived as being the most beneficial for developing them as administrators. Tables 8b and 8c in Appendix F provide the details for other sub-groups. The data for Tables 8a, 8b and 8c came from question B.1.h of the Questionnaire (Appendix A).

Once again professional reading was rated the highest overall. Female and male vice principals, urban and senior years principals, urban, northern, early, middle and senior years vice principals' sub-groups rated professional reading the highest at 100%. Male principals rated professional reading the highest at 90.5%.

Similar to the findings for the questions outlined above, local and individual professional development opportunities were mentioned by more than half of the respondents as being effective or highly effective in developing school leaders, with the additions of COSL conferences, COSL SAG conferences, and

university courses in Educational Administration.

**Table 8a: Percentages of Respondents Who Perceive that Involvement in Professional Development Activities are Effective or Very Effective in Their Development as Administrators (N=54)**

Professional Development Activities	All Respondents (n=54)	Principals		Vice Principals	
		Female (n=21)	Male (n=21)	Female (n=5)	Male (n=7)
Professional Reading	90.7%	85.7%	90.5%	100.0%	100.0%
School Division Workshops	83.3%	90.5%	80.9%	80.0%	71.4%
School Division Conferences	77.4%	90.0%	66.6%	80.0%	71.4%
COSL Conferences	71.7%	76.2%	70.0%	60.0%	71.4%
Learning Communities	70.6%	84.2%	70.0%	60.0%	42.9%
COSL SAG Conferences	62.0%	66.6%	60.0%	40.0%	71.4%
University Courses in Ed Admin	55.0%	52.6%	55.0%	60.0%	57.2%
Being a Mentor	46.0%	36.9%	68.5%	40.0%	14.3%
Regional P D Activities	45.1%	38.1%	50.0%	20.0%	71.4%
Study Groups	44.0%	68.4%	36.9%	60.0%	42.9%
Being a recipient of Mentoring	41.6%	47.1%	36.8%	80.0%	14.3%
MTS Workshops for Administrators	37.5%	33.4%	33.4%	60.0%	42.9%
MTS Conferences for Administrators	36.1%	33.4%	35.3%	40.0%	42.9%
COSL Summer Institute	24.4%***	26.3%	27.8%	0%	28.6%
MCLE Workshops	19.5%**	5.6%	25.0%	20.0%	42.9%
Northern Administrators Summer Institute	4%*	5.3%	0%	20.0%	0%

Notes: \* 95.9% indicated not applicable.

\*\* 73.9% indicated not applicable.

\*\*\* 69.4% indicated not applicable.

The female principals' sub-group rated school division workshops (90.5%) and school division conferences (90%) as most beneficial even though 4.8% rated school division workshops and 5% rated school division conferences as being very ineffective activities for developing school leaders. Both female and male vice principals rated no activity as very ineffective or ineffective. Male principals rated no activity as very ineffective. Not applicable could mean the individuals did not attend those activities or the topic of the activities didn't apply to their schools. Rural principals rated COSL conferences (88.9%) as most beneficial. Northern principals rated school division workshops and COSL



conferences (75%) as most beneficial. Respondents face different sorts of challenges in terms of taking part in professional development activities beyond reading books and journals. There is differential access based on geography, costs involved, available funding from school divisions, educational leave policies, time available, and awareness of the activities' program options.

One respondent stated: "Professional development that actively engages you through discussion, reflection, or some other way is particularly valuable in my learning". Another indicated: "Professional development which is ongoing is the most valuable. Ongoing can mean a number of days spread out over a year or two. It can also mean following up on your own with colleagues, reading books related to the topic, and trying some things, then reflecting on their effectiveness." Another respondent stated: "Professional development is an ongoing process that we need to constantly be mindful of as we are life-long learners and need to model that for our schools." Respondents also commented that attending national and international conferences was beneficial. These activities helped to open their eyes beyond Manitoba and helped them to see the larger educational landscape. One respondent commented: "It is critical for me to have a broader perspective than my own school(s) or school division."

An additional question related to the engagement in professional development asked administrators to consider whether they have been effective in transferring their learning from the activities they attended to their work context in schools. Table 9a indicates how effective school-based administrators perceive they have been in transferring their learning. Tables 9b and 9c in

Appendix F provide the details for the other sub-groups. The data for Tables 9a, 9b and 9c came from question B.1.d of the Questionnaire (Appendix A).

**Table 9a: Percentages of Respondents Who Perceive They Have Been Effective or Very Effective in Transferring the Learning from Professional Development Activities to Their Work Context in Schools (N=61)**

Professional Development Activities	All Respondents (n=61)	Principals		Vice Principals	
		Female (n=22)	Male (n=25)	Female (n=7)	Male (n=7)
Professional Reading	78.0%	70.0%	88.0%	85.7%	71.5%
School Division Workshops	76.6%	81.8%	80.0%	66.7%	57.1%
Learning Communities	72.0%	80.0%	69.5%	85.8%	42.9%
School Division Conferences	71.2%	81.2%	68.0%	66.7%	57.1%
COSL Conferences	65.0%	63.6%	70.8%	57.1%	57.1%
Study Groups	55.4%	63.2%	47.8%	71.6%	42.9%
COSL SAG Conferences	51.7%	60.0%	54.2%	28.6%	42.9%
Being a Mentor	49.1%	50.0%	54.2%	50.0%	28.6%
Regional P D Activities	46.4%	57.2%	59.1%	33.4%	57.1%
University Courses in Ed Admin	45.6%	40.0%	50.0%	50.0%	42.9%
MTS Workshops for Administrators	37.0%	31.6%	40.9%	33.4%	42.9%
Being a recipient of Mentoring	36.4%	36.9%	34.7%	66.7%	14.3%
MTS Conferences for Administrators	33.3%	26.4%	36.4%	33.4%	42.9%
COSL Summer Institute	20%**	10.0%	27.3%	16.7%	28.6%
MCLE Workshops	16.7%***	10.5%	18.2%	16.7%	28.6%
Northern Administrators Summer Institute	1.8%*	5.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%

Notes: All 7 Female Vice Principals did not respond to all of the professional development categories. At times only six did. Thus the percentages in that column vary.

\* 92.7% of respondents indicated not applicable.

\*\* 69.1% of respondents indicated not applicable.

\*\*\* 66.7% of respondents indicated not applicable.

Professional reading was rated the highest overall once again. Male principals, female and male vice principals, rural vice principals, senior years principals and vice principals rated professional reading the highest 88%, 87.5%, 71.5%, 100%, 90.9%, and 75% respectively. Also not surprising was the finding that local school division or individual professional development activities were deemed to be most transferable by more than half of the respondents, in addition

to COSL conferences and COSL SAG conferences, primarily because these activities take place within a specified context and transferability is presumably more likely as the activities are already tailored to that context. Lowest scores for transferability accrued for MCLE Workshops, the COSL Summer Institute and the Northern Administrators' Summer Institute, though large proportions of respondents reported "not applicable" which suggests they had not attended the events.

The female principals' sub-group rated school division workshops (81.8%), school division conferences (81.2%) and learning communities (80%) as most beneficial even though 4.5% rated school division workshops and 4.8% rated school division conferences as being very ineffective activities. Urban principals rated learning communities and study groups as most beneficial at 90%. Rural principals rated school division workshops most beneficial at 85.7% while northern principals rated school division workshops and COSL conferences as most beneficial at 75%.

Urban vice principals rated learning communities at 87.5% while northern vice principals rated learning communities, study groups and being a mentor at 100%. Early years principals rated school division workshops the highest at 84.4%. Middle years principals rated school division workshops, COSL SAG conferences, learning communities and being a mentor the highest at 75%. Early years vice principals rated school division conferences and workshops, learning communities, study groups and professional reading at 100%.

Both female and male vice principals and northern principals rated no

activity as very ineffective or ineffective. Not applicable could mean the individuals did not attend those activities or the topic of the activities didn't apply to their schools. As many of the sub-groups are composed of very small numbers and are therefore not statistically valid, care must be taken when interpreting the results of the questionnaire as they may not be representative of the broad educational community of which they are a part. However, seeing how they compare to the other sub-groups helps to enrich the study findings.

One respondent stated: "As a beginning administrator, I always found that the sessions that were being facilitated by other principals as being most relevant. They tended to be grounded in the reality of the job and tended to have an opportunity for conversations. I could apply them to the context of my school." A second respondent stated: "Readings are current and research-based and professional learning communities are learning from each other." Another one stated: "I gain a lot from reading and keeping current – then sharing and practicing something new."

Transferring what one has learned at a professional development activity to the context of one's school is not always straight forward. One respondent stated: "I have had the opportunity to dialogue with other colleagues who might be in the same spot as me. It is professional conversations that I find the most valuable." Contacts made at conferences can be a source of both inspiration and support when administrators are back on the job.

Another respondent stated: "The most valuable professional development is one that presents new information that is applicable to your situation. Being

actively involved in learning the new information has the greatest impact. Having an expectation for how you will implement the new learning also helps create the most impact.” Two of the purposes, identified by respondents, for school-based administrators to participate in professional development activities are for ongoing education and/or possibly to adopt an approach/technique that works elsewhere. Some administrators are able to implement what they have learned quite quickly while others have to wait for a “window of opportunity to open” in order to apply their new knowledge. According to respondents, the factors that influence implementation include: financing, support from the superintendent, a keen group of teachers within the school, possibly a new staff member who is knowledgeable about the content.

Guskey (2002) makes a strong case for the evaluation of professional development as being key to effective professional development. In his view, all professional development activities should be evaluated to determine whether there was an attendant change in professional practice to increase student learning. An important question on the questionnaire asked respondents to identify whether evaluation occurs to determine whether the skills, knowledge or dispositions learned by school-based administrators actually have been implemented in schools. Table 10 provides the responses from all questionnaire respondents. The data for Table 10 came from question B.1.g of the Questionnaire (Appendix A). The extent to which evaluation of the skills, knowledge or dispositions learned by school-based administrators from professional development activities occurs was rated under the terms “often”

“always” “never”, “rarely” or “sometimes.”

**Table 10: Percentages of Respondents Who Perceive that Evaluation to Determine Whether the Skills, Knowledge, or Dispositions Learned by Administrators are Implemented in School Practice (N=52)**

<b>Professional Development Activities</b>	<b>Never/Rarely</b>	<b>Sometimes</b>	<b>Often/Always</b>
<b>School Division Conferences</b>	<b>39.2%</b>	<b>29.4%</b>	<b>17.7%</b>
<b>School Division Workshops</b>	<b>38.5%</b>	<b>34.6%</b>	<b>19.2%</b>
<b>COSL Conferences</b>	<b>67.3%</b>	<b>15.4%</b>	<b>1.9%</b>
<b>COSL SAG Conferences</b>	<b>64.0%</b>	<b>16.0%</b>	<b>2.0%</b>
<b>COSL Summer Institute</b>	<b>41.7%</b>	<b>2.1%</b>	<b>0.0%</b>
<b>Northern Administrators Summer Institute</b>	<b>25.0%</b>	<b>0.0%</b>	<b>0.0%</b>
<b>Regional P D Activities</b>	<b>54.2%</b>	<b>14.6%</b>	<b>6.3%</b>
<b>MTS Conferences for Administrators</b>	<b>46.8%</b>	<b>6.4%</b>	<b>6.4%</b>
<b>MTS Workshops for Administrators</b>	<b>51.1%</b>	<b>6.4%</b>	<b>6.4%</b>
<b>MCLE Workshops</b>	<b>42.5%</b>	<b>2.1%</b>	<b>4.2%</b>
<b>Learning Communities</b>	<b>36.7%</b>	<b>16.3%</b>	<b>20.4%</b>
<b>Study Groups</b>	<b>34.7%</b>	<b>18.4%</b>	<b>12.2%</b>
<b>Being a Mentor</b>	<b>37.6%</b>	<b>12.5%</b>	<b>16.7%</b>
<b>Being a recipient of Mentoring</b>	<b>29.2%</b>	<b>10.4%</b>	<b>8.3%</b>
<b>University Courses in Ed Admin</b>	<b>48.0%</b>	<b>8.0%</b>	<b>10.0%</b>
<b>Professional Reading</b>	<b>58.0%</b>	<b>20.0%</b>	<b>10.0%</b>

These results were disappointing as the evidence suggests that it is much more likely that professional development efforts in the province designed to improve administrators' knowledge, skills and dispositions are never or rarely evaluated to determine whether they have become embedded in schools. Highest ratings occurred when “never” and “rarely” categories were combined for the following opportunities: COSL conferences (67.3%) and COSL SAG conferences (64.0%). The highest ratings for evaluation occurring when “often” and “always” were combined were: learning communities (20.4%) and school division conferences (17.7%) and workshops (19.2%), yet these proportions represent only one-fifth of the respondents for these opportunities.

Given that these initiatives are local, it would be reasonable to suggest that these events should be more easily (and more likely to be) evaluated as school-based administrators are immediately accountable to their school divisions, because their superintendents know what the activities entailed and presumably would/should do follow-up with their administrators. Ensuring that an evaluation of the learning opportunities occurs is more difficult to do, although not impossible, when the professional development activities take place away from the school division. However, such evaluation is apparently not occurring very often, and it begs the question of why school divisions and administrators would engage in professional development opportunities (or spend the money on it), if there is no evaluation occurring that would determine the extent to which the skills learned would be transferred to the local context. Presumably, then, these professional development activities are being engaged in with the assumption that they are valuable and are “working,” but little is being done to ensure that this is the case.

No respondents commented on whether the professional development activities themselves were evaluated after the activities occurred and whether the organization acted upon the evaluation feedback. In addition, there can be no claim made in this study on the quality of evaluations that do occur, and whether or not they evaluate the embedding of new learning in school contexts, or if they reflect more superficial evaluations on the quality of guest speakers, venue and food.

Questionnaire respondents were asked to rank, on a scale with 1 being

the best, the professional development activities in the order they believe they contribute most to their professional growth. The respondents' perceptions (all respondents combined) of which activities contribute most to their professional growth from highest to lowest were: 1) being a mentor; 2) university courses; 3) being mentored; 4) workshops; 5) professional reading; 6) conferences; and 7) professional learning communities/study groups.

**Table 11: The Best Professional Development Activities that Contribute Most to Professional Growth as Ranked by Sub-Groups (N=53)**

<b>Professional Development Activities</b>	<b>Ranked the BEST by Sub-Groups</b>
<b>Being a Mentor</b>	<b>All Respondents combined; All Vice Principals; Female, Northern, Senior Years Principals; Female, Male, Urban, Senior Years Vice Principals</b>
<b>Being Mentored followed by Being a Mentor</b>	<b>Rural Vice Principals</b>
<b>University Courses</b>	<b>All Principals; Male Principals; Northern Vice Principals</b>
<b>University Courses followed by Being a Mentor</b>	<b>Urban, Rural, Early Years, Middle Years Principals; Early Years, Middle Years Vice Principals</b>

The rankings for best activities for professional growth by subgroups are included in Table 11. The data for Table 11 came from question C.3 of the Questionnaire (Appendix A).

Mentoring (both being a mentor and being mentored) was highly rated. University courses were highly rated as well. This finding is curious, since generally speaking university courses are not perceived to contribute to “on the ground” practice (Barnett, 2004), yet they are perceived to be the most beneficial for growth for three of the sub-groups. University courses are a way for school-



based administrators to refresh their theoretical knowledge in order to better understand the more complex realities they face. At least as important, such courses provide psychologically “safe” places in which to wrestle with ambiguity and uncertainty among a group of peers with no reputations or funding on the line. University courses in the Post-Baccalaureate and Masters Programs are good places for administrators to develop networks as well as mentors.

