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School leadership: development of an evaluation instrument and process for administrators

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SCHOOL LEADERSHIP: DEVELOPMENT OF AN EVALUATION INSTRUMENT AND

PROCESS FOR ADMINISTRATORS

by

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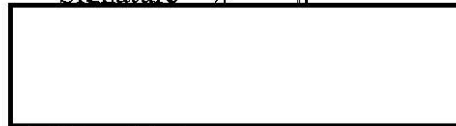
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DEDICATION

To Barry, Carole, Jim, Nina, and Sandra: Thank you for inspiring and believing in me.

ABSTRACT

Kathy L. McCormick
SCHOOL LEADERSHIP: DEVELOPMENT OF AN EVALUATION INSTRUMENT
AND PROCESS FOR ADMINISTRATORS
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Robert B. Campbell, Ed.D.
Educational Leadership

This action research study was conducted for purposes of changing the formal evaluation for school administrators to one constructed around the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) 2008 standards, inclusive of multifaceted components aimed to increase the active participation of both the evaluator and the individual being evaluated. The previous instrument assessed leaders' performance on a set of generic indicators. There were no requirements for pre-evaluation conferences, nor did the school leader have formal opportunity for self-reflection. Outcomes were not linked to district goals, to individual or district professional growth plans, nor to standards or criteria-based process of leadership assessment.

The research design consisted of sequential mixed methods to include multiple stages of data collection and analysis. A quantitative approach was employed as the primary mechanism of analysis and a qualitative component assisted with further examination of participants' perceptions and preferences regarding the development of a new school leader evaluation instrument and process. Quantitative research occurred as three distinct survey questionnaires to ascertain how administrators perceived the prior

and new instruments. Qualitative methods consisted of observation, interview, and artifact review to obtain data relative to the prior and a newly development instrument.

Results suggested an overall preference for a more contemporary administrator evaluation instrument comprised of multiple measures of performance assessment. Respondents indicated favorable perceptions associated with increased participation in the evaluation process and reciprocity between them and the evaluator. An unanticipated but welcome outcome was the degree to which the post-conferences were enhanced by the self-assessment component. This was further enhanced by administrators' concomitant obligation to provide evidence perceived as important and relevant to the evaluation process.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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I would also like to thank the other members of my dissertation committee, Dr. Mark Raivetz for his demonstrated confidence in me as a student and as an educational leader, and Dr. Jeffrey Graber for his support and encouragement.

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Many colleagues contributed to the successful completion of this project, most notably the administrators with whom I work. Their feedback and ideas, active participation in all phases of the research, and willingness to embrace change contributed to an end product that we are proud. A special thank you is extended to Mrs. Courtney McNeely for her fine proofreading skills.

I am grateful to my superintendent, Dr. James Sarruda, who supported this project from the onset and my growth as an educational leader among leaders.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The historical research on evaluation of school leaders is characterized by a lack of systematic or consistent approaches to the assessment of leadership skills and competencies. Studies reveal that administrators often do not receive routine formal evaluations, and that there is significant variability in the format of evaluation instruments which can be comprised of narrative summaries, rating scores, self-assessment documents, portfolios, or a combination of these elements (Davis & Hensley, 1999; Reeves, 2009). Clearly articulated performance criteria, more frequent observation of the individual being evaluated, increased and regular feedback, and an emphasis on interpersonal characteristics of leadership comprise investigative recommendations for improving evaluation procedures. Reeves (2004, 2009) also identified ambiguous performance standards and unclear performance expectations as two critical problems in the area of leadership evaluation. This research project addressed the existing school leader assessment instrument and process in one New Jersey school district.

Purpose and Context of the Study

This action research study was conducted for purposes of changing the formal evaluation for school administrators to one constructed around the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) 2008 standards, inclusive of multifaceted components aimed to increase the active participation of both the evaluator and the evaluatee. A system for evaluating administrators in my district consisted exclusively of a single instrument designed to assess leaders' performance on a set of indicators related to criteria listed in the generic job description, which was last revised in 1993. The

instrument was loosely representative of major concepts from the works of the Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning (McREL) for balanced leadership (Marzano, Waters, & McNulty, 2005). This type of administrator evaluation instrument was widely accepted at the time it was developed and measured a school leader's performance as a result of discrete task completion, similar to summative assessments administered to students.

There were no requirements for pre-evaluation conferences, nor did the school leader have a formal opportunity for self-reflection or an alternative method for meaningful participation in the evaluation process. Furthermore, the evaluation outcomes were not linked to district goals or school initiatives, to individual or district professional growth plans, nor to any standards or criteria-based process of leadership assessment (Buchanan & Roberts, 2000). Reeves (2009) asserted that the assessment of leaders must be congruent with the recent trends and changes in the assessment of students and should guide instructional decisions to improve student performance.

An essential element of this study was the establishment of a strong relationship between district initiatives and the assessment of administrators. The previous process occurred in isolation and did not include meaningful input from the administrator being evaluated, resulting in confusion and dissatisfaction. This was particularly evident in circumstances when a subordinate was ranked as *in need of improvement* on an ambiguous indicator lacking an objective relationship to a clearly identified goal or initiative, and in the absence of narrative comments to explain the nature and degree of deficiency.

The formal assessment of school leaders provided meaningful data regarding

leadership qualities and facilitated reflective practices among and between administrators. An ancillary, but important outcome of this research study was improved procedures for retaining high quality administrators who espouse philosophical ideas and practical goals consistent with the priorities of the school district. Goldring et al. (2009) cited research from Vanderbilt University and the University of Pennsylvania indicating that school districts implement different assessment components, different focus areas, and inconsistently provide clear or useful feedback to administrators. It has also been argued that the importance of linking professional growth with performance assessment is understood neither by administrators nor their superintendents (Van Meter & McMinn, 2001).

This action research study focused on administrators' perceptions and preferences of key components comprising an effective evaluative instrument for school leaders, and on the assumption that school leaders lacked sufficient foundational understanding of performance evaluation theory or methodology. The ISLLC 2008 standards provided a central component of the research objective to link an administrator assessment instrument to the six standards deemed most important in granting licensure to school leaders.

This study was conducted in my district of employment, where the profile of the administrative team was uniquely suited for the change in procedures for sustaining and evaluating effective school leadership. At the inception of this study, 9 of 13 members were in the first 1 to 4 years of their administrative position. As new school leaders, they were challenged with issues of adjustment and acclimation, yet simultaneously had the opportunity to forge strong collaborative relationships as they became familiar with the

distinct characteristics of the district and with their role therein. Providing this group of individuals with meaningful evaluation feedback was critical to their adjustment and to their commitment to district goals.