University courses tend to be theoretically driven with some discussion on relationship to practice. Mentoring is clearly immediacy of practice. Management and personnel are clearly immediacy of practice. The researcher believes that people, particularly principals, want the “big picture”—theory and leadership, but they are living in the immediacy of an environment that forces them to engage in management and personnel, so they’re looking for a mentor, or being a mentor for that immediate purpose.

Not all school divisions have formal mentorship programs; however, school-based administrators are very adept at finding mentors from within and outside of their school divisions. Talking with colleagues is a high priority for administrators. One respondent summed this up: “Talking with administrators is the best form of professional development.”

### **Interview Participants**

The interview participants indicated which professional development activities were most beneficial for developing effective educational leaders and/or improving student achievement. A definition of “effective” educational leaders was not provided to those interviewed. Their individual perceptions of the term

“effective” were used when they responded to the interview question. Interview participants did not report on any professional development activities that were not beneficial. They indicated that they were usually able to pick up at least one useful idea from an activity. Many activities provide lots of useful ideas. The data for this section came from questions A.2, A.4, B.1, B.2, B.3, and C.1 of the Interview Questions Protocol (Appendix B).

Being a mentor and being mentored were both very beneficial. This was a theme from all principals and vice principals interviewed even though not all were involved in a formal mentoring program. One principal commented: “I loved conducting in-services for teachers on how to mentor other teachers.” Another principal commented: “I am mentoring teachers on my staff who want to get into administration. I give them leadership opportunities in the school which benefit them as well as the school.” A third principal commented: “You mentor people to take leadership opportunities.” A fourth principal commented: “My mentorship experience was very helpful. We called our mentor our critical friend. We gave each other feedback on things like our school plan and we were self-reflective. This was a good experience because we could trust each other. The rapport was a big thing.” A vice principal commented: “The one thing she has taught me is that you can’t change everything. You have to do one thing at a time.” Another vice principal commented: “The principal gave me leadership opportunities and continued to encourage me. He was there for me even when he moved to another school. He helped me see things from both sides.” A third vice principal commented: “My principal groomed me by encouraging me to become team

leader and teacher in charge. I was slowly assuming responsibility before I was appointed an administrator.”

The courses and workshops necessary for Level 1 and 2 certification were commented on by ten of the participants (both principals and vice principals). One principal commented: “I don’t have my Level 1 or 2 certificates but I believe I have all of the qualifications. I have taught a number of the courses for the certificates though.” Another principal commented: “I took the internship program that the division offers. That gave me a number of hours towards my Level 1. I did the summer institute in Clear Lake and that also gave me the hours I needed. Both were very beneficial.” One vice principal commented: “I began the professional development requirements for my Level 1 certificate while I was a teacher.” Another vice principal commented: “The workshops for Level 1 and 2 were not that beneficial but if I take one good piece of information out of a workshop, I am happy. If I get more, great, but I need to learn one new concept and it is good. I find university courses more beneficial than workshops.”

Participating in divisional leadership development programs both before being appointed to an administrative position and afterwards was reported as being very beneficial. This was commented on by eight of the fifteen participants (both principals and vice principals). Not all school divisions have such programs. One principal commented: “We have a leadership development program in our division and some of us are called in to present at these sessions which is a good experience for all of us.” Another principal commented: “We have a leadership development program and the teacher leader program. I have been a

presenter at the leadership development program.” A third principal commented: “We have a mentorship group for new principals. It meets monthly. There is a different topic every month. It is a time for us to get to know each other and to learn something. It is run by the divisional mentor for principals. Every division should have that.” A vice principal commented: “The divisional preparation in the leadership pool is practical and very beneficial.” Another vice principal commented: “Being in a division that has a leadership council made up of administrators and coordinators that meets on a regular basis provides lots of access to people you can talk to.”

Taking a Masters degree program was very beneficial. This was commented on by seven of the participants (both principals and vice principals). One principal commented: “I completed most of my Masters courses while I was a vice principal and finished my thesis while I was a principal.” Another principal commented: “The university courses were beneficial after I was back in the school and I could think back on what I had learned. The courses made more sense then. I could do some research on things I was working on in my school.” One vice principal commented: “My research paper was on administrator training. I eventually became the program coordinator for the administrator training program.” Another vice principal commented: “Being in the divisional Masters cohort was also helpful.”

Four of the participants (both principals and vice principals) spoke very positively of French Immersion and second language learning professional development activities. One principal commented: “French Immersion

conferences have been very beneficial. I have presented both nationally and locally at these conferences.” Another principal commented: “I have an interest in second language learning and found a conference in Europe that looked interesting. I was able to attend the conference and also do a presentation on French Immersion at the conference.” One vice principal commented: “I participate in French Immersion conferences and because they are at different times of the year I am also able to participate in conferences conducted in English as well.”

Four of the participants (principals) have been presenters at conferences and found this to be beneficial for them as well.

The summer leadership course in Clear Lake which was sponsored by MCLE but is now sponsored by COSL was found to be beneficial. This was commented on by three of the participants (principals). One principal commented: “I attended a couple of the summer programs at Clear Lake. At the time they were two week stints. That was an excellent experience. I have always encouraged people to go to the Clear Lake institute.” A second principal commented: “I did take the summer leadership training at Clear Lake. I found that very beneficial to make connections with people.”

Other professional development activities that were commented on as being beneficial included: CAP, COSL conferences; National Principal Leadership Program in New York; Restitution; Sustainable Development; Cognitive Coaching; ASCD, AERA conferences; Ethical Education; Assessment; Threat Assessment with Kevin Cameron; Engaged Learner Conference;

Cooperative Learning; Inclusion; New Administrators' Conference in Las Vegas; At Risk Youth; Technology; Art and Culture; and Change.

All of the participants interviewed believe in and participate in professional development activities. They perceive the benefits as improving their leadership knowledge and improving students' achievement. Three of the participants (both principals and vice principals) commented on how the school law course they took at university was very beneficial for them. Participants also supported professional reading and staying current in the field of education.

One participant commented: "The best preparation you can have for administration is the day to day interactions with people; how you build relationships. You can have the greatest knowledge but if you don't have the relationship piece and cannot communicate then you will not be effective." Another participant commented: "The best preparation is teaching at more than one grade level before you are appointed as an administrator. Also, taking the division leadership courses really prepares you."

### **Summary**

School-based administrators perceive being a mentor, university courses, being mentored, workshops, and professional reading as being the top five most beneficial professional development activities for developing effective educational leaders. Administrators invest a lot of their own time and money into graduate courses. These courses involve reading, writing, seminars, discussions, and theses. Respondents and participants are committed to them and it is not surprising that they rank them highly.

Questionnaire respondents indicated that being a mentor and university courses contributed most to their professional growth while professional reading along with professional learning communities and study groups and school division conferences and workshops also were effective in their development.

The third criterion of effectiveness Guskey (2003a) identifies is context because: “real-world contextual differences profoundly influence the effectiveness of professional development endeavours” (p. 750). Both questionnaire respondents and interview participants indicated that they transferred what they had learned in professional development activities into the context of their schools. Not surprisingly, local school division or individual professional development activities were deemed to be most transferable by more than half of the respondents, in addition to COSL conferences and COSL SAG conferences. This is because these activities are either undertaken by the individual him/herself in areas of perceived need, or by the local school division in which the administrator works, and are likely therefore to be targeted to local contextual needs. COSL conferences tend also to be highly “practical” in their focus, which more than likely eases the opportunities for transferability of learning.

The fourth criterion of effectiveness advocated by Guskey (2002) is evaluation. The extent to which evaluation of the skills, knowledge or dispositions learned by school-based administrators from professional development activities occurs varies. There is a general lack of evaluation for all professional development opportunities. The highest ratings for evaluation occurred when

“never” and “rarely” categories were combined: COSL conferences (67.3%) and COSL SAG conferences (64.0%). The highest ratings for evaluation occurring when “often” and “always” were combined were: learning communities (20.4%) and school division conferences (17.7%) and workshops (19.2%). Often what is evaluated is the food provided. Thus the results of this study on the extent to which evaluation occurs in this study are disappointing given how important evaluation is to effectiveness. No respondents commented on whether the professional development activities themselves were evaluated after the activities occurred or whether the professional organizations took any action based on the evaluations. Evaluation of professional development activities was not mentioned by interview participants either.

Without the benefit of evaluation, the extent to which we actually know that the professional development for school-based administrators is having an effect on their practice, and in extension, student learning, cannot be measured. Word of mouth is one way of measuring effectiveness of professional development activities but it is not very scientific and it is based on perceptions over time which may change depending on circumstances. The COSL Summer Institute, MCLE workshops and the Northern administrators’ summer institute once again received the lowest scores on all questions for this section, though given the large numbers of people who indicated that these activities were “not applicable” to them, it is likely that many have never attended the events.

### **Research Question #3**

The third research question focused on what professional development



experiences in the areas of leadership, instruction, management and personnel (areas designated by Manitoba Education as being important for the certification of administrators) principals and vice principals in Manitoba have engaged, for what purpose and in what context. The responses from questionnaire and interview respondents are summarized below.

### **Questionnaire Respondents**

One of the questions on the questionnaire asked respondents to indicate which of the four areas related to certification requirements are most often targeted by the professional development activities. Respondents were able to give more than one answer to the question. The percentage distribution of responses on which of the four areas of certification tended to be the focus of the 16 professional development activities under consideration are provided in Table 12. The data for Table 12 came from question B. 1.b of the Questionnaire (Appendix A).

The majority of participants suggested that the area of leadership was the primary target for 15 of the 16 professional development activities considered in this research. The only professional development activity where another target area had higher proportions of responses was that for being a recipient of mentoring, and the targeted area was most often suggested to be management.

The category “Other” was included in Question B. 1. b. Comments in this category included: “I take PD to keep current not for certification purposes.” “I attend national and international conferences as well.” “I enjoy the informal dialogue with other administrators.” “Research trends, wellness, technology, and

assessment for learning.”

**Table 12: Percentages of Respondents Who Perceive Which of the Four Areas Related to Certification Requirements is Most Often Targeted by Professional Development Activities (N=64)**

<b>Professional Development Activities</b>	<b>Instruction</b>	<b>Leadership</b>	<b>Management</b>	<b>Personnel</b>
<b>School Division Conferences</b>	<b>25.4%</b>	<b>68.3%</b>	<b>22.2%</b>	<b>20.6%</b>
<b>School Division Workshops</b>	<b>41.3%</b>	<b>58.7%</b>	<b>42.9%</b>	<b>34.9%</b>
<b>COSL Conferences</b>	<b>23.8%</b>	<b>71.4%</b>	<b>23.8%</b>	<b>20.6%</b>
<b>COSL SAG Conferences</b>	<b>24.2%</b>	<b>61.3%</b>	<b>27.4%</b>	<b>17.7%</b>
<b>COSL Summer Institute</b>	<b>11.1%</b>	<b>29.6%</b>	<b>18.5%</b>	<b>13.0%</b>
<b>Northern Administrators Summer Institute</b>	<b>1.8%</b>	<b>7.3%</b>	<b>1.8%</b>	<b>1.8%</b>
<b>Regional P D Activities</b>	<b>43.3%</b>	<b>46.7%</b>	<b>21.7%</b>	<b>16.7%</b>
<b>MTS Conferences for Administrators</b>	<b>25.5%</b>	<b>32.7%</b>	<b>14.5%</b>	<b>12.7%</b>
<b>MTS Workshops for Administrators</b>	<b>17.5%</b>	<b>29.8%</b>	<b>26.3%</b>	<b>17.5%</b>
<b>MCLE Workshops</b>	<b>9.4%</b>	<b>17.0%</b>	<b>15.1%</b>	<b>9.4%</b>
<b>Learning Communities</b>	<b>39.7%</b>	<b>43.1%</b>	<b>20.7%</b>	<b>17.2%</b>
<b>Study Groups</b>	<b>32.8%</b>	<b>39.7%</b>	<b>19.0%</b>	<b>13.8%</b>
<b>Being a Mentor</b>	<b>20.0%</b>	<b>36.4%</b>	<b>25.5%</b>	<b>3.6%</b>
<b>Being a recipient of Mentoring</b>	<b>15.1%</b>	<b>22.6%</b>	<b>24.5%</b>	<b>9.4%</b>
<b>University Courses in Ed Admin</b>	<b>27.3%</b>	<b>30.9%</b>	<b>29.1%</b>	<b>9.1%</b>
<b>Professional Reading</b>	<b>64.4%</b>	<b>78.0%</b>	<b>45.8%</b>	<b>44.1%</b>

All professional development activities listed were perceived to target to some degree all four areas related to certification requirements.

Questionnaire respondents were asked to rank by importance the four areas of professional growth considered for administrative certification: Instruction, Leadership, Management, and Personnel as defined by Manitoba Education. The areas were ranked from 1 to 4 with 1 being most important. Table 13 provides the results of those ranked most important and least important. The data for Table 13 came from question C. 4 of the Questionnaire (Appendix A).

The area of leadership, as defined by Manitoba education, was ranked as

most important by all respondents combined and by 94.7% (N=18) of the sub-groups. The areas of instruction, leadership, and personnel were ranked equally important to Northern vice principals. These findings suggest that administrators are focusing on the broader aims of leadership or instruction (student learning).

**Table 13: Certification Areas Ranked by Respondents as Being Most and Least Important for Administrators Professional Growth (N=84)**

<b>Certification Areas Ranked MOST Important</b>	<b>Ranked the BEST by Sub-Groups</b>
<b>Instruction</b>	<b>Northern Vice Principals</b>
<b>Leadership</b>	<b>All Respondents 62.8%; All Principals; Female, Male, Urban, Rural, Northern, Early Years, Middle Years, Senior Years Principals; All Vice Principals; Female, Male, Urban, Rural, Northern, Early Years, Middle Years, Senior Years Vice Principals</b>
<b>Management</b>	
<b>Personnel</b>	<b>Northern Vice Principals</b>
<b>Certification Areas Ranked LEAST Important</b>	<b>Ranked the LOWEST by Sub-Groups</b>
<b>Instruction</b>	
<b>Leadership</b>	
<b>Management</b>	<b>All Respondents 9.8%; All Principals; Female, Male, Urban, Rural, Early Years, Middle Years Principals; All Vice Principals; Female, Male, Urban, Northern, Early Years, Middle Years, Senior Years Vice Principals</b>
<b>Personnel</b>	<b>Northern, Senior Years Principals; Male, Rural, Senior Years Vice Principals</b>

Table 13 also provides the results for the area ranked least important by the respondents. The area of management was ranked of least importance by all respondents combined and by 88.8% (N=16) of the sub-groups while the Northern and senior years principals and male, rural and senior years vice

principals indicated the area of personnel was of least importance.

Questionnaire respondents were also asked in which of the four areas their primary interests lay. Table 14 provides the results. The data for Table 14 came from question C. 4. of the Questionnaire (Appendix A).

**Table 14: Certification Area of Primary Interest – by Sub-Group (N=84)**

Sub-Group	Instruction	Leadership	Management	Personnel
<b>All Respondents Combined (n=84 )</b>	18.9%	<b>75.5%</b>	3.8%	1.9%
<b>All Principals (n=63)</b>	19.5%	<b>73.2%</b>	4.9%	2.4%
<b>Female Principals (n=29)</b>	15.0%	<b>75.0%</b>	5.0%	5.0%
<b>Male Principals (n=34)</b>	23.8%	<b>71.4%</b>	4.8%	0.0%
<b>Urban Principals (n=26)</b>	26.3%	<b>73.7%</b>	0.0%	0.0%
<b>Rural Principals (n=31)</b>	16.7%	<b>72.2%</b>	5.6%	5.6%
<b>Northern Principals (n=6)</b>	0.0%	<b>75.0%</b>	25.0%	0.0%
<b>Early Years Principals (n=42)</b>	18.5%	<b>70.4%</b>	7.4%	3.7%
<b>Middle Years Principals (n=5)</b>	0.0%	<b>100.0%</b>	0.0%	0.0%
<b>Senior Years Principals (n=16)</b>	30.0%	<b>70.0%</b>	0.0%	0.0%
<b>All Vice Principals (n=15)</b>	16.7%	<b>83.3%</b>	0.0%	0.0%
<b>Female Vice Principals (n=8)</b>	20.0%	<b>80.0%</b>	0.0%	0.0%
<b>Male Vice Principals (n=7)</b>	14.3%	<b>85.7%</b>	0.0%	0.0%
<b>Urban Vice Principals (n=9)</b>	16.7%	<b>83.3%</b>	0.0%	0.0%
<b>Rural Vice Principals (n=4)</b>	0.0%	<b>100.0%</b>	0.0%	0.0%
<b>Northern Vice Principals (n=2)</b>	<b>50.0%</b>	<b>50.0%</b>	0.0%	0.0%
<b>Early Years Vice Principals (n=3)</b>	0.0%	<b>100.0%</b>	0.0%	0.0%
<b>Middle Years Vice Principals (n=4)</b>	33.3%	<b>66.7%</b>	0.0%	0.0%
<b>Senior Years Vice Principals (n=8)</b>	12.5%	<b>87.5%</b>	0.0%	0.0%

The area of leadership was indicated as being of primary interest to all respondents combined and all sub-groups with the two northern vice principals split between leadership and instruction. This agrees with Table 13 where the respondents indicated that the area of leadership was the most important of the four areas for school-based administrators.

Findings suggest that administrators believe leadership to be most important while the actual nature of their work is such that they have to focus on the details of management and personnel issues.

One respondent commented: “I believe you have to think of the four areas as being of equal importance with their own continuum of competency. They are interrelated and not mutually exclusive.” Another respondent commented: “I believe the broad general topics covered are adequate. I do not believe that they are equal in importance, and as such I think they should be weighted differently in terms of the requirement for certification.” A third respondent commented: “In my world these four areas are very interchangeable. They all require attention and time but don’t always come across that way for sessions available to administrators/potential administrators. It is not as easy to find a program that discusses how your leadership style can influence and affect instructional practices and personnel management simultaneously. I find that often these are treated as separate not interchangeable issues.”

As far as these four areas helping to make one an effective leader, one respondent summed them up this way: “It is my personal belief that if you are not an effective leader, regardless of your knowledge of instruction, personnel or management, you will not be able to get your staff to buy into the direction you are wanting the school to move in.”

Questionnaire respondents were asked whether they thought certification as an administrator should be a requirement prior to becoming a principal. Table 15 provides the results for all respondents combined and for each sub-group. The data for Table 15 came from question C.5. of the Questionnaire (Appendix A).

**Table 15: Percentages of Respondents who Agree, Disagree or are Neutral that Certification Should Be a Requirement Prior to Becoming a Principal (N=53)**

<b>Sub-Group</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree/Disagree</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>Agree/ Strongly Agree</b>
<b>All Respondents Combined (n=53)</b>	45.3%	15.1%	39.7%
<b>All Principals (n=41)</b>	39.1%	19.5%	41.5%
<b>Female Principals (n=20)</b>	50.0%	15.0%	35.0%
<b>Male Principals (n=21)</b>	28.6%	23.8%	47.6%
<b>Urban Principals (n=19)</b>	31.6%	31.6%	36.7%
<b>Rural Principals (n=18)</b>	44.4%	11.1%	44.4%
<b>Northern Principals (n=4)</b>	50.0%	0.0%	50.0%
<b>Early Years Principals (n=27)</b>	40.7%	25.9%	33.3%
<b>Middle Years Principals (n=4)</b>	75.0%	0.0%	25.0%
<b>Senior Years Principals (n=10)</b>	20.0%	10.0%	70.0%
<b>All Vice Principals (n=12)</b>	66.7%	0.0%	33.3%
<b>Female Vice Principals (n=5)</b>	80.0%	0.0%	20.0%
<b>Male Vice Principals (n=7)</b>	57.2%	0.0%	42.9%
<b>Urban Vice Principals (n=6)</b>	66.7%	0.0%	33.4%
<b>Rural Vice Principals (n=4)</b>	75.0%	0.0%	25.0%
<b>Northern Vice Principals (n=2)</b>	50.0%	0.0%	50.0%
<b>Early Years Vice Principals (n=1)</b>	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%
<b>Middle Years Vice Principals (n=3)</b>	33.3%	0.0%	66.7%
<b>Senior Years Vice Principals (n=8)</b>	75.0%	0.0%	25.0%

Sub-groups all respondents combined, female principals, early and middle years principals, all vice principals, female, male, urban, rural, early and senior years vice principals “strongly disagree” and “disagree” combined were predisposed unfavorably to certification of principals prior to their appointment being a requirement.

Sub-groups all principals, urban and senior years principals, and middle years vice principals “agree” and “strongly agree” combined were predisposed favorably to certification of principals prior to their appointment being a requirement. Sub-groups rural and Northern principals and Northern vice principals are evenly split between “strongly disagree” and “disagree” combined

and “agree” and “strongly agree” combined on certification of principals prior to their appointment being a requirement.

The differences between male and female groups were striking. However, comments were not made on the reasons for their opinions, therefore, no rationale was provided. Possibly, female principals and vice principals may “strongly disagree” or “disagree” because they do not have the time to take the university courses and workshops required for certification because their personal time is limited and is devoted to being wives and mothers, raising families and caring for their homes. Being the care givers for aging parents also could be demanding on their personal time.

Eleven of the sub-groups “strongly disagree” or “disagree” with the requirement for certification prior to becoming a principal while five of the sub-groups “agree” or “strongly agree” on this subject. This is particularly the case with almost all vice-principal groups and may be related to the wording of the question which asked participants to respond to the idea of certification “prior to becoming a principal.” As these individuals may wish to move into a principalship in the short-term, they may not wish to have the barrier of prior certification in the way of their career move. Principals who are already in those positions are presumably more comfortable with the idea now that they are already in the role and don’t have a potential “hurdle” to overcome. There may have been different responses if the question was worded: “Should certification be a requirement for school-based administrators”. It remains interesting to note, however, given that most U.S. states and many provinces and territories in

Canada require certification, that Manitoba respondents remain ambivalent or seemingly opposed to mandatory certification.

One questionnaire respondent commented: “Administration is totally different from teaching and requires different skill sets.” A second commented: “The demands of this job have made this role increasingly difficult. As much preparation as we can provide future colleagues would be of benefit to uninterrupted instruction for our students and schools.” Another commented: “Depending on circumstances and the mentoring opportunities within a division, the certification process could be done ‘on the job’.” I feel that it is a process that every administrator should do within the first few years of the job.” One respondent summed it up this way: “We are a profession. We need to have rigor/high expectation.” A number of respondents are against certification being mandatory for school-based administrators. One commented: “I think you should be working towards this but it is more important to have the right person for the job.”

### **Interview Participants**

The interview participants identified the areas of leadership, instruction, management and personnel by indicating whether they had completed the requirements for certification of administrators in Manitoba. Of those school-based administrators interviewed, 33.3% (N=5) had Level 1 certification only and 40% had both Level 1 and 2 certification (N=6). The data were obtained from questions A. 2 and B. 1 of the Interview Questions Protocol (Appendix B).

When asked if they believed certification as an administrator should be a



requirement in Manitoba, eight of the principals interviewed (80%) said yes (some said “yes but”) and two said no (20%). The data for this section came from question C.2 of the Interview Questions Protocol (Appendix B). Of those who said “yes but,” they indicated that the requirements to obtain the certificates should be reviewed and brought up to date and one said that it is not very practical in some parts of the province because people do not have access to the courses. One participant stated: “If you are going into administration just to go through the hoops or jump over hurdles and get your Level 1 and 2 just to say you’ve got it, no, because anybody can do that. If you’re going into it to learn and to grow and these are good things for me to learn, then yes.” Another participant stated: “My Masters degree gave me far more than my Level 1 and 2 experiences did.” Of the 20% who said no, one stated: “Having a certificate really doesn’t matter. It’s the knowledge you have not the paper you have behind you.” Another one summed it up this way: “No I don’t believe it should be a requirement but it should be encouraged.”

When asked if they believed certification as an administrator should be a requirement in Manitoba, four of the vice principals interviewed (80%) said yes and one said no (20%). One vice principal stated: “I think there are probably great administrators who don’t have the certification and they are great administrators intuitively. There are probably some who are certified who are not great.” The vice principals who said no stated: “Degrees and certification show that you have taken the courses and know the theory but may not apply it as a leader. Can you put your knowledge into practice?” One of the vice principals

who said yes commented: “I think it should be because of the role we are asking people to do. It doesn’t make sense that you should be able to acquire that position without additional training because the responsibilities change so much. A teacher needs a certificate to teach and then we are asking that person to do an entirely different job with different criteria.” There is no unanimity on whether certification for school-based administrators should be a requirement.

All school-based administrators interviewed believed in the value of professional development and have participated in a variety of professional development activities not only in the four areas required for certification but also on a number of other topics of value to them as educational leaders (eg. assessment, at risk students, peer coaching, mentoring, change, restitution, threat assessment). The interview participants strongly supported the leadership development programs that some school divisions provide.

### **Summary**

Questionnaire respondents and interview participants have participated in professional development experiences in the areas of leadership, instruction, management and personnel. They have done so by attending professional development activities (conferences, workshops, institutes, mentoring, university courses and professional reading) sponsored by a number of different organizations. All of the organizations make activities in all four of the areas available at some time but most often the target is suggested to be the area of leadership. Questionnaire respondents indicated that the area of management was most important and leadership least important but they indicated that their

primary interest was in leadership. Both questionnaire respondents and interview participants support the importance of professional development experiences in their development as educational leaders and they participate in a variety of activities on other topics as well as in the four areas. Interview participants were very supportive of divisional leadership programs.

Questionnaire respondents (particularly vice principals) were ambivalent towards or tended to disagree with the idea on whether principals should be required to have administrator certification prior to being appointed, whereas, principals and vice principals interviewed supported the requirement for school-based administrators to become certified if not before then after being appointed. Both interview participants and questionnaire respondents stated that the program for certification needs to be reviewed and revised whether or not it is made mandatory.

#### **Research Question #4**

The fourth research question focused on how formal leadership organizations in Manitoba might more effectively create meaningful formalized professional development opportunities for the development of effective school-based administrators.

#### **Questionnaire Respondents**

Questionnaire respondents were asked to respond to the question of how they would rate the general quality of their professional development experiences using a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 equals very effective. Table 16a provides the results of respondents' views on the effectiveness of professional development

activities provided by various formal leadership organizations in Manitoba. Tables 16b and 16c in Appendix F provide the details for the other sub-groups. The data for Tables 16a, 16b and 16c came from question B.1.c of the Questionnaire (Appendix A).

**Table 16a: Percentages of Respondents Who Rated the General Quality of Their Professional Development Activities as Effective or Very Effective (N=62)**

Professional Development Activities	All Respondents (n=62)	Principals		Vice Principals	
		Female (n=23)	Male (n=26)	Female (n=7)	Male (n=6)
Professional Reading	87.0%	77.7%	86.9%	100.0%	100.0%
School Division Workshops	74.2%	82.6%	73.0%	57.1%	66.7%
School Division Conferences	68.8%	77.3%	69.2%	57.1%	50.0%
COSL Conferences	67.2%	65.2%	68.0%	57.2%	50.0%
Learning Communities	64.9%	80.0%	58.3%	71.5%	33.3%
COSL SAG Conferences	58.3%	54.5%	61.5%	50.0%	66.7%
Being a Mentor	57.9%	45.0%	72.0%	66.6%	33.3%
Regional P D Activities	56.9%	52.2%	56.5%	50.0%	83.3%
Study Groups	50.0%	65.0%	32.0%	85.8%	33.3%
University Courses in Ed Admin	44.8%	38.1%	48.0%	50.0%	50.0%
Being a recipient of Mentoring	41.8%	42.2%	41.7%	67.7%	16.7%
MTS Workshops for Administrators	40.8%	40.0%	45.5%	16.7%	50.0%
MTS Conferences for Administrators	38.1%	30.0%	43.5%	33.3%	50.0%
COSL Summer Institute	30.4%***	19.0%	43.5%	16.7%	33.3%
MCLE Workshops	23.1%**	15.8%	28.6%	0.0%	50.0%
Northern Administrators Summer Institute	5.4%*	4.8%	4.3%	16.7%	0.0%

Notes: All 7 Female Vice Principals did not respond to all of the professional development categories. At times only five or six did. Thus the percentages in that column vary.

\* 91.1% of respondents indicated not applicable.

\*\* 63.5% of respondents indicated not applicable.

\*\*\* 58.9% of respondents indicated not applicable.

Vice principals and principals identified professional reading as being most effective in their development as effective school-based administrators. In addition to the alignment with previous findings related to high ratings for local school division and individual professional development opportunities, over 50%

of the respondents also rated COSL conferences, COSL SAG conferences, being a mentor and regional PD activities as being effective or very effective.

As has been the case previously, the COSL summer institute, MCLE workshops and the Northern administrators' summer institute receive the lowest ratings in terms of effectiveness; however, the categories were ranked as being non-applicable for over 40% of the respondents for the first two categories and over 90% of the respondents for the Northern institute, which suggests that many of these respondents had never gone to these events.

Female vice principals identified study groups; urban principals identified school division conferences and workshops; and, female principals identified school division workshops as well. Therefore, sub-groups were not unanimous on this topic.

Questionnaire respondents were asked what professional development activities stood out in their minds as being particularly valuable. One respondent commented: "Workshops that give practical ideas and solutions to daily education issues." Another wrote: "Working with other administrators from other countries/cultures helps us see what we are doing that is both effective and ineffective." A third wrote: "I appreciated hearing from other administrators about what to do and what not to do. I have also appreciated the professional development conferences that were steeped in research, especially if we came as a team from the division. It was helpful if more than one person attended so we could talk about what we learned and ways to implement new ideas." Another wrote: "Courses where you have to network and share with others."

Along the same vein, another respondent wrote: “University Masters level course – valuable in discussing, reflecting, and applying new knowledge to current situations in educational administration.” A further comment was: “Recently the COSL conference – the cohesiveness of the program and support after.” One respondent summed up by writing: “Gaining general knowledge at conferences that motivated me to develop in a specific area – progressing from the conference to professional reading, study groups and learning communities with fellow administrators.” School-based administrators appreciate professional development that causes them to reflect on their practice and dialogue further with their professional learning communities.