Research Questions and Methods

Research surrounding the broad subject of leadership is largely comprised of theoretical posits and commentary on a myriad of identified leadership styles. Regardless of the specific constructs of theory or the style a leader brings to an organization, it remains essential to retain individuals that best fit the goals of the school district. It is also necessary to sustain effective evaluation of the efficacy of individuals most accountable for goal attainment at the building level.

This study answers the following questions:

1. What is the level of satisfaction and perceived pros and cons with the existing administrator evaluation instrument and process?

2. To what extent do administrators perceive the existing evaluation tool and process contributes to meaningful professional growth or performance improvement?

3. What is the level of satisfaction and perceived pros and cons with the new administrator evaluation instrument?

4. To what extent do administrators perceive the new evaluation tool and process contributes to meaningful professional growth or performance improvement?

5. How does my leadership demonstrated through this project match my espoused leadership theory?

The design of this action research study consisted of sequential mixed methods to

include multiple stages of data collection and analysis. It emphasized a quantitative approach as the primary mechanism of analysis and included a qualitative component to assist with further examination. The participants throughout this research project were all administrators in a regional district located in Burlington County, New Jersey with the exception of the central administration. The subjects represented three main job position titles: two principals, six directors, and five assistant principals. Due to the relatively small size and ready access to all school leaders, every member of the identified population participated in the project. Due to changes in administrative personnel over the duration of this project, data collected during three research cycles did not represent exact participant replication.

Quantitative research occurred as survey questionnaires designed to ascertain how administrators perceived the previous instrument, in terms of strengths and specific areas in need of improvement. The surveys incorporated measures of demographics, factual information, and attitude, and represented a cross-sectional collection of data at multiple points in time. Qualitative research methods were employed using observation, interview, and artifact review to obtain data relative to the prior and a newly development instrument and also to varied components within sample administrative evaluation tools. Action research methods were incorporated to apply results for the development of a new school leader evaluation instrument and process based on the perceptions and preferences of the target population.

Leadership and Change

Making a positive difference, which Fullan (2001) described as moral purpose, for members of this administrative team and for their respective subordinates was

decidedly the most prominent underlying reason to undertake this change project. Consistent with most change processes, reconstructing the school leader assessment instrument and procedures were initiated as a result of shared dissatisfaction with the prior tool. Informal dialogue with members of the administrative team, as well as formal discussion during post-evaluation conferences, clarified that both parties in the evaluation process found limited benefit from the previous instrument. The tool was perceived as static, occurring in isolation, and inconsistent with contemporary approaches of leadership assessment that emphasize reciprocal participation and dynamic, standards-based performance responsibilities with the potential to benefit broad organizational processes.

One of the most complex aspects associated with changing the administrator evaluation instrument was the eventual impact on non-administrative staff. The desired and long-term outcome was for principals, directors, and assistant principals to use their own assessment reports as an effective strategy for improving instruction, increasing compliance with key goals related to district initiatives, and student learning. Determining how to best develop an instrument with the potential to solidify correlations between components of the assessment process and broad areas of the organization presented a multifaceted challenge. Anticipating the nature and degree of resistance of those who perceived the challenge impossible to meet was also central to the understanding of, and effectively responding to, complexities that occurred throughout the change process.

As an action research project, the findings of this study are generally limited to the context in which it occurred. While this is an acknowledged limitation, results may

serve as a model for other districts interested in establishing administrator assessment practices based on leadership standards and interactive evaluative processes. An additional limitation may present in terms of personal bias and my motivation to incorporate contemporary best practices into all facets of leadership across the district. Occupying a super ordinate position in the administrative team dynamic may also contribute to influences of bias and to generalization of findings. Determining the long-range implications of novel instruments and processes will be required for a comprehensive understanding of change efficacy and outcomes.

CHAPTER II

LEADERSHIP PLATFORM

My introduction to the field of education occurred at the relatively young age of twenty-one when I accepted a high school mathematics teaching position and was also appointed as an assistant varsity field hockey coach, a sport I had never played. I was only three or four years older than the students I taught and the players I coached, but found that these positions inherently conveyed a status of authority. It was at this juncture that I became cognizant of my ability to have a positive and motivating influence on others and secondarily of my leadership potential. Achieving early success and esteem as a teacher and as a coach of an unfamiliar sport provided invaluable experiences and contributed significantly to my confidence within the context of education. I was also fortunate to gain the respect of a veteran principal who provided me with informal leadership experiences, resulting in the ultimate recognition by my peers as "Teacher of the Year" during the 11th year of my career. Several years later, a superintendent encouraged and convinced me to apply for the position of supervisor of special services. This was certainly not my area of expertise and I had little experience working with students with special needs. However, recollecting my positive coaching experience as a reminder of my ability to thrive in unchartered territory, I quickly accepted this leadership position in special services, which served as an excellent opportunity for professional growth.

The decision to transition from the classroom to the administrative office was difficult at the time given my continued enthusiasm for teaching and the enjoyment I derived working directly with students. The intrinsic desire to effect change, the ability to motivate others, and my outlook towards the bigger picture ultimately prevailed. While these fundamental reasons for choosing a path to school leadership continue to ring true, the variety of positions I held and the challenges I faced over the last decade have and continue to mold my current philosophies regarding educational leadership. I deem relationships with my superintendent and the administrative team as most important. Currently in the position of assistant superintendent, I place much emphasis on the input of others and define myself as a leader in terms of my ability to effectively incorporate the values, opinions, and experiences of others in the organization.

Crafting a definition of myself as a leader was a challenging task, but eventually it served a twofold purpose: (1) functions as a personal construct and guide, and (2) illuminates and represents my beliefs, morals, and values for others' review and understanding. My definition of leadership resulted in much self-reflection, introspection, and benefit of a deep understanding of theoretical constructs related to style, culture, and change within organizations. Throughout this process, it has been tempting to adapt a construct to the definitions professed by distinguished and prominent authors, and when examining various leadership styles identified in the literature, I found that most of them had at least some relevance to my everyday functions within my organization. I remained steadfast and committed to composing a definition that accurately and concurrently represented an espoused definition of my leadership beliefs, and found the writings of many authors to be helpful in formulating an understanding of my true leadership style.

Greenleaf (1977) purported that effective leadership is the positive resultant of two perceived negative forces of *serve* and *lead* (p. 20), and posited that leaders are not concerned with their image, but with the process of fulfilling commitments made to both the followers and the organization. Unequivocally, I enjoy hard work and gain satisfaction from watching and listening to others exhibiting similar expressions working together on a project. I also agree with Wren's (1995) assertion that leaders must not only have the capacity for rational problem solving, but must also have an intuitive understanding of the needs of followers (p. 188). Reflection on this position includes consideration of the change process as outlined by theorists Fullan (2001) and Kotter (1996), notably with regard to the responses of other members of the organization.