Questionnaire respondents were asked what professional development activities stood out in their minds as being particularly poor. They identified: “one shot conferences with little follow-up”; “lecture style”; “little or no engagement activities/conversations from the audience”; “presenter not knowing their target audience”; “one day ‘sit and git’ sessions are the least productive”; and “one day speakers with no carryover to school.” School-based administrators know what they want: professional development activities that are interactive, provide time for discussion and dialogue, and are relevant to their situations. In order to validate their current practices, administrators’ value being able to dialogue with other professionals, through professional learning communities and/or study groups.

Respondents to the questionnaire identified the following types of skills, knowledge and/or dispositions most necessary for administrators to learn, know,

or do in order to be successful in today's educational context: good knowledge of curriculum; knowledgeable about special needs and inclusion; know how to work with challenging people; have excellent communication and interpersonal skills; are able to make connections with people; are able to listen; are able to manage the change/improvement process; are able to keep the focus on student learning; knowledgeable about good assessment, evaluation and reporting practices; and having a wide range of teaching experiences prior to being appointed was viewed as an asset. After reviewing the comments on the questionnaire, it appears that school-based administrators who are successful are motivated, caring, and focused on improving student learning. Identified as well was the value of being a mentor or being mentored and being part of a professional learning community. The actual findings of this study do not suggest that student learning is the primary purpose for their professional development; therefore, some of the comments may be rhetorical that people know what they should say versus what they are actually focused on (management). The researcher noted the incongruence with what people provided in the qualitative comments versus what they indicated in their numeric ratings for their own skill development.

Questionnaire respondents were very supportive of professional development in general and indicated the factors that affect the kinds of professional development activities in which they participate. Factors mentioned by respondents included:

- a) Logistics: rural access; time; cost; travel; dates; location; professional development funds available; professional development budgets for

transportation and accommodation costs as well as registration. One respondent commented: “Will someone cover my school while I am away?”

- b) Personal: time commitment; personal needs; distance from home/work; location (due to family commitments). One respondent commented: “How many personal dollars will I have to spend on this activity?”
- c) Professional development topic: something new and innovative; relevancy; interest; student needs; current research; data analysis; leadership teams encouraged to attend. Comments from respondents included: “Is it what I am looking for or is it a priority topic for our school or division?” “Will it help me do a better job for the staff and students?” “How does it relate to school and/or division goals?” “Will it benefit my school?” “Will it benefit my practice?” “Who is the sponsor and what area is it in so I can use it for my administration certification?”

Respondents commented as well on not spending money from the family budget; not being away from school for too many days for professional development purposes; and topics that relate to the division strategic plan, the school plan and that support Master’s in educational administration courses are valued. Questionnaire respondents support professional development activities and were quite vocal on which activities they prefer.

### **Interview Participants**

All interview participants were supportive of the professional organizations



within Manitoba that provide professional development activities. The data for this section came from questions A.2, B. 1, b. 2, C. 1, C. 3 and C. 4 of the Interview Questions Protocol (Appendix B). The following themes were prevalent in the interviews.

The organizations were encouraged to provide activities that are more interactive and which provide an opportunity for dialogue by participants. One principal commented: "I appreciate activities where time is provided to discuss what one has learned with other participants. We learn from each other." Another principal commented: "Taking workshops and classes where there was lots of chance for discussion I found to be very helpful. Sharing with colleagues is so beneficial." One vice principal commented: "I like going to activities as a team either from the school or division. When given opportunities to interact at the activities we can develop plans and get feedback right away without having to return to our division, develop plans independently and then try to find time to meet and discuss them."

Activities should have a research foundation and be focused on improving student achievement. One principal commented: "I became a principal in order to make a difference particularly in the achievement of students." Another principal commented: "I tell my staff that I never settle for less than excellence. I push them in a positive way and tell them to never settle for mediocrity." A third principal commented: "My son opened my eyes to some things I was doing as a teacher that I shouldn't have been doing. This has helped me work with my staff too. Being a parent has been a great learning experience for me as a teacher

and administrator. Being a parent and seeing things through the eyes of a child is so important.” A vice principal commented: “The relationship between research and practice is important to know about. As a teacher you don’t have time to do this. Now that I have spent the time as an administrator and taken the courses I want to pass that on to the teachers. I am passionate about that. I want to bring that to a level of consciousness of the teachers. This will help us focus on improving student achievement.”

Rural and northern school-based administrators raised concerns regarding how adequate professional development budgets were as well as how accessible the professional development opportunities were. Three suggested that more university courses could be offered online which would allow more rural and northern administrators to participate without having to drive to Winnipeg or Brandon.

The participants supported university courses and recommend them to teachers who are interested in becoming administrators. One principal commented: “I think the theory I learned in my Masters and some of the very good professors I had were helpful. They provided me with a different perspective on how to look at things.” Another principal commented: “When teachers ask me what is the best preparation for becoming an administrator I suggest taking university courses. I suggest continuing life-long learning.” One vice principal commented: “Part of the Level 2 requirements was nine credit hours of university course work. So I started on my journey of taking university courses and I put the nine credit hours towards my Masters in Ed Admin. If I had

not had to take the nine credit hours I wouldn't have been spurred on to take my Masters. So university courses had a positive influence on my professional development.”

The participants were strong supporters of mentoring and encouraged organizations to provide more formal training on mentorship. They encouraged school divisions to develop formal mentoring programs. One principal commented: “The mentorship program offered by COSL at SAG was very good for me to participate in.” One vice principal commented: “The divisional mentor for new administrators has been very helpful. More school divisions should have a formal mentor for the division. The benefits outweigh the costs.”

Leadership development programs developed by school divisions were supported by those interview participants who were fortunate to work in a division that had such a program. One principal commented: “Teachers should be encouraged to take on leadership positions within their schools and divisions. In this way they learn what leadership is all about and school divisions can provide professional development for them.” When school-based administrators recognize teachers on their staffs that have leadership potential, they provide them with leadership opportunities in their schools and encourage them to participate in the divisional leadership program. One participant stated: “School divisions need to develop leaders locally.”

Participants encouraged professional organizations to provide activities on inclusion and special needs. School-based administrators who do not have a background in these areas and resource and/or counseling are at a

disadvantage. One principal commented: “This year I did professional development on the inclusion of students with behavioural concerns with some of our behaviour intervention team members. We did this for our whole staff and they thought it was one of the best in-services they had ever had.”

Participants were supportive of the activities provided by COSL and MASS. One principal commented: “The program for new administrators sponsored by COSL is very beneficial.” Another principal commented: “Professional development activities sponsored by MASS (e.g. Ethical Leadership) are very beneficial. One vice principal commented: “With the support of COSL we are planning to develop, in conjunction with our superintendent, a leadership development program for our division.”

The COSL/MCLE summer institute was recommended by those participants who had attended.

Participants were supportive of developing networks and suggested professional organizations should provide time for networking at their activities. One principal commented: “While taking university courses I found the networking and talking with people who were already in administration very helpful.” Three principals commented: “Being part of the elementary principals group in our division is a very good opportunity to network and receive feedback.” A vice principal commented: “I find going to conferences and workshops very good opportunities for dialogue and developing networks.”

Participants who had taken on a leadership position outside of their school divisions, with MTS and/or COSL, commented on how these experiences aided

their development as educational leaders (e.g., peer coaching trainer, regional facilitator for professional development, member of COSL Leadership Team). One principal commented: “I am a member of COSL’s leadership team and that helps me develop a network.” Another principal commented: “Being involved with the MTS at the provincial level helps me develop networks.” A third principal commented: “Working in a number of schools has helped me develop networks.” A vice principal commented: “Teaching at different grade levels helped me develop networks.”

### **Summary**

In addition to the alignment with previous findings related to high ratings for local school division and individual professional development opportunities, over 50% of the respondents also rated COSL conferences, COSL SAG conferences, being a mentor and regional PD activities as being effective or very effective. As has been the case previously, the COSL summer institute, MCLE workshops and the Northern administrators’ summer institute receive the lowest ratings in terms of effectiveness, though this is likely due to respondents never having attended the events. The summer institute was previously sponsored by MCLE but, is now sponsored by COSL. Some respondents may have attended the summer institute sponsored by MCLE instead of the one sponsored by COSL but that question was not asked on the questionnaire and no respondent made that comment.

The respondents provided feedback on the types of skills, knowledge, and/or dispositions that are necessary for administrators to be successful. They

provided feedback on factors that affect the kinds of professional development activities in which they participate as well as what types of activities were valuable and what types were not of value.

Interview participants indicated that being a mentor, university courses, attending conferences and workshops, and dialoguing with colleagues as well as professional learning communities contributed most to their professional growth. Professional reading was commented on positively as well.

Manitoba school-based administrators consider their professional development experiences by and large to have been successful. Formal leadership organizations in Manitoba may want to take into account the feedback provided by the questionnaire respondents and interview participants in order to more effectively create meaningful formalized professional development opportunities for school-based administrators especially in these areas: location –the activity is easily accessible from all parts of the province; costs – the professional development budgets are made adequate; timing – the activities do not conflict with major school activities (e.g., school budget development, school plan development, athletic finals, music festivals) and family time; the activities themselves are relevant, interactive, provide time for dialogue between the participants, provide follow up, and last but not least focus on student achievement.

Chapter Five will examine the findings in light of the framework and their implications for future research, practice and theory.

## **Chapter Five: Conclusions and Recommendations**

### **Introduction**

This chapter presents the conclusions and recommendations for theory, practice and research of this mixed-methods study based on the responses to the questionnaire and the participants in the interviews.

### **Conclusions**

Both questionnaire respondents and interview participants are very supportive of the professional development opportunities available, and none indicated that they never participate in professional development. Thus, school-based administrators avail themselves of professional development opportunities both within and outside of Manitoba. Many of the sub-groups in this study were composed of very small numbers; however, their results were compared to the broader educational community of principals and vice principals who responded to the questionnaire which supports the claim that the findings may be generalizable to the population of school-based administrators in Manitoba.

This study was framed theoretically from an interpretivist perspective underpinned by constructivism. The assumption was made that knowledge is grounded in the lived experiences of the participants, is subjective rather than objective, and is formulated in the human context. Knowledge is constructed by individuals based on their experiences (Gliner & Morgan, 2000, p. 409). The participants in this study constructed meaning about the effectiveness of professional development from reflecting on their own experiences. It was not the intent of the researcher to determine what constituted an ultimate “truth”

regarding the effectiveness of professional development in the province; the focus was on accessing each individual's perceptions based on his/her personal engagement within these activities. Because the study was not theoretically constructed within a positivist framework, the lower response rate to the questionnaire, though disappointing and potentially limiting, never-the-less supported the lived experiences of interview participants, which helped to reinforce and corroborate the interpretation of the findings. In addition, the use of this theoretical construction was helpful in examining the perspectives of school-based administrators because we currently do not have models that could definitively assess the effectiveness of professional development activities over time and across different contexts. Therefore, it is currently necessary to begin the review of professional development utilizing contextualized descriptions of subjective experiences. Though such a perspective negates the potential of generalizable results, the methodology utilized (multiple methods, ensuring adequate representation of sample participants and data analysis techniques) have been carefully conducted to ensure that findings are reliable and adequately portray the perceptions of school based administrators on the effectiveness of their professional development activities. These findings have lead to multiple conclusions and implications for practice, research and theory based on administrators' views.

When measured against the research of Thomas Guskey (2002, 2003a) that professional development should have research-based content, both questionnaire respondents and interview participants recognized the importance



of there being a research-based foundation for the professional development activities in which they participate. They also indicate that those professional development opportunities that have a research foundation were initiatives that tended to be undertaken personally or at the local school division level, or included COSL conferences and University coursework. These tend to be means of engaging in professional development in independent, relatively cost-effective, and time-opportune ways on topics of personal or local interest.

The two most common reasons for participating in professional development activities for both questionnaire respondents and interview participants were to develop their administrative knowledge and skills and to improve student achievement. As well, engaging in educational conversations with peers and developing networks were important reasons to participate in professional development. Local and individual professional development opportunities were mentioned as being effective or highly effective in developing school leaders, with the additions of COSL conferences, COSL SAG conferences, and university courses in Educational Administration.

In response to research question #1 of this study, only one-third of the school-based administrators involved in this study agreed that the primary purpose for which they engaged in professional development was to improve student learning outcomes; improving knowledge and skills was cited as a higher priority. This is curious given the research that suggests that the primary purpose of leadership should be to support student learning, even if the leadership influence is indirect (Darling-Hammond et al., 2007; Davis et al., 2005;

Leithwood & Jantzi, 2006, 2008; Leithwood & Levin, 2005; Leithwood et al., 2004). The findings of this study suggest that administrators are more likely to engage in professional development for their own benefit over that of the students. There may be a few reasons for this finding. For example, the demographic of administrators in Manitoba could be reflective of a younger, less experienced group of administrators as evidenced in the sample who are living in a “sink or swim” environment of administration or are being affected by increasing accountability and legal restraints. School-based administrators could reasonably believe that developing the “hard skills” of administration will improve the school and meet the expectations/ standards imposed on them by the school division and the Department of Education. They might think that in learning how to deal with system requirements, they will be able to achieve a sense of efficacy and autonomy that will allow them to innovate on behalf of their students. It stands to reason that mixed motives may be at work here, with a combination of engaging in professional development for both self-needs/self-interests and the improvement of student learning. For example, a principal may choose to develop her/his skills in order to move into a larger school with more resources (and a higher salary) and then put efforts into making a difference for students there.

Principals and vice principals perceive that as a consequence of the professional development in which they have participated, the benefits they have accrued include: learning new skills and knowledge; improving student achievement in their schools; networking and dialoguing with peers; benefiting

from being a mentor or being mentored; and developing their leadership skills. Being a mentor and/or being mentored was rated very highly by the respondents and participants in this study, thus supporting the research on this topic (Crippen & Wallin, 2008; Hansford & Ehrich, 2006; Kline, 1987; LeTendre & Roberts, 2005; Mitang, 2007; Silver, Lochmiller, Copland, & Tripps, 2009; Young, 2009).

In response to research question #2, principals and vice principals identified professional reading, conferences, COSL professional development activities, mentoring or being mentored, professional learning communities and/or study groups, and university courses as being the most beneficial for developing effective educational leaders and/or improving student achievement. These types of professional development are ones in which principals and vice principals are able to choose to participate and reap benefits. The researcher believes that it makes total sense that administrators are engaging in professional reading and professional development activities around the need to provide leadership. This is what they want to do but the actual nature of their work is such that they have to focus on the details of management and personnel issues.

The second criterion for effective professional development Guskey identifies as context because “real-world contextual differences profoundly influence the effectiveness of professional development endeavours” (Guskey, 2003a, p. 750). When measured against Guskey’s second criterion, both questionnaire respondents and interview participants indicated that they attempted to transfer what they had learned at the professional development

sessions into the context of their schools. Not surprisingly, local school division or individual professional development activities were deemed to be most transferable by more than half of the respondents, in addition to COSL conferences and COSL SAG conferences. This is because these activities are either undertaken by the individual him/herself in areas of perceived need, or by the local school division in which the administrator works, and are likely therefore to be targeted to local contextual needs. For example, a number agreed that being part of a professional learning community and being able to dialogue with peers about what they had learned was very helpful in transferring their learning. Thus, the data show that professional learning communities are of value to school-based administrators for both their own learning and the achievement of their students (DuFour, DuFour, Eaker, & Karhanek, 2004; DuFour et al., 2005; Schmoker, 2004). Professional learning communities assist school-based administrators and teachers in discussing contextual differences. COSL conferences tend also to be highly “practical” in their focus, which more than likely eases the opportunities for transferability of learning.

The fourth criterion of effectiveness advocated by Guskey (2002) is evaluation. The extent to which evaluation of the skills, knowledge or dispositions learned by school-based administrators from professional development activities occurs varies but is overall reflective of a general lack of evaluation for all professional development opportunities, which includes less than 20% even for local opportunities. Thus, the results of this study regarding the extent to which evaluation occurs are disappointing given how important evaluation is to

determining the effectiveness of the professional growth opportunity. No respondents commented on whether the professional development activities themselves were evaluated after the activities occurred or whether the professional organizations took any action based on the evaluations. Evaluation of professional development activities was not mentioned by interview participants either. Without the benefit of evaluation, the extent to which we actually know that the professional development in which school-based administrators participate is having an effect on practice, and in extension, student learning, cannot be measured.

In response to research question #3, principals and vice principals have engaged in professional development experiences in the areas of leadership, instruction, management, and personnel. All of the organizations cited in this study provide professional development activities in all four of these areas, although not every year or at every activity. Questionnaire respondents indicated that the area of leadership was the most important area and management the least important, and, they indicated that the primary area they were interested in was leadership. Findings may be suggestive of the notion that administrators are trying to think more broadly and openly in terms of leadership, but they are also focused on the immediacy of their work environments and accountability requirements and therefore need the management skills though they would prefer to be able to focus more broadly on leadership issues.

Principals and vice principals participate in professional development activities on other topics as well. Interview participants indicated that divisional

leadership programs were very beneficial to school-based administrators and to teachers who want to become administrators.

Questionnaire respondents (particularly vice principals) were ambivalent towards or tended to disagree with the idea on whether principals should be required to have administrator certification prior to being appointed, whereas, principals and vice principals interviewed supported the requirement for school-based administrators to become certified if not before then after being appointed. Both interview participants and questionnaire respondents stated that the program for certification needs to be reviewed and revised whether or not it is made mandatory, since they have not been changed since 1985 other than to amend the course numbers for university courses.

In response to research question #4, professional reading was deemed to contribute most to their development as effective school-based administrators. In addition to the alignment with previous findings related to high ratings for local school division and individual professional development opportunities, respondents also rated COSL conferences, COSL SAG conferences, being a mentor and regional PD activities as being effective or very effective.

Principals and vice principals also made suggestions for how formal organizations in Manitoba might create more meaningful and effective formalized professional development opportunities for the development of effective school-based administrators. In this study, principals and vice principals indicated that activities need to be easily accessible from all parts of the province not only because of distance but also because of availability and personal time

commitments. This might involve repeating the activities and holding them in various parts of the province. Financial support for professional development activities does not always cover the costs of the activities. The professional development activities of school-based administrators are not financially supported to the same degree by all school divisions. The timing of professional development activities sometimes coincides with major school activities (e.g., school budget development, school plan development, athletic finals, music/band festivals) and family time.

Principals and vice principals want their professional development activities to be relevant, interactive, to provide time for interaction and dialogue, to be research-based, to be evaluated, to include the Manitoba context, and to be focused on student achievement. The actual findings of this study do not suggest that student learning is primary; therefore, some of the comments may be rhetorical and be based on what people know they should say versus what they are actually focused on (management). The researcher noted the incongruence with what people provided in the interviews and qualitative comments versus what they indicated in their numeric ratings for their own skill development.

### **Recommendations**

The following sections utilize the study findings to make recommendations for practice, research and theory in educational leadership.

#### **Practice**

Since school division leadership development programs were so positively perceived and commented upon by the interview participants they should be

initiated in each school division. These programs should be available to both current school-based administrators and prospective administrators. COSL representatives at the provincial level should sit down with representatives of the Manitoba Association of School Superintendents to discuss the benefits of the development of these programs. Then, local COSL members should discuss the idea of school division leadership development programs including job shadowing with their local superintendents. The researcher is confident that those school divisions with successful, as identified by participants, leadership development programs would share information about their programs with other school divisions. Having leadership development programs available in all school divisions would encourage more teachers to develop their leadership skills and may help to curb the shortage of teachers wanting to become school-based administrators. This would also address the issues of access, transferability of learning, and the potential for context-dependent evaluation to occur.

Mentoring and being mentored were forms of professional development that both questionnaire respondents and interview participants indicated were very beneficial to them. School divisions should provide time and should ensure their school-based administrators are involved as mentors or were being mentored. COSL should offer more professional development activities on mentoring.

The criteria for Level 1 and Level 2 certification need to be reviewed and revised and standards developed. COSL should develop a proposal for this and discuss it with the Deputy Minister of Education who hopefully would set up an



inter-organizational committee (COSL, MASS, MSBA, Faculties of Education, Department of Education) to revise the certification process for school-based administrators. The revised Guidelines should contain underlying principles, standards, references to research, and promote improving student achievement as a focus of school leaders. In addition, currently there is no requirement that administrators obtain any additional professional learning once the certificates are in their hands. Interestingly, though the argument for certification is around the professional growth needs of principals, there is no requirement for continuing professional growth in order to maintain certification status. Whether or not administrators continue to attend professional development opportunities is therefore very much in the hands of individuals and/or the coercive interests of school divisions as new initiatives or ideas are deemed to be of value. It may be that some consideration of providing evidence of continual professional growth for maintaining certification status should be part of any discussions related to refining the certification process.

Professional reading was identified by both questionnaire respondents and interview participants as being very beneficial to their professional development. They agreed that professional learning communities and/or study groups are excellent venues for sharing the information learned from the professional readings. Superintendents should provide funding for professional books and journals in each school and should be encouraged to have school-based administrators share at divisional administrators' meetings what they have learned from what they have read and how they have implemented changes to

professional practice as a result. Time should be provided for professional learning communities and/or study groups to meet during the school day in school divisions as principals and vice principals perceive they are beneficial in the development of effective educational leaders.

Conferences and workshops should provide time for school-based administrators to dialogue and network. They should also be interactive, relevant, research-based, and focused on improving student achievement.

Given that participants indicated that effective professional growth was facilitated in university coursework, but that access, time and resource issues played a significant role in whether or not participants could engage in these pursuits, school divisions should be encouraged to develop partnerships (Lashway, 2003) with the universities to establish cohorts in their school divisions or in conjunction with other divisions so their administrators are able to take university courses for their Master's degrees in their divisions rather than having to travel to the universities. Universities need to consider that the professionals who can benefit from their programs are not only those who reside in a close catchment area, but that articulating programs that provide opportunities province-wide, even if that means collaborating across universities, would support leadership development across this province.

Given the millions of dollars spent on professional development and viewed against Guskey's criteria, principals and vice principals must become skilled consumers of educational research, demand better research-based evidence from consultants, and evaluate all professional development activities.

Guskey (2002) states that there are five critical levels of evaluation that can improve professional development: 1) participants' reactions, 2) participants' learning, 3) organization support and change, 4) participants' use of new knowledge and skills, and 5) student learning outcomes (p. 46-49). These levels ask the questions: What questions are addressed? How will information be gathered? What is measured or assessed? and, How will information be used? (Guskey, 2002, p. 48-49). These levels and questions should be built into school-based administrators' evaluation of professional development activities. Without more emphasis on the evaluation of professional development opportunities, there can be no immediate claims made that most, if any, of the opportunities currently of focus in Manitoba are actually being embedded within the practices of administrators at the local level. This finding is quite alarming given the levels of funding spent across the province on professional development opportunities, the time spent organizing and/or participating in these events, and the findings that suggest that leaders do truly wish to build their own skill sets and improve student learning. A more coordinated and focused approach to the evaluation of such opportunities must start to occur within local contexts and across the leadership groups currently offering professional development activities for administrators.

### **Future Research**

Further research on the certification of principals in Canada is required, especially when one sees the vast differences in Ontario and Manitoba. Moreover, the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada recently agreed on the

portability of certification from province to province even though the differences in certification vary greatly across Canada, which has further ramifications for the professional growth needs of leaders in diverse contexts. Given that most U.S. states and many provinces and territories in Canada require certification, Manitoba respondents remain ambivalent or seemingly opposed to mandatory certification. More research on the reasons why administrators remain ambivalent or negatively disposed towards certification is necessary. It may be that there remain very good reasons why administrators feel this way that affect their ability or desire to be certified prior to an administrative appointment. Without such knowledge, moving towards a system of certification without addressing potential problems related to access could exacerbate a situation which appears to already be embedded with tension.

Whether what individuals have learned from their professional development becomes embedded in the daily practice of leaders and/or ultimately promotes student learning is an area that needs extensive study. Given the findings that suggest that evaluation of these activities are not occurring to any great extent, future research could incorporate action research projects that work with professional development providers and local schools/school divisions to foster the evaluation process and help participants transfer and embed their learning within their local contexts.

### **Theory**

The findings of this study support the theory that school-based administrators are working in the neoliberal/accountability environment and/or a

demographic environment of less experienced administrators. Respondents to the questionnaire had a mean years of experience of 10.0 years for principals and 6.2 years for vice principals. This could reflect a younger, less experienced group of administrators (as evidenced in the sample in this study) who are first living in the “sink or swim” environment of administration, or who are being affected by increasing accountability and legal restraints. This is further supported by the findings that administrators are focusing on individual skill development over student learning and are finding management aspects more beneficial than leadership foci even though they would prefer to be focusing on the “big picture” leadership issues. At best only 30% of the sample put student learning first, and improving knowledge was higher. This does not support the research on student learning and leadership (Davis et al., 2005; Duke, 2004; Goldring et al., 2007; Goldring et al., 2009; Leithwood & Jantzi, 2008; Leithwood & Levin, 2005; Leithwood & Mascall, 2008; Leithwood & Riehl, 2003; Leithwood et al., 2004; Marks & Printy, 2003; Porter et al., 2006; Robinson et al., 2008) . In fact, it suggests that administrators are engaging in professional development for their own benefit over that of their students.

The findings of this study link strongly to the fact that administrators are thinking more broadly and openly in terms of leadership, but they are also focused on the immediacy of their work environments and accountability requirements. They are engaged in professional reading on the topic of leadership but are not able to put what they have read into practice; nor is there any emphasis in evaluation of professional development that may help them

focus on transferring their learning. Instead, the actual nature of their work is such that they have to focus on the details of management and personnel issues. This is a significant finding that supports what administrators want in terms of their professional growth versus in what they are forced to engage as a consequence of our current educational milieu.

Finally, there must be some comment made regarding the value of Guskey's criteria for professional development: (a) focused on student learning; (b) research-based; (c) context-specific; and (d) evaluated for its potential to embed learning in practice. The findings of this study suggest that, overall, administrators in Manitoba are highly satisfied with their professional learning opportunities. However, their views do not always align with Guskey's criteria.

In this study, having a focus on student learning comes second to the development of individual knowledge and skills. This in itself may not make the end result of professional development any less beneficial for students, particularly given the fact that the findings may be reflective of a cadre of relatively inexperienced new administrators. It may be that Guskey's model needs to be refined to include consideration of career stage or base skill level of the intended audience. It may be difficult for new administrators to focus immediately on transferring their learning to students if they do not as yet have a base level of management skills that will help them in their own daily practice.

In terms of the second criteria, the findings tend to support the view that administrators perceive that professional development opportunities should be, and usually are, supported by a foundation of research. Though respondents

were not asked to articulate the nature of the research, local school division, COSL conferences and university coursework were suggested to be most often underpinned by a base of research.

The third criteria, that of the need for context specificity, is also supported by the fact that the vast majority of respondents consistently value most highly, and find most beneficial, those opportunities that are supported or offered at the individual or local school or school division level. This no doubt helps to provide a context-specific focus on learning and supports transferability of skills. A second contextual issue, however, may be that Guskey's model may also need to acknowledge that the criteria of effectiveness also needs to be context-specific. Applying a "one-size-fits-all" model to all professional development activities does not allow for context to play a role in how and what professional development activities are offered. For example, given the neoliberal context in which administrators find themselves today, it is not surprising that the professional bodies responsible for professional development across the province are offering management sessions for leaders at the expense of broad-based leadership issues or the foci on student learning. In this case, the third criteria of context specificity actually justifies a limitation on the criteria of student learning as the primary focus.

Disappointingly , the fourth criteria of evaluation is evidenced little, if at all, across all professional development opportunities found within Manitoba, even though participants tend to rate these opportunities as being beneficial. In this case, it is suggested that the culture in Manitoba is one where professional

development is encouraged, attended, and overall valued highly, but it is not one in which accountability for the transference of skills learned has been promoted. Theoretically and practically, it becomes difficult to justify the value of any professional development activity if there is no attendant focus on whether or not any of it is actually affecting and improving practice. In this way, Guskey's model offers an element of consideration clearly lacking in the current professional development culture in Manitoba.

### **Summary**

This thesis addressed the broad research question: as a means of developing effective leadership, what are the perceptions of principals and vice principals in Manitoba of their professional growth needs and of the quality of the professional development in which they have participated during their administrative careers? The focus was on the purposes for which they engage in professional development, perceptions of effectiveness of the professional development, and recommendations for the provision of effective administrative professional development experiences. All of these foci were addressed as were the four specific research questions.

The findings of this study show that school-based administrators overall believe that the professional development opportunities available to them have been effective in developing leadership capacity. However, the study found that professional development activities are rarely evaluated, and that the purpose of student learning comes second to that of administrative management, which may be a reflection of the current accountability climate and the recent turnovers of



administrators across the province.

The perceptions of principals and vice principals of their professional development experiences were viewed using Guskey's criteria for effective professional development as a lens. Manitoba school-based administrators consider their professional development experiences by and large to have been successful. When their perceptions are viewed against Guskey's criteria, school-based administrators are pleased with the professional development activities that are focused on student achievement (criterion 1) but this is not their primary purpose for participating in professional development activities. Activities that have a research-based foundation and use data for decision making are well received by administrators. They do not find activities that lack a research base to be effective. Evaluation appears to be lacking in most activities. Administrators may find activities effective but there is no evaluation to back up their views. Ultimately, the study did not find that all four of Guskey's criteria must be in place at all times for school-based administrators to conclude that professional development activities are effective. The findings also suggest that school-based administrators tend to value most highly those professional development opportunities that are individualized and/or localized and supported by the local school or school division.

Principals and vice principals in Manitoba are very supportive of professional development and they are very perceptive as to what they like, what works and what doesn't in their development as effective educational leaders. The researcher is indebted to the principals and vice principals who shared their

perceptions and participated so openly in this study.

Finally, administrators remain divided on their view about mandatory certification of administrators; however, they are in agreement that the criteria for certification should be revised to include standards of professional practice.

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## Appendix A

### Questionnaire

### The Perceptions of Administrators on Their Professional Development

Before proceeding to the questionnaire, please read the following consent form and indicate whether you are willing to participate. This consent form is only part of the process of informed consent. It should give you the basic idea of what the research is about and what your participation will involve. If you would like more information regarding the questionnaire, please contact the researcher at email address or by phone at phone number.