Fullan (2008) maintained that positive change and improved outcomes start by attracting talented people, followed by assistance in helping them continually develop individually and collectively on the job. I have been fortunate to have the opportunity to hire several key administrators in the area of curriculum and instructional supervision. While seeking individuals who demonstrate excellent knowledge of the content areas they would be supervising, it was more important to find candidates that would mesh well with existing members of the administrative team. It was also critical to seek applicants with the skills and personality necessary for supervision of a veteran instructional staff. To date, the directors, both experienced and those new to the district, have demonstrated a willingness to embrace new initiatives while simultaneously showing respect for district traditions and cultural norms.

Wren (1995) included John Gardner's insights on the topic of leaders and followers stating, "to the extent that leaders enable followers to develop their own

initiative, they are creating something that can survive their own departure" (p. 187). He also included Joseph Rost's perspective of followers indicating, "in the new paradigm, followers and leaders do leadership and …they are in the leadership relationship together" (p. 192). Both of these perceptions are significant to the overall construction of my leadership platform. These reflections assist in refining the clarity of my leadership style and significantly influence how I conduct administrative meetings, referred to in my district as *Academic Council*. It is through close examination of my behaviors and attitudes as a central office administrator at these meetings that I have gleaned the most telling information about my leadership style.

Bolman and Deal (2003) presented a holistic definition of leadership as "a subtle process of mutual influence fusing thought, feeling, and action to produce cooperative effort in the service of purposes and values embraced by *both* the leader and the led" (p. 339). This definition provides a clearer and more authentic representation of my paradigm of leadership, particularly with the inclusion of the terms mutual, purposes, and values. I value a vision that encompasses the courage, enthusiasm, and trust necessary to effect meaningful change across myriad and complex levels of the organization. My ability to quickly see the big picture, to discern those characteristics that are most relevant to a given situation, and to relate key situational variables to district and personal goals resulted in a critical synthesis between my values and my most prominent leadership characteristics. This has been evident in my ability to effectively convey a comprehensive understanding of the district climate, the efficacy of existing programs and projects, and the potential for effective future initiatives. I have learned at this point in my career to value and trust my instincts.

Leadership Theories

      I have a personal affinity for the phrase *leading for a lifetime* as compared to the

ubiquitous phrase *a lifelong learner*. Warren Bennis, a highly respected and renowned

author in leadership, co-authored a book entitled *Leading for a Lifetime* (Bennis &

Thomas, 2007). Their first chapter offers a powerful, yet simple declaration, "The ability

to learn is a defining characteristic of being human; the ability to continue learning is an

essential skill of leadership" (p. 1). Similarly, DePree (1992) connected learning and

leadership by describing how the leader must polish his gifts and assist followers to

polish their gifts. DePree artfully used a jazz band metaphor to convey his view of

effective leadership. "Jazz-band leaders know how to integrate the "voices" in the band

without diminishing their uniqueness. The individuals in the band are expected to play

solo and together" (p. 81). I relate strongly to DePree's construct because of the

inextricably woven relationships between the leader and followers, and the leader's effort

and commitment to cultivate and develop the potential gifts of each follower.

      Annually, my superintendent plans and conducts a weeklong administrative

retreat. In preparation of the 2010 retreat, I requested and was granted the responsibility

to redesign and assume accountability for the topics, activities, and format. I saw this as

an opportunity to maximize participants' engagement and commitment by soliciting input

from administrators, distributing responsibility for the development and facilitation of

activities across all sectors of the leadership team, and providing a collective oversight to

ensure that the week consisted of meaningful sessions that required active participation

from all. The concept of redesigning the retreat was discussed initially at an academic

council meeting and the process continued via emails to obtain topics of interest from the

administration. Based on the topics submitted, of which there were many of a pragmatic nature, I easily determined that the primary purposes of the retreat were to increase understanding of administrators' performance responsibilities, the interaction between and among administrators, and to subsequently foster an environment and culture that is clear, consistent, and respectful.

Given the projected time necessary for each session and the defined five-day retreat, there were several topics that were unable to be scheduled during the week. I communicated to the administration that any proposed topic that was not represented in scheduled sessions would be addressed during subsequent academic council meetings throughout the year. Presenters and facilitators varied for each session and members participated in planned small group and individual activities that were incorporated to support different learning modalities. An outcome both observed and reported by participants was the strengthened personal behaviors and professional performances of all administrators that would positively impact learning. The methods I used to design the retreat reinforced my espoused theories of leadership presented by DePree (1992) and Greenleaf (1977); I modeled how to cultivate, develop, and polish gifts of each follower.

DePree (1992) frequently delivered the message that "leadership is a job, not a position" (p. 134), and characterized the concept of job in terms of developing ideas and skills in people versus providing them with explicit direction. In a 2010 edition of the *Wharton Leadership Digest*, Benjamin Zander, conductor of the Boston Philharmonic Orchestra, addressed similarly the difference between the cooperative coordination of a small string quartet versus a conductor led orchestra. The latter, which Zander characterized as a "totalitarianism," is beset by rampant job dissatisfaction while the

quartet is typically very pleased with the collaborative conditions of their profession (as cited in Simon, 2010). In terms of leadership, Zander was recognized for his departure from traditional orchestral conduction through his insistence on providing musicians with the rare opportunity to provide input and feedback. He speaks to leaders across a wide range of professions, including those in education, and will serve as an inspiration when I contemplate future cooperative professional development activities with my administrative team.

DePree's (1992) jazz band metaphor is also similar to ideals characteristic of servant leadership, popularized by Robert Greenleaf (1977). Both styles value key elements of ethical and caring behavior, a holistic approach to work, fostering and cultivating a sense of community, and the shared involvement of others in decision making process. Servant leadership is not an approach that will produce instant trust and investment of followers, but is rather a long-term, transformational approach to leadership (Spears, 2002).

This aforementioned collaborative approach to planning and implementing intense professional development is consistent with Toll's (2010) concept of *learning* leadership, which emphasizes what is learned and how it is learned. Toll (2010) made a distinction between this construct versus *instructional* leadership, which focused on planning, implementing, and evaluating. Specifically, Toll (2010) suggested six steps for principals to follow to be learning leaders: (a) believe that every teacher has the potential to grow; (b) model being an ongoing learner; (c) create a climate that fosters learning; (d) create a sense of possibility; (e) ask frequent and meaningful questions; and, (e) reinforce learning via follow-up.

I continue to demonstrate a natural propensity to go beyond collaborative discussions with stakeholders in the organization while working on a project; I roll up my sleeves to serve the person leading the task or to lead the task for the group. Functioning in either role provides me with individual fulfillment as well as pride in the organization. I recognize a natural tendency toward servant leadership, but obviously do not demonstrate this style in the purest sense and am not certain that other persons in my organization view my leadership style in this manner. As a group-oriented approach to analysis and making decisions, servant leadership served me well as I entered the initial phases of interviewing candidates for an administrative position in the counseling area. During the first two rounds I involved multiple stakeholders, including guidance counselors, assistant principals, principals, directors, and support staff. While it was clearly not the role of the committees to choose the final candidate, the decision to give them a voice in the process increased their investment in the eventual successful candidate.

As I began my tenure as an assistant superintendent in August 2007, a poignant professional situation emerged as an example of how I further clarified my leadership style. I quickly learned that previous administration no longer required the instructional staff to submit weekly lesson plans. Not surprisingly, this was a popular and quickly embraced change by the instructional staff, but also one without a clear alternative for ensuring instructional accountability, consistency, or integrity. It had become evident that this change negatively affected new teachers' classroom management as well as their overall official entry to the profession. Through formal observations, administrators frequently documented that both teachers and students were not able to state the intended

learning outcome for the period. As I developed district goals for the next school year, the observation data collected and analyzed revealed a necessary change.

Bennis and Thomas (2007) defined a leader's *integrity tripod* as comprised of three elements: ambition, competence, and moral compass (p. 145). After much reflection, I decided to preserve and balance my *integrity tripod*, and as a result, change the process of not submitting weekly lesson plans. My decision to reverse the change was strongly rooted within the fundamental elements of moral purpose, was certainly not negotiable, and required that I provide frequent and intense hands-on support to my administrative team as they implemented what was perceived as a major and unwelcome change. The manner in which I assessed and addressed this situation corresponds directly to my understanding of the staff's feelings. Accordingly, emotional intelligence (EI) continued to influence my approach to both daily and long-term challenges, and I remained faithful to the principles of EI relating to my personal leadership development, the concepts of professional learning communities, and the building of EI groups within my organization (Druskat & Wolff, 2001; DuFour & Eaker, 1998; Goleman, Boyatzis, & McKee, 2002; Hernon & Rossiter, 2006).

An increased depth of understanding as it relates to my EI as a leader has precipitated the need for me to further broaden this focus to Goleman's (2006) concept of *social intelligence*. This is the next logical step to expand my interests and understanding of what transpires when people engage in relationships (p. 12). In my professional environment, I facilitate a committee consisting of all administrators on a bi-weekly basis. These academic council meetings represent a wonderful opportunity to revisit the importance of establishing collective norms and exploring the elements of EI. I am also

inspired by West and Derrington's (2009) interpretation of constructs within *Primal Leadership* by Goleman et al. (2002):

> These leaders are knowledgeable about how their organizations operate, are sensitive to the concerns and opinions of others, and work actively to meet the needs of the people they serve. These savvy leaders are experts with relationships: they inspire others, enhance the performance of their subordinates, step up to the plate when change is needed, and collaborate with members of their team. (p. 41)

As a result of conducting several years of academic council meetings, I identified reflective practices for individuals and groups, and positive confrontation as areas for improvement. The latter topic is a notable growth point exemplified by my increased appreciation for the influence of culture in district-based goal setting and decision-making. Articles authored by Connolly (2005), Ferraro (2000), Reeves (2009), and Wagner (2006) offered practical strategies for reflective thinking that are readily applicable to the broad area of leadership. I have also found a compendium of articles edited by Von Frank (2008) as a superb and useful resource.

I often use a transformational leadership style, as well as characteristics common to what is termed charismatic leadership, to energize and inspire confidence in others to embrace a new initiative or to effectively address a difficult situation. It has been my experience that teachers and administrators equally respond well to leaders that instill confidence in them to take risks, motivate them to welcome changes, and that encourage peer-supported actions wherever possible. It has been an important component of my leadership style to instill a sense of *relating* when engaging in collaborative dialogue, thus establishing that I genuinely understand the feelings and opinions of those with

whom I am collaborating. My espoused view of leadership is consistent with West and Derrington (2009), who described transformational leaders as those who communicate a clear vision and who are adept at building enduring and trusting relationships with subordinates (p. 40).

My administrative history includes several positions in areas in which I lacked familiarity or expertise, including supervisor of special services and director of student information and technology. In each of these positions I often found myself trying to motivate staff to consider new initiatives or simple alternative ways to conduct daily business, and just as often was faced with the argument that my content knowledge was insufficient and that my suggestions for change were inconsistent with the status quo. Rather than accept these arguments, I contended that a non-expert's point of view was healthy in terms of new and possibly more effective ways to deliver services. At the same time, it was necessary to acknowledge that members of these departments possessed greater content knowledge accrued over many years of working in their respective specialty areas.

My tenure as a special services administrator was particularly daunting given the highly specific regulations that accompany program and services for students with special needs. My leadership tasks were further complicated by having veteran child study team members not always receptive to change or to expectations for increased autonomy. Although I experienced wearisome days and difficult obstacles serving in this position, by demonstrating perseverance and a commitment to empowering staff to make collaborative decisions in a supportive environment I was able to make and sustain positive change. Through transformational leadership, and the eventual willingness of the

staff to consider new ideas, the department progressed in terms of increased compliance with regulations, expanded program options for students with special needs, and improved use of personnel and financial resources. These years were invaluable in contributing to my overall leadership skills and in the development of a lasting leadership style. Many years have elapsed since I performed the daily responsibilities of special services and technology, yet I continue to reflect upon those experiences as I face challenges in a central office administrative position.

I will continue to use a transformational leadership style to energize and inspire confidence in others to embrace a new initiative or to effectively address a difficult situation, and to place much emphasis on the input of others. It remains an essential component of the manner in which I desire to lead my administrative team to effectively incorporate the values, opinions, and experiences of each participant and to promote collegiality and shared decision-making. This is particularly important relative to my ongoing concern about frequent turn-over among the administrative group, with the result that a new member often requires support not only from me as the immediate superior but more importantly from the veteran members. Although it can be expected that newly appointed administrators will continue to seek advancement, even if that means employment in other districts, I contend that retention will improve if the climate is characterized by peer support and a sense of confidence in teamwork processes. I concur with the contention presented by West and Derrington (2009) that team forming does not occur through control, but rather through a purposeful building of collegial, cooperative, and diplomatic relationships with followers.

Consistent with my value of relationships and reflection, it is critical that as the leader among leaders, I create a communication forum to model and facilitate open, reciprocal dialogue. In a statement about the creation of authentic teams of school administrators, West and Derrington (2009) emphasized the importance of needs and concerns, knowledge of schools and programs, the initiation of change, providing ongoing support, and collaborating in a trust-building manner. The utility of interactive and reflective practice with administrative colleagues, occurring within authentic environments, has the potential to improve and strengthen professional relationships. To that end, the academic council meetings in which I am equally the lead facilitator and a member consist of engaging learning activities. It is common practice to discuss, analyze, and peer edit completed teacher observation reports and other forms of staff communication to deliver a consistent message.