#### Informed Consent

By selecting "I agree" below you are consenting to participate in the study "Educational Leadership and the Professional Development of Principals and Vice Principals in Manitoba" which is being conducted by Dorothy Y. Young, a Ph D candidate at the University of Manitoba. The questionnaire is conducted using SurveyMonkey which is a secure site and there is no way to trace individual respondents. The purpose of this study is to conduct research on the perceptions of principals and vice principals on the professional development activities in which they participate. The research will examine formal professional development activities in Manitoba which are organized and/or sponsored by the Council of School Leaders (COSL), the Manitoba Teachers' Society (MTS), the Manitoba Council for Leadership in Education (MCLE), the universities in Manitoba offering educational administration programs, and activities sponsored by school divisions. These activities include conferences, workshops, mentoring, professional reading, learning communities, study groups and university courses.

To help me in this research, I am inviting you to participate in a questionnaire which should take only 30 minutes to complete and has 27 questions in total. The questions will concern your professional development and there are a few questions of a personal nature (e.g., gender, position) which will be used in the statistical analysis of the data. Of course, you have the right to answer only those questions you feel most comfortable answering, and you can withdraw from the study at any time by telling me that you have withdrawn; should you choose to withdraw, your comments will be destroyed and not used in either analyzing or reporting the data. Only aggregate data will be reported to further protect the confidentiality of all participants. Should any data allow for the identity of any individual, it will simply not be used in the results. The data may be shared with my advisor, Dr. John Stapleton. There are no known risks associated with this study. Your participation will benefit the study in that it will provide the Manitoba context on administrator professional development. It is anticipated that the results may be used in planning future professional development activities. All responses will remain anonymous and confidential, and all identifiers will be stripped from the analysis and dissemination of the results of the study. All data will be kept by me in a locked file cabinet and/or password protected on my computer in my office at home (as required by University of Manitoba guidelines) and will not allow for the identification of any individual. Data will be destroyed after five years.

You will be able to receive a copy of a summary of the final report once the study is complete by emailing me at email address. The results of the study will be made available to my advisor, Dr. John Stapleton, Department of Educational Administration, Foundations and Psychology, the members of my Advisory Committee, and will be used in the writing of my thesis. The final report may also be presented at local, national and international conferences and may be disseminated in professional and scholarly journals. The report will be cited in my thesis and/or used to provide direction for my thesis. This research has been approved by the Education/Nursing Research Ethics Board. If there are any concerns or complaints about this project contact the Human Ethics Secretariat at phone number, or email address. You may also contact my advisor, Dr. John Stapleton, at email address. Once again your participation is voluntary. Should you wish to participate, please click on the "I agree" button at the bottom of this page. If you do not wish to participate, please exit the questionnaire.

**A. General Information: Please check one response only for each question.**

1. I identify as:
  - Female
  - Male
  
2. Currently, I am employed as a:
  - Principal
  - Vice principal
  
3. Currently, I work in the following type of school:
  - Early Years/Elementary (K- 5, K- 6, K-8)
  - Middle Years/Junior High (5-8, 6-8, 6-9, 7-9)
  - Senior Years (9-12, 10-12)
  - Other \_\_\_\_\_ (please indicate grade levels)
  
4. Currently, I work in the following location:
  - Urban (e.g., Winnipeg, Brandon)
  - Rural (e. g., Pilot Mound, Steinbach)
  - Northern (e.g., Flin Flon, Thompson, Leaf Rapids)
  
5. I have been in an administrative position (include both principal and vice principal) for a total of \_\_\_\_\_ years. (Please put the total number of years to June 2010 in the box below rounded to the nearest whole year).
  
6. I have the following administration certificate(s) from Manitoba Education:
  - Level 1 only
  - Level 2 only
  - Level 1 and Level 2
  - Neither Level 1 nor Level 2
  
7. The highest level of education I have obtained is:
  - Bachelor's Degree(s)
  - Post -Baccalaureate Diploma/Certificate in Education
  - Master's Degree specializing in \_\_\_\_\_
  - Doctorate Degree specializing in \_\_\_\_\_



B. 2	School Division workshops for administrators								
B. 3	COSL Conferences usually held in February								
B. 4	COSL SAG Conferences held in the Fall								
B. 5	COSL Summer Institute								
B. 6	Northern Administrators' Summer Institute								
B. 7	Regional PD Activities								
B. 8	MTS Conferences for administrators								
B. 9	MTS Workshops for administrators								
B. 10	MCLE Workshops								
B. 11	Learning Communities								
B. 12	Study Groups								
B. 13	Being a Mentor								
B. 14	Being a recipient of Mentoring								
B. 15	University Course(s) in Educational Administration								
B. 16	Professional Reading (journals, books)								
B. 17	Other, please specify _____								

### C. Purpose of Professional Development

Please reflect on the reason(s) you have participated in professional development while you have been an administrator. In the first column please indicate ***all that apply to you*** and in the second column please check off the ***one primary reason***.

C. 1. The purpose for me to continue with my professional development is:

All reasons that apply	One primary reason	Reasons
		it is a requirement of my school division.
		to further develop my administrative knowledge and skills.
		to increase my salary level.
		to improve student achievement.
		to learn something new.
		to engage in conversations about education with my peers.
		to obtain my Post-Baccalaureate Diploma/Certificate in Education.
		to obtain my Master's Degree in Educational Administration.
		to obtain my Level 1 and/or Level 2 Certificate.
		Other (please specify) _____

C. 2. Please indicate the factors (professional, logistical and personal) that affect the kinds of professional development activities in which you choose to engage.

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C. 3. The following is a list of the major professional development activities available for administrators. Please rank the activities (1 = best) in the order you believe they contribute most to professional growth. Then indicate in the space provided why you feel the way you do.

- \_\_\_\_\_ conferences
- \_\_\_\_\_ workshops
- \_\_\_\_\_ being a mentor
- \_\_\_\_\_ being mentored
- \_\_\_\_\_ professional learning communities/ study groups
- \_\_\_\_\_ university courses
- \_\_\_\_\_ professional reading
- \_\_\_\_\_ other (please specify)

Reason:

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C. 4. a) Below are the four categories of professional growth considered for administrative certification in Manitoba. A description of each can be found at the top of the rating chart on page 2. In the first column, please rank the categories (1 = most important) in what you believe to be their order of importance for administrators in Manitoba. In the second column, please indicate in which one of the four areas your primary professional interests lie.

Area	Ranking	Primary Professional Interest
Instruction		
Leadership		
Management		
Personnel		

b) Given the description of the areas above that align with certification requirements in Manitoba, might you suggest changes to these descriptions, or other areas or topics that would be reflective of current initiatives and/or dynamics that affect the context in which administrators now work? Please list these below.

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C. 5. On a scale of 1 – 5 (where 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = neutral, 4 = agree and 5 = strongly agree) should certification as an administrator be a requirement prior to becoming a principal?

Reason

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C. 6. Please describe the nature of the professional development activities that stood out in your mind as being particularly valuable in your learning. What was it about them that you found valuable or effective?

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C. 7. Please describe the nature of the professional development activities that stood out in your mind as being particularly poor. What was it about them that made you consider them to be ineffective or of poor quality?

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C. 8. Given the extent of your experiences and knowledge of administrative professional growth in Manitoba, what types of skills, knowledge and/or dispositions are most necessary for administrators to learn, know, or be able to do in order to be successful in today's educational context and, what suggestions can you make on how these activities could be improved?

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**D. Comments**

In the space below, please include any comments regarding professional development and its usefulness to you in becoming a more effective educational leader and in improving student achievement. General comments on professional development are also encouraged.

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**E. Invitation**

If you are interested in participating in a follow-up one on one interview with the researcher, Dorothy Y. Young, to further discuss your professional development and its effects on your educational leadership, please [Email Me](#) by placing Interview Volunteer in the subject line and indicate in the body of the email whether you are a principal or vice principal and providing both email and telephone numbers where you may be contacted to receive further information. The researcher is looking for 15 volunteers (10 principals and 5 vice principals) to be interviewed. No participants will be identified in this research.

**F. Thank you**

Thank you for completing the questionnaire and participating in this research.

## Appendix B

### Interview Questions Protocol

#### A. Pre-appointment experiences:

1. Tell me about why you became an administrator (educational leader).
2. Describe for me the pre-appointment preparation you had (university courses, professional development, level 1 or 2 certificates, etc.) for administration before you became an administrator.
  - Which of these experiences were most helpful? Why?
  - Which of these experiences were least helpful? Why?
3. Tell me how prepared you felt for your work as an administrator.
  - Were there any areas in which you felt unprepared? If so, what were they?
4. Tell me about any mentors who influenced you to become an administrator.
  - What was their relationship to you and why did they become mentors to you?
  - What skills, knowledge or dispositions did you learn from them and how did that help you become a better administrator?

#### B. Administrative experiences:

1. Describe for me the professional development experiences you had (university courses, conferences, workshops, level 1 or 2 certificates, etc.) in administration while you have been an administrator.
  - Which of these experiences were most helpful? Why?
  - Which of these experiences were least helpful? Why?
2. Tell me how these professional development experiences influenced you as an educational leader.
  - Which of these experiences did you use in your position? Why?
  - Which of these experiences did you discard? Why?
  - Which of these experiences assisted you most in developing into an effective educational leader? Why?
3. Tell me about any mentors who influenced your development as a leader.
  - What was their relationship to you and why did they become mentors to you?
  - What skills, knowledge or dispositions did you learn from them and how did that help you become a better administrator?
4. Tell me about why you did or did not become a mentor to an administrator.
  - If you did mentor an administrator, why did you choose to mentor that individual(s)?
  - If you chose not to mentor other administrators, what factors influenced that decision?

#### C. Reflections:

1. What preparation do you believe benefited you the most as an educational

leader?

2. Do you believe certification as an administrator should be a requirement in Manitoba? Why or why not?
3. If you were to do it all over again, would you prepare yourself differently both prior to your appointment and during the years you have been an administrator? If so, how? If not, why not?
4. What do you believe is the best preparation for teachers who wish to become administrators?
  - What form should these opportunities take?
  - Who should be responsible for designing these opportunities?

## Appendix C

### Letter to COSL

Note: Letter was printed on University of Manitoba Faculty of Education letterhead.

Dorothy Y. Young  
Doctoral Candidate  
Department of Educational Administration, Foundation and Psychology  
University of Manitoba  
R3T 2N2

March 23, 2010

Al Schroeder  
Chairperson  
COSL Office  
Winnipeg, MB

Dear Mr. Schroeder,

My name is Dorothy Young and I am a doctoral candidate at the Faculty of Education at the University of Manitoba. I am writing to request COSL's support for a research study that I am conducting that is focused on the effective educational leadership and professional development of public school principals and vice principals in Manitoba.

The project is entitled, "Educational Leadership and the Professional Development of Principals and Vice Principals in Manitoba". The study has been approved by the Education/Nursing Research Ethics Board.

The purpose of this research is to determine from school principals and vice principals in Manitoba their perceptions of the quality of the professional development in which they have participated during their administrative careers, with a focus on the purposes for which they engage in professional development, their perceptions of its effectiveness, how the professional development has contributed to their development as educational leaders, and the value of certification as a means of developing effective leadership. A questionnaire answered via the internet and interviews with 20 administrators will be used in this research.

This letter requests COSL's support for this research by asking COSL to email an invitation (attached) to principals and vice principals to participate in a questionnaire that would be answered via the internet using SurveyMonkey which will preserve the confidentiality of the participants. The questionnaire asks questions related to the purposes of professional development, and formal professional development activities in Manitoba which are organized and/or sponsored by the Council of School Leaders (COSL), the Manitoba Teachers' Society (MTS), the Manitoba Council for Leadership in Education (MCLE), the universities in Manitoba offering educational administration programs, and activities offered by school divisions.

I am willing to present the findings of this research at a COSL conference or seminar and COSL will receive a copy of the final report through email once the study is complete. The results of the study will be made available to my advisor, Dr. John Stapleton, Department of Educational Administration, Foundations and Psychology, the members of my Advisory Committee, and will be used in the writing of my dissertation. The final report may also be presented at local, national and international conferences and may be disseminated in professional and scholarly journals. The report will be cited in my thesis and/or used to provide direction for my thesis.

Further information on this study is available from the Education/Nursing Research Ethics Board by contacting email address or you may contact my advisor, Dr. John Stapleton, at email address.

If COSL would be willing to support this research by agreeing to my request I would be most appreciative. If the organization would prefer not to become involved, I thank you for being willing to consider my request. Regardless of COSL's formal involvement, I would be happy to forward a copy of the final report once the study is complete.

Sincerely,

Dorothy Y. Young  
Mailing address

Tel: telephone number  
E-mail: email address

(Attachment – Invitation to Participate)

## Invitation to Participate

Note: Sent via email.

To: All principals and vice principals in public schools in Manitoba  
From: Dorothy Y. Young, Doctoral Candidate

My name is Dorothy Young and I am a retired administrator from Manitoba and a doctoral candidate at the Faculty of Education at the University of Manitoba. I am writing to invite you to participate in a research study that is focused on the effective educational leadership and professional development of public school principals and vice principals in Manitoba.

Research Study Title: "Educational Leadership and the Professional Development of Principals and Vice Principals in Manitoba". The study has been approved by the Education/Nursing Research Ethics Board.

You are invited to participate in a questionnaire which forms part of my research study on the perceptions of principals and vice principals on the professional development activities in which they participate. The research will examine formal professional development activities in Manitoba which are organized and/or sponsored by the Council of School Leaders (COSL), the Manitoba Teachers' Society (MTS), the Manitoba Council for Leadership in Education (MCLE), the universities in Manitoba offering educational administration programs, and activities offered by school divisions. These activities include conferences, workshops, mentoring, professional reading, learning communities, study groups and university courses.

Principals and vice principals are asked to answer a web-based questionnaire about their professional development. The questionnaire will take approximately 30 minutes to complete. At the conclusion of the questionnaire, participants are invited to participate further in the second part of the research by consenting to a one on one interview with the researcher. Fifteen interviews will be conducted in part two of the study.

The results of the study will be made available to my advisor, Dr. John Stapleton, Department of Educational Administration, Foundations and Psychology, the members of my Advisory Committee, and will be used in the writing of my thesis. The final report may also be presented at local, national and international conferences and may be disseminated in professional and scholarly journals. The report will be cited in my thesis and/or used to provide direction for my thesis. The final report of the study will provide the Manitoba context on administrator professional development. It is anticipated that COSL and other educational organizations will be able to use the final report in planning future professional development activities. You will be able to receive a copy of a summary of the final report once the study is complete by emailing me at email address. Please put "Request for Summary of Final Report" in the subject of the email.

Further information on this study is available from the researcher, Dorothy Y. Young, via email at email address or by telephone at telephone number; from the Education/Nursing Research Ethics Board by contacting email address or you may contact my advisor, Dr. John Stapleton, at email address.

To participate in this study, please click on the link <http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/N5RHMSX> (or copy and paste the URL into your web browser) to proceed to the consent form and questionnaire. SurveyMonkey is a secure website and there is no way to trace individual respondents. All responses will remain anonymous and confidential, and all identifiers will be stripped from the analysis and dissemination of the results of the study. The questionnaire will be open from April 5, 2010 until June 5, 2010.

## Appendix D

### Participant Informed Consent Letter

Note: Letter was printed on University of Manitoba Faculty of Education letterhead.

Dorothy Y. Young  
Doctoral Candidate  
Department of Educational Administration, Foundation and Psychology  
University of Manitoba  
R3T 2N2

June, 2010

Dear Principal/Vice Principal (individually addressed),

My name is Dorothy Young and I am a doctoral candidate at the Faculty of Education at the University of Manitoba. I am writing to invite you to participate in a research study that is focused on the effective educational leadership and professional development of public school principals and vice principals in Manitoba.