Wheatley's (2006) descriptive account of typical meetings engendered a broad spectrum of personal emotions and elicited many previous memories that closely resembled the ones illustrated in her text (p. 27). Unfortunately, there is not a secret ingredient or recipe on how to conduct meetings where real progress is demonstrated or that qualify as meaningful and productive. Through my ongoing readings and experiences as a meeting participant, I concluded that my approach to conducting meetings, where real progress occurs, is through the increased implementation of soft skills, or those that emphasize and strengthen relationships. This approach appears more consistent with my preferred style, rather than those that rely heavily on participants' hard skills, commonly known as technical skills.

The introduction of group norms was an effective strategy for defining expected commitments from members of the group prior to commencing with the actual function of the group (Dufour, DuFour, Eaker, & Many, 2006; Goleman et al., 2002; Lencioni, 2002). By establishing a context of ground rules that applies to all members of the group, the leader or facilitator can assertively address problem behavior, and clearly communicate that full engagement and participation in the discussions is an expected and mutually defined commitment. My administrative team represented many elements that Lencioni (2002) categorized as dysfunctional and it is increasingly apparent that this team benefits from the establishment, ownership, and reinforcement of group norms.

When I initially facilitated administrative meetings, there were members that rarely appeared engaged in discussions. They did not exhibit distracting behaviors, but they spent an inordinate amount of time reading and re-reading supporting documents and sustained limited eye contact with other members. My attempts to engage individuals in discussions or to solicit opinions rarely resulted in meaningful contributions. Strategies offered by Dufour et al. (2006), Goleman et al. (2002), and Lencioni (2002) were excellent starting points in diagnosing how these individuals contribute to dysfunction, and how to create an environment more conducive to engaging and sustaining their contributions.

Soft skills are further defined as both intrapersonal and interpersonal skills that include competencies in areas of emotional intelligence (EI), communication, conflict resolution, and decision-making. Soft skills, sometimes referred to as EI, complement a person's technical skills. As a result of Goleman et al.'s (2002) research on EI and leadership, and the enormous public appeal generated by their work, today's leaders must

be cognizant that the implementation of soft skills is just one piece of a long-term process. This process begins with a thorough understanding of why EI matters, and ends with a commitment to ongoing coaching and mentoring of one's members.

Relationship Between Leadership and the Study

My professional passion remains to increase the effective capacity of leaders in my district as well as aspiring leaders whom I mentor officially and informally. According to Fullan (2007) effective leadership includes positive optimal levels of leader satisfaction and effective performance evaluation. He wrote extensively about standards-based accountability and it is from his framework that I formulated an action research study focused on changing how administrators are formally evaluated. I also agree with Murphy's (2002) contention that the evaluation of school leaders should be linked with high performance, and that evaluation instruments need to prioritize performance areas important to the district (Catano & Strong, 2006). It is my assertion that giving a voice to all administrators in the manner in which they are evaluated represents best practices in leadership performance assessment and will reap exceptional benefits accordingly.

The dynamic nature of servant leadership illustrates the process associated with performance evaluation. My desire to coalesce essential elements of strong and visible leadership with positively influencing administrative subordinates who wish to learn and improve is very evident in my decision to include them in the evaluation of the instrument and ultimately in the development of a revised process and tool. The majority

of the administrators informally voiced a strong desire for feedback, for participative input, and for meaningful indicators of their progress and performance. While recognizing individual voices, perceptions, and even biases among this diverse group, I assert that the examples of leadership I demonstrate on a daily basis convey the integrity of our collective mission in reaching the goals of this change process.

Challenges, Culture, and Change

Leading change, understanding the change process, and addressing varied responses of followers as a result of change are three primary responsibilities of a leader. Prior to my intensive and extensive study of the change process and the inherent role of leaders, I was content to accept that change was often associated with challenge and commonly described by the leader in a less than confident or constructive voice. Now, with a clearer understanding of the change process and my role as a leader, I view change as a natural product of visionary leaders and organizations. Rather than associate change with challenge, my preference is to associate change as a constructive, positive gift to the organization and its followership (DePree, 1992). This mindset is further supported if the leader who undertakes meaningful changes clearly correlates it to a plausible rationale and strategy to implement the change (Fullan, 2001; Kotter, 1996). Consistent with my overall leadership style, I highly value DePree's statement "the quality of our relationships is the key to establishing a positive ethos for change" (p. 113).

Fullan (2008) outlined key factors that facilitate the process for an organization to sustain meaningful change. His position is founded on the premise that change is contingent upon a set of criteria that are systemic, synergistic, heavily nuanced,

motivationally embedded, and represented by tension. I developed a clear definition of my leadership style and am comfortable in the manner in which I approach the challenge of understanding the goals and culture of an organization. However, the basic elements of change in a district that tends to be satisfied with the current state of affairs have remained somewhat elusive and the challenge of positively influencing organizational functions has been daunting. The works of DePree (1992), Fullan (2008), and Kotter (1996) provided a structural foundation as I re-assess the antecedents of systems as well as the most effective way to remain on the path of improving outcomes across all levels of the district.

Porter (2005) proposed that change is intrinsically related to the beliefs, attitudes, commitment, and involvement of the members of an organization, and that the relationship between change and these human factors is more relevant than the length of time involved in the process. He emphasized nurturing and patience over the burden of accomplishing changes over a prescribed period. That I cannot simply rely on theoretical tenets, but must adroitly and flexibly apply change elements, has become increasingly apparent as I evolve as a central office administrator. Fullan (2008) and Kotter (1996) argued that effective cultures embrace transparency by openly displaying outcomes and applying positive pressure to motivate employees to model and sustain desired results. I established a professional goal encompassing the courage, enthusiasm, and trust necessary to effect meaningful change across myriad and complex levels of the organization.

Discerning organizational characteristics that are most relevant to a given situation is a process that requires a delicate balance between the need to move forward

and the necessity to recognize cultural factors that remain at the central core of values held by the community of staff and students. This was particularly evident in my ability to effectively convey a comprehensive understanding of the district culture, the efficacy of existing programs and projects, and the potential for effective future initiatives. I learned at this point in my career to value and trust my instincts and more important to integrate the cultural artifacts of an organization within this process. During my second year as assistant superintendent I completed an environmental scan as a requirement of this doctoral program. The information gleaned from this process was invaluable as I shifted my thinking from the perspective of an administrator in a high-ranking and academically-oriented suburban high school where I completed the first 25 years of my career, to one that was consistent with the values of the agricultural and rural community distinctive of the district in which I am now employed.

As the end result of this action research reached full stages of implementation, the greatest challenge to my leadership was the time management required to conduct meaningful administrator performance evaluations. Today's budgetary constraints, in conjunction with waning public support for administrative positions and salaries, contradicts best practices currently touted in the literature associated with the evaluation of school staff. Although New Jersey Administrative Code addressing education (N.J.A.C. 6A) mandates professional standards for school leaders (N.J.A.C. 6A-9-3.4) with a sunset date of January 5, 2014, districts have satisfied this mandate by evaluation procedures designed for expediency and which yield little information about how an administrator makes a difference as a function of their job performance. As

administrative teams are reduced due to budget cuts, it will be a leadership challenge to sustain meaningful implementation of improved evaluation instruments and procedures.

Conclusion

As I reflect upon my espoused leadership style, potential for effecting positive and pervasive change, and the need to balance goals for improvement with the cultural norms of the district, I reference the most salient of Fullan's (2008) points. I have given much thought to the concept that systems learn from themselves, and the idea that teachers learn from their own mastery of key instructional competencies resonates deeply. I am motivated to establish mechanisms for staff to produce at their highest levels, to work cooperatively whenever possible, to enhance their skill level within the context of genuine performances, and to proudly and repeatedly display positive results. As a situational and transformational leader in central office administration, I am in an excellent position to accomplish this goal and my proficiency in effecting change through trusted and trusting relationships will serve me well.

As I have come to embrace servant leadership as a framework that is frequently compatible with my everyday approach to professional challenges, I use the Möbius band as a visual icon of the servant leader concept. The Möbius band, also known as the Möbius strip, is a continuous flat loop with one twist. It was independently discovered by German mathematician Johann Listing (1808–88) and German scholar August Ferdinand Möbius (1790–1868) (Tanton, n.d.). The continuous loop without a distinct entry or exit point visually depicts the interchangeable roles between the leader and follower. There is no clear distinction. The merging of servanthood into leadership and back into servanthood again, in a fluid and continuous pattern, wonderfully captures my desire

to both serve others and to lead others who are interested in leadership and service (Spears, 2002, p. 15).

As a self-proclaimed transformational and situational leader who values both results and human relations, it is essential to survey and analyze information about organizational culture, the rationale for the change, and the likely reaction of key stakeholders as an ongoing routine. By attending to this task consistently, I can readily communicate the reason for the change and the anticipated improvement and/or benefit that will occur in response to the change, and can be in a position to respond to the inevitable and predictable resistance that emerges with any initiative. With respect to the leader and follower relationship, Gardner (1995) states "to analyze complex problems, leaders must have the capacity for rational problem solving; but they must also have a penetrating intuitive grasp of the needs and moods of the followers" (p. 188). I rely on my intuition and ability to quickly assess a situation, most notably in terms of a person's nonverbal language to guide my actions and statements.

When reflecting upon my role as a leader and when asked to describe this role, I often express that I am a leader among leaders, as evidenced by my super-ordinate role over all school leaders with the exception of the superintendent. I teach graduate level courses to aspiring leaders as well as those already in leadership positions. My experiences reinforce that I adapt my leadership approaches to a situation rather than conducting myself strictly in terms of an established style. As a matured leader, I demonstrate a clear understanding of how to respond to situations with the appropriate method of leadership. My natural instincts are to strive to incorporate both production and human relationship elements into my everyday goal-setting and problem-solving.

At the inception of this research study, my espoused leadership theories are consistent with tenets of leadership presented by Bolman and Deal (2003), Burns (2003), DePree (1992), and Greenleaf (1977). Throughout my journey, I have also embraced the works of Goleman et al. (2002) and West and Derrington (2009). My eventual paradigm of leadership will be best presented as something borrowed from many individuals who have attempted to conceptualize this construct in a concise fashion, which have influenced my thinking and facilitated the crystallization and expression of my understanding of leadership.

The literature review provides a historical review of school leader performance assessment and includes references to and examples of both the instrument and procedures associated with evaluation. The relationship between meaningful administrator evaluation and retention of school leaders is highlighted, as is research regarding emerging standards-driven evaluation instruments.

CHAPTER III

LITERATURE REVIEW

The formal evaluation of school leaders has the potential to improve and enhance job performance, assist with and contribute to professional development, and facilitate reflective practices among and between administrators. An ancillary, but equally important outcome of this process, is improved procedures for retaining high quality administrators who espouse philosophical ideas and practical goals consistent with the priorities of the school district. It is essential for central office administrators to create an environment that promotes optimal levels of productivity, collaborative decision-making, accountability, and job-satisfaction for district and building administrators. West and Derrington (2009) stated that administrators benefit from central office leaders that are effective supervisors and evaluators (p. 97).

Effective school leaders must be retained, and a comprehensive assessment and evaluation process must be constructed on the principles and framework of the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) 2008 policy standards. It is noted that the revised, updated ISLLC 2008 standards are inclusive of a comprehensive research base compiled by the National Policy Board for Educational Administration (NPBEA) with a

panel of experts and scholars, indicating that the original ISLLC 1996 standards were developed from insufficient research pertaining to the relationship of effective leaders to student learning (Council of Chief State School Officers, 2008).

Researchers from Vanderbilt University and the University of Pennsylvania found that school districts implement different assessment components, emphasize different focus areas, and inconsistently provide clear or useful feedback to administrators (Goldring et al., 2009). Leadership reform concentrated on the areas of professional development, mentoring, licensure, and standards with minimal attention to the development of school leaders via a coherent assessment system (Goldring et al., 2009). It can be argued that neither the administrators nor their superintendents have an appreciable understanding of current research establishing the importance of linking professional growth with performance assessment (Van Meter & McMinn, 2001). It was predicted by Portin, Feldman, and Knapp (2006) that leadership assessments and evaluations will transform from instruments with limited capacities to ones that measure interaction, assess groups rather than an individual, and consider the leader's role in change initiatives as well as connection to student learning outcomes. A national survey conducted by Reeves (2009) found that principals agreed their evaluations were generally positive, accurate, and consistent with job expectations, but did not improve performance or motivation, nor provide specific information regarding what behaviors should change.

Research surrounding the broad subject of leadership is largely comprised of theoretical posits and commentary on a wide range of identified leadership styles. Regardless of the specific constructs of theory or the style that a leader brings to an organization, it remains essential to retain individuals that best fit the goals of the school

district. It is also necessary to sustain effective evaluation of the efficacy of individuals most accountable for goal attainment at the building level. Individuals' actions influence the actions of other stakeholders in an organization. To that end, the performance of school administrators impact teacher performance, which ultimately affects student achievement (Marzano et al., 2005). The literature review for this action research examined the distinct themes of administrator retention and administrator evaluation components, and the relationship between the two within the broader context of the ISLLC 2008 policy standards for school leaders. The scope of this review illustrates the potential for improving assessment and subsequent retention of effective school leaders via meaningful, supportive, and reflective evaluation procedures.