Research Project Title: Educational Leadership and the Professional Development of Principals and Vice Principals in Manitoba. This study has been approved by the Education/Nursing Research Ethics Board.

Researcher: Dorothy Y. Young

**This letter will provide you with the basic idea of what this research is about and what participation will involve. If you would like more detail about something mentioned here, or information not included here, feel free to ask. Please take the time to read this carefully and to understand any accompanying information.**

The purpose of this study is to speak with 10 public school principals and 5 vice principals to determine (a) whether they were certified, beyond teacher certification, and to what level; (b) whether they had any professional development in the areas of leadership, instruction, management and personnel, as these are the focus of leadership preparation by the province; (c) whether they were mentored before and during the course of their careers as principals and vice principals; and (d) whether principals and vice would prepare differently for the position, either in their choices of professional development and/or mentorship opportunities in order to become more effective educational leaders.

To help me in this research, I am inviting you to participate in an audio-taped interview which should take no more than one hour of your time. The questions I ask will relate to your professional preparation prior to your first appointment as an administrator, your professional development while you were an administrator and your reflection on your professional preparation. Of course, you have the right to answer only those questions you feel most comfortable answering, and you can withdraw from the study at any time; by telling me that you have withdrawn; should you choose to withdraw, your comments will be destroyed and not used in either analyzing or reporting the data.

We will arrange an interview at a time and place that is mutually agreeable, in order to ensure that you are comfortable and to protect the privacy of our conversation. You will receive a copy of the interview questions via email before the interview so that you can gather your thoughts. Your responses, including the name of your mentor if named by you will be kept strictly anonymous and confidential. Your name and the name of your mentor, if provide, will not appear anywhere in



the results. Your name and the name of your mentor will be designated with pseudonyms. If a direct quotation is to be used, a pseudonym will protect your identity. Your taped interview will be transcribed by me and the transcript will be returned to you so that you can add, delete, or change your responses to ensure that all identifying information has been omitted. This will occur before the analysis of the data begins. You will be asked to return the reviewed transcript to me within two weeks of receipt of it. The data of the study will be analyzed and collated for the purposes of generalization into meaningful units that will be used to identify themes and patterns in the data related to the research questions. Only aggregate data will be reported to further protect the confidentiality of all participants. Should any data allow for the identifying of any individual, it will simply not be used in the results. The data may be shared with my advisor, Dr. John Stapleton. All data will be kept by me (Dorothy Y. Young) in a locked file cabinet and/or password protected on my computer in my office in my home (as required by University of Manitoba guidelines) and will not allow for the identification of any individual. No confidential records will be consulted. Data will be destroyed after five years. There are no known risks associated with this study. Your participation will benefit the study in that it will provide the Manitoba context on administrator professional development. It is anticipated that the results may be used in planning future professional development activities.

You will be able to receive a copy of a summary of the final report through email once the study is complete. The results of the study will be made available to my advisor, Dr. John Stapleton, Department of Educational Administration, Foundations and Psychology, the members of my Advisory Committee, and will be used in the writing of my thesis. The final report may also be presented at local, national and international conferences and may be disseminated in professional and scholarly journals. The report will be cited in my thesis and/or used to provide direction for my dissertation.

Once again, your participation is voluntary. Should you wish to participate, please sign the consent on the bottom of this page. Keep one copy for yourself, and mail the second copy to me for my records at the address listed below. If you do not wish to participate, please discard this information. You are free to withdraw from the study at any time, and/or refrain from answering any questions without prejudice or consequence.

Sincerely,

Dorothy Y. Young  
Mailing address  
Tel: telephone number  
E-mail: email address

This research has been approved by the Education/Nursing Research Ethics Board. If there are any concerns or complaints about this project contact any of the above-named persons or the Human Ethics Secretariat at phone number, or email address. You may also contact my advisor, Dr. John Stapleton, at email address.

.....  
I have read the consent form and consent to participate in the interview and research being conducted by Dorothy Y. Young, doctoral candidate, University of Manitoba.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Participant

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

Participant phone number is: \_\_\_\_\_

Participant email address to which the Final Report should be sent is: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Researcher

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

## Appendix E

### Research Matrices

#### 1. Research Questions and Questionnaire Questions

Research Questions	Questionnaire Questions																
	1. a	1. b	1. c	1. d	1. e	1. f	1. g	1. h	C. 1	C. 2	C. 3	C. 4	C. 5	C. 6	C. 7	D	
1) What benefits do principals and vice principals in Manitoba perceive have accrued in their development as educational leaders, as a consequence of the professional development in which they have participated?			X		X	X		X						X	X	X	
2) What types of professional development do principals and vice principals in Manitoba perceive as being the most beneficial for developing effective educational leaders and/or improving student achievement, and why?			X		X			X	X		X			X	X	X	
3) In what professional development experiences in the areas of leadership, instruction, management and personnel (areas designated by Manitoba Education as being important for the certification of administrators) have principals and vice principals in Manitoba engaged, for what purpose and in what context?		X							X			X	X	X	X		
4) How might formal leadership organizations in Manitoba more effectively create meaningful formalized professional development opportunities for the development of effective school based administrators?	X	X	X	X						X				X	X	X	X

**Note:**

1. Questions A. 1. to A. 7. are the independent variables of this research and are therefore not included in the matrix.
2. Questions B. 1 to B. 17 are the same except for the professional development activity being asked about. Therefore, 1. a to 1. h above represent the eight sub-questions asked in B. 1 to B. 17.

**2. Questionnaire Questions Linked to Research Literature**

1. Questions A. 1. to A. 7. are the independent variables of this research – Wallin (2010).
2. Questions B. 1 to B. 17 are the same except for the professional development activity being asked about. Therefore, B. 1. a to B. 1. h below represent the eight sub-questions asked in B. 1 to B. 17.

<p>B. 1. a. How regularly do you engage in this type of professional development activity? 1. Never 2. Once every two years 3. Once a year 4. Two to five times a year 5. Six times or more a year.</p>	<p>B. 1. b Which of the four areas related to certification requirements are most often targeted by this professional development activity? See above for definitions) 1. Instruction 2. Leadership 3. Management 4. Personnel 5. Other topics not included in the four areas.</p>	<p>B. 1. c On a scale of 1 (very ineffective) to 5 (very effective), how would you rate the general quality of this type of professional development experience?</p>	<p>B. 1. d On a scale of 1 (very ineffective) to 5 (very effective), how effective have you been in transferring your learning from this type of professional development activity to your work context in schools?</p>	<p>B. 1. e On a scale of 1 (very ineffective) to 5 (very effective), how effective has this type of professional development activity been for fostering your ability to affect student learning?</p>	<p>B. 1. f On a scale of 1 (not evident) to 5 (highly evident), to what extent is this professional development activity premised upon a strong research foundation?</p>	<p>B. 1. g On a scale of 1 (never) to 5 (always), to what extent does evaluation occur to determine whether the skills, knowledge or dispositions learned by administrators have actually been implemented in schools?</p>	<p>B. 1. h On a scale of 1 (very ineffective) to 5 (very effective), to what extent has this professional development activity assisted you in your development as an administrator?</p>
<p>Darling-Hammond et al (2007)</p>	<p>Björk &amp; Kowalski (2005) Cann (2005) Hess &amp; Kelly (2007) MECY(2008, 2009)</p>	<p>Darling-Hammond et al (2007) Guskey (2000, 2002, 2003a)</p>	<p>Guskey (2000, 2002, 2003a)</p>	<p>Darling-Hammond et al (2007) DuFour et al (2004) Duke (2004) Guskey (2000, 2002, 2003 a, b);Heck &amp; Hallinger (1999) Leithwood &amp; Jantzi (2006, 2008); Leithwood et al, (2004)</p>	<p>Guskey (2002, 2003a, 2007) Young, Levin &amp; Wallin (2007)</p>	<p>Guskey (2000, 2002, 2009)</p>	<p>Barnett (2004) Fullan (2001) Guskey (2000) Lashway (2003)</p>

3. Questions C. 1 to C. 9 are linked to the research literature in the chart below.

<b>Questionnaire Question</b>	<b>Research Literature</b>
C. 1 Purpose for Professional Development	Darling-Hammond et al (2007), Guskey (2000), Leithwood et al (2004)
C. 2 Factors affecting type of PD activities	Guskey (2000, 2002, 2003a)
C. 3 Activities available	Barnett (2004), Darling-Hammond et al (2007), Guskey (2000)
C. 4 Certification PD categories	LeTendre & Roberts (2005), MECY (2008, 2009), Wallace, Foster & da Costa (2007)
C. 5 Certification requirement	Leithwood & Levin (2005)
C. 6 Valuable PD activities	DuFour (2004), Grogan & Andrews (2002), Lashway (2003), Orr (2006)
C. 7 Poor PD activities	Barnett (2004), Darling-Hammond et al (2007), Lashway (2003)
C. 8 Skills, knowledge and/or dispositions necessary	CCSSO (2008), Hess & Kelly (2007), Murphy (2007), Murphy & Vriesenga (2006)
C. 9 Suggestions for improvement	Darling-Hammond et al (2007), Guskey (2000, 2003 a, b)

### 3. Research Questions and Interview Questions

Research Questions	Interview Questions											
	A.1	A.2	A.3	A.4	B.1	B.2	B.3	B.4	C.1	C.2	C.3	C.4
1) What benefits do principals and vice principals in Manitoba perceive have accrued in their development as educational leaders, as a consequence of the professional development in which they have participated?		X	X	X	X	X	X	X			X	X
2) What types of professional development do principals and vice principals in Manitoba perceive as being the most beneficial for developing effective educational leaders and/or improving student achievement, and why?		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X
3) In what professional development experiences in the areas of leadership, instruction, management and personnel (areas designated by Manitoba Education as being important for the certification of administrators) have principals and vice principals in Manitoba engaged, for what purpose and in what context?		X			X	X				X	X	X
4) How might formal leadership organizations in Manitoba more effectively create meaningful formalized professional development opportunities for the development of effective school based administrators?		X		X		X			X	X	X	X

**Note:** Question A.1 is an introductory question which helps to set a positive tone for the interview and therefore does not appear on the matrix.

#### 4. Interview Questions and Research Literature

Interview Questions	Research Literature
A. 2 pre-appointment preparation	Darling-Hammond et al (2007), Fry (2006), Guskey (2002, 2003a), Hess & Kelly (2007), Leithwood & Levin (2005), Levine (2005), Murphy (2007), Young, Crow, Orr, Ogawa & Creighton (2005)
A. 3 how prepared did you feel	Hess & Kelly (2007)
A. 4 pre-service influence of mentors	Fullan (2001)
B. 1 in-service preparation	Darling-Hammond et al (2007), Guskey (2002, 2003a), Wallace, Foster, da Costa (2007)
B. 2 influence of professional development	Darling-Hammond et al (2007), Guskey (2002, 2003a)
B. 3 influence of mentors	Crippen & Wallin (2008), Darling-Hammond et al (2007), Fullan (2001), Kline (1987), Mitang (2007), Young (2009)
B. 4 acting as a mentor	Crippen & Wallin (2008), Darling-Hammond et al (2007), Fullan (2001), Leithwood & Jantzi (2008), Young (2009)
C. 1 preparation that benefited the most	Darling-Hammond et al (2007), Guskey (2002)
C. 2 should certification be a requirement	CCSSO (2008), MECY (2008, 2009)
C. 3 would you prepare differently	Young (2009)
C. 4 what is the best preparation	Darling-Hammond et al (2007)

**Note:**

1. Question A.1 is an introductory question which helps to set a positive tone for the interview and therefore does not appear on the matrix.

## Appendix F Supplementary Tables

**Table 6b: Percentages of Respondents, by Location, Who Perceive that Professional Development Activities are Evidently or Highly Evidently Based on a Strong Research Foundation (N=55)**

Professional Development Activities	Principals			Vice Principals		
	Urban (n=21)	Rural (n=17)	North (n=4)	Urban (n=7)	Rural (n=4)	North (n=2)
Location						
School Division Conferences	80.9%	43.8%	50.0%	57.2%	25.0%	50.0%
School Division Workshops	80.9%	53.0%	50.0%	57.2%	25.0%	50.0%
COSL Conferences	40.0%	76.4%	25.0%	42.9%	75.0%	100.0%
COSL SAG Conferences	45.0%	56.3%	0.0%	42.9%	75.0%	50.0%
COSL Summer Institute	5.6%	31.3%	33.3%	14.3%	25.0%	50.0%
Northern Administrators Summer Institute	0.0%	0.0%	33.3%	0.0%	0.0%	50.0%
Regional P D Activities	29.4%	53.0%	50.0%	42.9%	50.0%	0.0%
MTS Conferences for Administrators	16.7%	37.6%	0.0%	14.3%	50.0%	50.0%
MTS Workshops for Administrators	11.1%	50.1%	0.0%	14.3%	50.0%	50.0%
MCLE Workshops	17.7%	33.4%	0.0%	0.0%	25.0%	50.0%
Learning Communities	68.4%	62.5%	33.3%	71.4%	0.0%	100.0%
Study Groups	73.7%	18.8%	0.0%	71.4%	25.0%	100.0%
Being a Mentor	44.6%	37.6%	0.0%	28.6%	25.0%	50.0%
Being a recipient of Mentoring	26.3%	6.3%	0.0%	42.9%	25.0%	50.0%
University Courses in Ed Admin	5.0%	50.0%	33.3%	42.9%	50.0%	100.0%
Professional Reading	95.2%	93.8%	75.0%	71.5%	100.0%	100.0%

**Table 6c: Percentages of Respondents, by Type of School, Who Perceive that Professional Development Activities are Evidently or Highly Evidently Based on a Strong Research Foundation (N=55)**

Professional Development Activities	Principals			Vice Principals		
	Early (n=28)	Middle (n=4)	Senior (n=10)	Early (n=2)	Middle (n=3)	Senior (n=8)
School Division Conferences	66.7%	75.0%	40.0%	50.0%	100.0%	25.0%
School Division Workshops	67.8%	75.0%	60.0%	50.0%	10.0%	25.0%
COSL Conferences	55.5%	50.0%	50.0%	0.0%	66.7%	75.0%
COSL SAG Conferences	44.0%	50.0%	50.0%	0.0%	66.7%	62.5%
COSL Summer Institute	20.8%	25.0%	11.1%	0.0%	0.0%	37.5%
Northern Administrators Summer Institute	4.2%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	12.5%
Regional P D Activities	40.0%	75.0%	33.3%	50.0%	66.7%	25.0%
MTS Conferences for Administrators	21.7%	50.0%	22.2%	0.0%	33.3%	37.5%
MTS Workshops for Administrators	26.0%	50.0%	22.2%	0.0%	33.3%	37.5%
MCLE Workshops	28.6%	25.0%	11.1%	0.0%	0.0%	25.0%
Learning Communities	62.5%	75.0%	60.0%	50.0%	100.0%	37.5%
Study Groups	47.8%	50.0%	40.0%	50.0%	100.0%	50.0%
Being a Mentor	45.4%	0.0%	40.0%	0.0%	66.7%	25.0%
Being a recipient of Mentoring	17.3%	25.0%	10.0%	50.0%	66.7%	25.0%
University Courses in Ed Admin	44.0%	50.0%	60.0%	0.0%	100.0%	50.0%
Professional Reading	92.6%	100.0%	90.0%	50.0%	100.0%	87.5%