Retention of Effective School Leaders

Fullan (2007) offered that after many years of imposed standards and testing to hold students and schools accountable, education policy increasingly emphasized accountability of the leaders charged with making the system work. The importance of strong and effective leadership was succinctly presented by Fullan (2007) as "what standards were to the 1900s, leadership is to the 2000s" (p. 293). Fullan's work discussed the relationship among highly effective educational leaders, optimal levels of leader satisfaction, and performance evaluation.

Given the increasingly demanding environment of public school settings, universities that prepare administrators and the school districts that employ administrators strived to develop support mechanisms designed to increase administrator resiliency (Hoffman, 2004). Mechanisms included the creation of supportive structures and norms within school districts, attention to team-building, effective coaching, ongoing

professional development, and the creation of a culture that challenges, energizes, and rewards leaders. Hoffman also reported that ongoing professional growth appears to be a primary factor in building resiliency. This position is shared by DuFour and Eaker (1998) within the broader context of professional learning communities. They suggested that a high level of shared decision-making and the continuous learning of all members of the school community will enhance the competency and resiliency of school leaders.

The concept of professional learning communities (PLCs) was broadly applied to school effectiveness (DuFour & Eaker, 1998), and was specifically done so relative to building leaders in a study of a Principal Professional Learning Community (PPLC) by Piggot-Irvine (2006). As with other applications of this collaborative process, incorporation of PLCs to school leaders promoted sharing of expertise, sharing of practice through observation and peer coaching, and sharing of reflection based on professional readings, and an examination of quality practices. Pigott-Irvine recommended that PPLCs include action research to assist school leaders in further applying reflective outcomes to measurable school improvement. This professional environment suggested potential for positively impacting both retention and meaningful evaluation of school leaders.

Lovely (2004) indicated that making a school district a great place to work is the key to retaining quality school leaders, and a district's reputation is the most influential recruitment and retention factor. Lovely used the term *leaving moments* to describe a phenomenon in which school leaders find themselves tempted to move to a different district, often due to unsatisfactory relationships with their superintendent and colleagues (p. 17). Six strategies for becoming a school district of choice include organizing the

district as a learning community, training supervisors to identify true talent, building relationships between superintendents and other administrators, celebrating milestones and successes, maintaining a clear focus, and helping leaders experience a sense of achievement (Lovely, 2004). A 2007 study conducted in Washington State found that principals reported interpersonal relations as the highest-ranking characteristic for a superintendent to be considered an effective supervisor and evaluator of performance (West & Derrington, 2009, p. 55).

Assimilation to an organization, as it relates to leader retention, has been explored by Downey, March, and Berkman (2001) within the context of competition for talent. These authors purported that individuals tend to join an organization predominately based on reputation, but that individuals stay with an organization for emotional commitment. Downey et al. (2001) contended that it typically requires three years to fully assimilate to a new organization, and that retaining effective leaders requires a mindset change in which promoting success is viewed as a shared responsibility. Downey et al. also maintained that supporting the assimilation process must be part of organizational values and norms and that assimilation savvy organizations provide multiple resources to assist the journey of new leaders.

A fundamental cause of the current and future shortage of educational leaders was stress and loneliness during times of high accountability, resource depletion, and interventionist politics (Litchka, 2007). Accordingly, the practice of reflection may be essential for leaders to improve abilities and to identify gaps in their knowledge base and practices. Litchka (2007) asserted that "…the theories, practices, and application of reflective leadership will help to resolve the shortage of educational leaders and also

ensure that no leader--now or in the future--is ever left behind" (p. 50). Reflection has

drawn the attention of educators, notably with the early work of Dewey (1933) who

stated that the process of obtaining evidence to support knowledge and beliefs allow

individuals to make conclusions about the future. Becoming more reflective about their

practice is an important way for educational leaders to reveal assumptions and make

better decisions (Barnett & O'Mahony, 2006). These authors professed that meaningful

school improvement is contingent upon building a school culture of reflection

characterized by daily interactions and deliberations that focus on teaching and learning,

and that reduce feelings of isolation.

Reeves (2009) and Wagner (2006) also found that reflective assessment helps to

celebrate accomplishments, evaluate skills, use strengths more efficiently, and to set and

attain goals. A reflective practice can be data-driven and collected from multiple sources,

lead to individualized and well defined professional goals, and influence the

improvement of student achievement. A five-step reflection protocol, introduced by

Connolly (2005), has been utilized as a way to increase the poise and confidence that

comes from being prepared to meet the challenges of school leadership. The five steps

include: choose an incident to reflect on; spend five to ten minutes recalling the details of

the incident; write down the precise details of what happened; describe the meaning of

the incident; describe what was learned from the incident and how it might influence one

in the future (Connolly, 2005, p. 66).

A quarter-century ago, Murphy, Hallinger, and Peterson (1985) reported that

principals were neither supervised nor evaluated on a regular basis. They investigated the

outcomes of central office coordination and control of schools and building leaders.

Superintendents participating in this study were found to perform three different sets of activities when visiting schools for supervisory purposes: review activities (e.g., curriculum, facilities); culture-building activities (e.g., communication, team building); and supervisory activities (e.g., role modeling, direct supervision) (p. 80-81). They concluded that in effective school districts, a strong linkage exists between district and site administrative staff. With the passage of almost 25 years, current research indicated that progress has been limited and that much remains to be accomplished in the area of school leader evaluation.

Evaluation of School Leaders

Despite increasing attention to improving school principal competencies and renewed emphases on principal training and preparation programs, leadership evaluation has received far less attention and research (Goldring et al., 2009). The historical research on evaluation of school leaders is characterized by a lack of systematic or consistent approaches to the assessment of leadership skills and competencies (Goldring et al., 2009; Portin et al., 2006; Wallace Foundation, 2009). In a study by Davis and Hensley (1999), principals reported that they were not formally evaluated on a regular basis, that performance evaluation goals were not developed until mid-year, and that evaluation measures varied from narrative summaries or rating scores to self-assessment documents or portfolios. Recommendations for more effective evaluation procedures included clearly communicated evaluation criteria, increased observational opportunities, frequent feedback, and increased emphasis on interpersonal characteristics of leadership.

Goldring et al. (2009) reported major shifts in the area of leadership assessment with a focus on behaviors instead of traits, reliance on professional standards, links to

student achievement, emphasis on professional development, and consideration of organizational locale (Goldring et al., 2009, p. 22). Research of the evaluation and assessment of school administrators included numerous arguments for providing feedback from multiple sources (Portin et al., 2006; Wallace Foundation, 2009) and as a process for growth over time (Lashway, 2003). It is not unlikely for assessment and evaluations of school leaders to consist of several and varied components contained therein. This is consistent with findings from a study that listed four widely used evaluation components and reasons for their status (Idaho State University, 2002). This study identified these components in descending order of popularity: checklist and ratings scale evaluation, written statement evaluation, a combination of the two aforesaid, and management by objectives evaluation.