**Table 7b: Percentages of Respondents, by Location, Who Perceive that Professional Development Activities Have Been Effective or Very Effective in Fostering the Ability to Affect Student Learning (N=58)**

Professional Development Activities	Principals			Vice Principals		
	Urban (n=21)	Rural (n=20)	North (n=4)	Urban (n=7)	Rural (n=4)	North (n=2)
School Division Conferences	76.1%	47.3%	50.0%	42.9%	0.0%	0.0%
School Division Workshops	80.9%	50.0%	75.0%	28.6%	0.0%	0.0%
COSL Conferences	35.0%	75.0%	50.0%	42.9%	25.0%	0.0%
COSL SAG Conferences	35.0%	66.7%	33.3%	42.9%	0.0%	0.0%
COSL Summer Institute	0.0%	15.6%	66.7%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Northern Administrators Summer Institute	0.0%	10.5%	33.3%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Regional P D Activities	27.8%	65.0%	0.0%	42.9%	50.0%	50.0%
MTS Conferences for Administrators	16.7%	26.3%	0.0%	28.6%	25.0%	50.0%
MTS Workshops for Administrators	11.1%	36.8%	0.0%	28.6%	25.0%	50.0%
MCLE Workshops	0.0%	26.4%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Learning Communities	84.2%	57.9%	33.3%	71.5%	0.0%	100.0%
Study Groups	84.2%	31.6%	33.3%	71.5%	0.0%	100.0%
Being a Mentor	63.2%	31.6%	0.0%	28.6%	0.0%	100.0%
Being a recipient of Mentoring	52.6%	10.5%	0.0%	42.9%	0.0%	50.0%
University Courses in Ed Admin	40.0%	31.6%	50.0%	28.6%	25.0%	0.0%
Professional Reading	80.0%	73.7%	66.7%	71.5%	75.0%	50.0%

**Table 7c: Percentages of Respondents, by Type of School, Who Perceive that Professional Development Activities Have Been Effective or Very Effective in Fostering the Ability to Affect Student Learning (N=58)**

Professional Development Activities	Principals			Vice Principals		
	Early (n=31)	Middle (n=4)	Senior (n=10)	Early (n=2)	Middle (n=3)	Senior (n=8)
School Division Conferences	63.4%	50.0%	60.0%	50.0%	66.7%	0.0%
School Division Workshops	71.0%	25.0%	70.0%	50.0%	33.3%	0.0%
COSL Conferences	53.4%	25.0%	70.0%	0.0%	66.7%	28.0%
COSL SAG Conferences	39.3%	75.0%	66.7%	0.0%	66.7%	12.5%
COSL Summer Institute	14.8%	25.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Northern Administrators Summer Institute	11.1%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Regional P D Activities	40.7%	75.0%	44.4%	50.0%	66.7%	37.5%
MTS Conferences for Administrators	23.1%	25.0%	11.1%	50.0%	33.3%	25.0%
MTS Workshops for Administrators	23.1%	25.0%	22.2%	50.0%	33.3%	25.0%
MCLE Workshops	15.3%	25.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Learning Communities	66.7%	75.0%	70.0%	50.0%	100.0%	37.5%
Study Groups	62.9%	50.0%	40.0%	50.0%	100.0%	37.5%
Being a Mentor	46.1%	25.0%	50.0%	0.0%	66.7%	20.0%
Being a recipient of Mentoring	34.6%	25.0%	20.0%	50.0%	66.7%	12.5%
University Courses in Ed Admin	37.0%	25.0%	40.0%	0.0%	66.7%	12.5%
Professional Reading	75.0%	50.0%	90.0%	100.0%	66.7%	62.5%

**Table 8b: Percentages of Respondents, by Location, Who Perceive that Involvement in Professional Development Activities are Effective or Very Effective in Their Development as Administrators (N=54)**

Professional Development Activities	Principals			Vice Principals		
	Urban (n=20)	Rural (n=18)	North (n=4)	Urban (n=6)	Rural (n=4)	North (n=2)
School Division Conferences	90.0%	70.6%	50.0%	100.0%	50.0%	50.0%
School Division Workshops	95.0%	77.8%	75.0%	100.0%	50.0%	50.0%
COSL Conferences	57.9%	88.9%	75.0%	33.3%	100.0%	100.0%
COSL SAG Conferences	52.7%	76.5%	50.0%	50.0%	75.0%	50.0%
COSL Summer Institute	5.9%	41.2%	66.7%	0%**	50.0%	0.0%
Northern Administrators Summer Institute	0%**	0%**	33.3%	0%**	0%**	50.0%
Regional P D Activities	17.6%	66.7%	50.0%	50.0%	75.0%	0.0%
MTS Conferences for Administrators	29.9%	43.8%	0%**	33.3%	50.0%	50.0%
MTS Workshops for Administrators	23.5%	47.0%	0%**	33.3%	75.0%	50.0%
MCLE Workshops	0.0%	29.4%	0%**	0%**	75.0%	50.0%
Learning Communities	89.5%	70.6%	33.3%	66.7%	0%**	100.0%
Study Groups	77.7%	29.4%	33.3%	66.7%	25.0%	100.0%
Being a Mentor	66.7%	41.1%	33.3%	33.3%	25.0%	50.0%
Being a recipient of Mentoring	72.2%	12.6%	0%**	66.7%	25.0%	50.0%
University Courses in Ed Admin	57.9%	47.1%	66.7%	50.0%	50.0%	100.0%
Professional Reading	100.0%	83.3%	50.0%	100.0%	50.0%	100.0%

Note: \*\* 100% indicated not applicable

**Table 8c: Percentages of Respondents, by Type of School, Who Perceive that Involvement in Professional Development Activities are Effective or Very Effective in Their Development as Administrators (N=54)**

Professional Development Activities	Principals			Vice Principals		
	Early (n=28)	Middle (n=4)	Senior (n=10)	Early (n=1)	Middle (n=3)	Senior (n=8)
School Division Conferences	81.4%	75.0%	70.0%	100.0%	100.0%	62.5%
School Division Workshops	89.3%	75.0%	80.0%	100.0%	100.0%	62.5%
COSL Conferences	74.0%	50.0%	80.0%	0%**	33.3%	87.5%
COSL SAG Conferences	62.5%	50.0%	70.0%	0%**	66.7%	62.5%
COSL Summer Institute	29.2%	50.0%	11.1%	0%**	0%**	25.0%
Northern Administrators Summer Institute	4.2%	0%**	0%**	0%**	0%**	12.5%
Regional P D Activities	38.4%	100.0%	33.3%	0%*	66.7%	50.0%
MTS Conferences for Administrators	34.8%	25.0%	37.5%	0%**	33.3%	50.0%
MTS Workshops for Administrators	34.8%	25.0%	33.3%	0%**	33.3%	62.5%
MCLE Workshops	14.3%	25.0%	11.1%	0%**	0%**	50.0%
Learning Communities	76.0%	75.0%	80.0%	0%*	100.0%	37.5%
Study Groups	54.2%	50.0%	50.0%	0%*	10.0%	37.5%
Being a Mentor	54.2%	25.0%	60.0%	0%*	66.7%	12.5%
Being a recipient of Mentoring	43.5%	50.0%	33.3%	100.0%	66.7%	25.0%
University Courses in Ed Admin	52.0%	50.0%	60.0%	0%**	33.3%	75.0%
Professional Reading	89.3%	50.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Note: \* 100% were neutral

\*\* 100% indicated not applicable

**Table 9b: Percentages of Respondents, by Location, Who Perceive They Have Been Effective or Very Effective in Transferring the Learning from Professional Development Activities to Their Work Context in Schools (N=61)**

Professional Development Activities	Principals			Vice Principals		
	Urban (n=22)	Rural (n=21)	North (n=4)	Urban (n=8)	Rural (n=4)	North (n=2)
School Division Conferences	77.3%	75.0%	50.0%	85.7%	25.0%	50.0%
School Division Workshops	77.3%	85.7%	75.0%	85.7%	25.0%	50.0%
COSL Conferences	61.9%	71.4%	75.0%	62.5%	75.0%	0.0%
COSL SAG Conferences	47.6%	65.0%	66.7%	37.5%	50.0%	0.0%
COSL Summer Institute	10.5%	25.0%	33.3%	0%^^	50.0%	50.0%
Northern Administrators Summer Institute	0%**	0%**	33.3%	0%^^	0%^^	0.0%
Regional P D Activities	31.6%	61.9%	33.3%	42.9%	50.0%	50.0%
MTS Conferences for Administrators	21.1%***	45.0%	0%^^	28.6%	50.0%	50.0%
MTS Workshops for Administrators	21.1%***	55.0%	0%^^	28.6%	50.0%	50.0%
MCLE Workshops	0.0%	30%***	0%^^	0%^^	50.0%	50.0%
Learning Communities	90.0%	65.0%	33.3%	87.5%	0%^^	100.0%
Study Groups	90.0%	25.0%	0%^^	75.0%	0.0%	100.0%
Being a Mentor	66.7%	40.0%	33.3%	42.9%***	0.0%	100.0%
Being a recipient of Mentoring	65.0%	10%**	0%^^	57.2%	0.0%	50.0%
University Courses in Ed Admin	47.6%	40.0%	66.7%	42.9%	50.0%	50.0%
Professional Reading	86.4%	75.0%	66.7%	67.5%	100.0%	50.0%

Notes: \*\* Over 90% indicated not applicable

\*\*\* Over 50% indicated not applicable

^ Over 80% indicated not applicable

^^ 100% indicated not applicable

**Table 9c: Percentages of Respondents, by Type of School, Who Perceive They Have Been Effective or Very Effective in Transferring the Learning from Professional Development Activities to Their Work Context in Schools (N=61)**

Professional Development Activities	Principals			Vice Principals		
	Early (n=32)	Middle (n=4)	Senior (n=11)	Early (n=2)	Middle (n=4)	Senior (n=8)
School Division Conferences	80.7%	50.0%	63.6%	100.0%	75.0%	42.9%
School Division Workshops	84.4%	75.0%	72.7%	100.0%	75.0%	42.9%
COSL Conferences	71.0%	25.0%	72.7%	50.0%	75.0%	50.0%
COSL SAG Conferences	51.7%	75.0%	63.6%	0%^^	50.0%	37.5%
COSL Summer Institute	25.0%	25.0%	0.0%	0%^^	0%^^	42.9%
Northern Administrators Summer Institute	3.6%**	0%^^	0%**	0%^^	0%^^	0.0%
Regional P D Activities	48.3%	25.0%	50.0%	50.0%	25.0%	57.1%
MTS Conferences for Administrators	29.6%	50.0%	30.0%	50.0%	25.0%	42.9%
MTS Workshops for Administrators	37.0%	50.0%	30.0%	50.0%	25.0%	42.9%
MCLE Workshops	11.1%	50.0%	10.0%	0%^^	0%^^	42.9%
Learning Communities	75.0%	75.0%	72.7%	100.0%	100.0%	37.5%
Study Groups	59.2%	50.0%	45.5%	100.0%	75.0%	37.5%
Being a Mentor	51.7%	75.0%	45.5%	50.0%	50.0%	28.6%
Being a recipient of Mentoring	37%***	25.0%	36.4%	50.0%	75.0%	14.3%
University Courses in Ed Admin	44.8%	25.0%	54.4%	0%^^	75.0%	42.9%
Professional Reading	80.0%	50.0%	90.9%	100.0%	50.0%	75.0%

Notes: \*\* Over 90% indicated not applicable

\*\*\* Over 50% indicated not applicable

^ Over 80% indicated not applicable

^^ 100% indicated not applicable

**Table 16b: Percentages of Respondents, by Location, Who Rated the General Quality of Their Professional Development Activities as Effective or Very Effective (N=62)**

Professional Development Activities	Principals			Vice Principals		
	Urban (n=22)	Rural (n=23)	North (n=4)	Urban (n=7)	Rural (n=4)	North (n=2)
School Division Conferences	86.4%	63.6%	50.0%	57.1%	50.0%	50.0%
School Division Workshops	81.8%	73.8%	75.0%	71.4%	50.0%	50.0%
COSL Conferences	52.4%	78.2%	75.0%	57.2%	75.0%	100.0%
COSL SAG Conferences	54.5%	63.6%	50.0%	57.2%	75.0%	100.0%
COSL Summer Institute	21.1%	36.4%	66.7%	0.0%	50.0%	50.0%
Northern Administrators Summer Institute	5.3%	0.0%	33.3%	0.0%	0.0%	50.0%
Regional P D Activities	47.4%	60.8%	50.0%	66.7%	75.0%	50.0%
MTS Conferences for Administrators	31.6%	45.5%	0.0%	33.3%	50.0%	50.0%
MTS Workshops for Administrators	27.8%	59.1%	0.0%	16.7%	50.0%	50.0%
MCLE Workshops	17.6%	28.6%	0.0%	0.0%	50.0%	50.0%
Learning Communities	89.4%	54.6%	33.3%	71.5%	0.0%	100.0%
Study Groups	66.7%	28.6%	33.3%	85.7%	0.0%	100.0%
Being a Mentor	71.5%	52.4%	33.3%	66.7%	0.0%	100.0%
Being a recipient of Mentoring	70.0%	19.1%	0.0%	66.7%	0.0%	50.0%
University Courses in Ed Admin	47.6%	33.3%	75.0%	33.4%	50.0%	100.0%
Professional Reading	95.0%	73.8%	50.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

**Table 16c: Percentages of Respondents, by Type of School, Who Rated the General Quality of Their Professional Development Activities as Effective or Very Effective (N=62)**

Professional Development Activities	Principals			Vice Principals		
	Early (n=34)	Middle (n=4)	Senior (n=11)	Early (n=2)	Middle (n=4)	Senior (n=7)
School Division Conferences	72.7%	75.0%	72.7%	100.0%	25.0%	57.1%
School Division Workshops	79.5%	100.0%	63.6%	100.0%	50.0%	57.1%
COSL Conferences	63.8%	50.0%	81.8%	0.0%	75.0%	85.8%
COSL SAG Conferences	60.6%	25.0%	63.6%	50.0%	50.0%	66.7%
COSL Summer Institute	36.7%	50.0%	10.0%	0.0%	0.0%	50.0%
Northern Administrators Summer Institute	5.3%	0.0%	10.0%	0.0%	0.0%	16.7%
Regional P D Activities	56.3%	50.0%	50.0%	100.0%	50.0%	66.7%
MTS Conferences for Administrators	41.3%	50.0%	20.0%	50.0%	25.0%	50.0%
MTS Workshops for Administrators	46.4%	50.0%	30.0%	0.0%	25.0%	50.0%
MCLE Workshops	22.2%	25.0%	22.2%	0.0%	0.0%	50.0%
Learning Communities	68.9%	75.0%	63.7%	100.0%	50.0%	42.9%
Study Groups	48.4%	50.0%	40.0%	100.0%	75.0%	42.9%
Being a Mentor	61.3%	50.0%	60.0%	50.0%	75.0%	33.3%
Being a recipient of Mentoring	41.4%	50.0%	40.0%	50.0%	75.0%	16.7%
University Courses in Ed Admin	40.7%	25.0%	60.0%	0.0%	50.0%	66.7%
Professional Reading	82.8%	66.7%	88.9%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%