Dyer (2001) found that educational leaders could reassess their skills and address their weaknesses via a multi-source feedback system, referred to as 360-degree feedback. Within this system, leaders gathered data about themselves from multiple sources in their circles of influence. The basic premise was that data gathered from multiple perspectives was more comprehensive and objective. In Dyer's work, she noted that self-assessment offered a promising alternative to traditional administrator evaluation. The 360-degree feedback assessment has been used in the Nuview Union School District for school leaders, using a self-evaluation based on 10 performance criteria and a comprehensive written analysis by the superintendent (Hoffman, 2004), and by college deans to determine what they were doing right, where they could improve, and how to implement change (Shinn, 2008). Moore (2009) posited that anonymous 360-degree feedback is an efficient mechanism for providing principals with honest information about how to

improve their leadership by emphasizing the importance of coaching and self-directed learning. This approach is presented as a satisfactory alternative to traditional leadership evaluation instruments or processes that focus only on technical or task-oriented skills.

DePaul (2006) argued for a three-part performance appraisal system that is clear, comprehensive, and consistent. As a former superintendent, DePaul employed an administrative evaluation and performance program based on conferencing, goal-setting, and structured opportunities for new leaders to learn from their veteran colleagues. Also a former superintendent, Gil (2001) advocated for peer evaluation among school leaders through peer groups to assess performance in the areas of professional growth, school improvement, evaluation of school personnel, management, communication, and community relations. Rich and Jackson (2005) described a process of pairing novice and experienced principals to provide both leaders with opportunities to promote reflective thinking in their decision-making. This model of peer coaching was considered to provide benefit by decreasing feelings of isolation, increasing awareness of where improvement is needed, sharing successful practices and solutions, learning to address problems within a larger context, and increasing reflection about future implications.

Asserting that the evaluation of principals and administrators remains largely the same as it has been for decades, Russo (2004) advocated for the use of portfolios to provide valid, reliable, and authentic performance assessment. Advantages of portfolio assessment for school leaders include the showcasing of a broad range of skills and accomplishments that have been demonstrated throughout an entire year or more, opportunities for reflection and continuous improvement, and contributions towards school initiatives. Green (2004) reported that a principal portfolio is a self-assessment of

attributes, skills and goals resulting from personal reflection and professional dialogue. A portfolio is comprised of authentic evidence to communicate a portrait of leadership and a plan for growth, with professional development identified as the most critical component in the self-assessment process. Self-development is a key component of principal evaluation proposed by McCleary (1979) who argued, "the primary purpose of evaluation is to establish a basis for change of individual behavior such that both personal satisfaction and organizational effectiveness is improved" (p. 46). McCleary also concluded that performance evaluations in schools must be comprised of five levels, which include institutional, program, administrative performance, staff performance, and student performance.

School leaders form their conceptions of accountability from three sources: individual beliefs and values about what they can and should do (individual responsibility); collective norms and values that define the organization in which individuals work (collective expectations); and formal mechanisms by which teachers account for what they do (Elmore, 2005, p. 135). The alignment of individual values with collective expectations results in increased accountability and organizational effectiveness. The importance of establishing a relationship between high levels of leadership accountability and performance assessment was presented by Reeves (2009), who claimed that educational leadership evaluation is a failure and that current evaluation systems display an intellectual understanding of what needs to be done, but lack the fundamental ability to act on that knowledge. Reeves (2009) stated "the fundamental purpose of leadership evaluation is the improvement of teaching and learning through the building of knowledge and skills of current and prospective educational leaders" (p. 14).

Specifically, Reeves (2004, 2009) identified two major problems in the area of leadership evaluation: either performance standards were ambiguous or the performance expectations were unclear. Other prominent researchers in the field supported the concept that feedback is a powerful mechanism to influence performance (Hersey, Blanchard, & Johnson, 2001; Marzano & Pickerings, 2001). Reeves (2009) expanded the construct of feedback with his statement of "…educational organizations use this tool badly or not at all" (p. 2). By the time an organization realized that evaluation is necessary to improve performance, it is usually too late (Collins, 2001).

A committee of the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) crafted *Standards for School Leaders* that were released in November of 1996 as a concerted, highly-structured, and research-based effort to critically link evaluation of school administrators with qualities associated with high performing schools (Murphy, 2002). According to Catano and Strong (2006), school districts must clearly communicate expected responsibilities and use evaluation instruments that inform and prioritize performance areas deemed important to execute. It is prudent for districts to align evaluation and assessment instruments with state and professional standards in order to clarify roles and to increase job satisfaction. In a related study, *Education Week* reported that districts nationwide developed many instruments for measuring performance of administrators; however, few have undergone rigorous analysis of validity or reliability measures (Olson, 2008).

Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) Policy Standards

In 1994, the National Policy Board for Educational Administration (NPBEA) and 23 state departments of education joined forces under the name of the Interstate School

Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) to develop standards and assessments for school leaders (Shipman & Murphy, 2001). The consortium developed these leadership standards based on research about society, education, and effective leaders in schools and other organizations, and professed that the standards had the potential to improve efforts in the areas of licensure, certification, induction, assessment, evaluation, professional development, and preparation programs.

The original Standards for School Leaders, approved by the consortium in 1996, were comprised of six major areas of performance: developing a vision of learning that is shared by all school stakeholders; fostering a productive school culture and instructional program; managing school in an efficient and effective manner; enhancing collaboration with families and the community; administering in a legal and ethical fashion; and influencing the socioeconomic, legal, political, and cultural contexts of schooling through proactive leadership. Nearly 200 indicators of knowledge, performance, and dispositions accompanied the standards. The ISLLC standards of 1996 were updated, revised, and published in 2008 by the Council of Chief State School Officers.

The 2008 ISLLC standards retained the structure of the original six areas of performance and reinforced the proposition that the primary responsibility of a school leader is to improve teaching and learning for all children. The revised language and framework of the six standards is similar but not identical: setting a widely shared vision for learning; developing a school culture and instructional program conducive to student learning and staff professional growth; ensuring effective management of the organization, operation, and resources for a safe, efficient, and effective learning environment; collaborating with faculty and community members, responding to diverse

community interests and needs, and mobilizing community resources; acting with integrity, fairness, and in an ethical manner, and understanding, responding to, and influencing the political, social, legal, and cultural contexts (Council of Chief State School Officers, 2008, p. 6).

Other key changes to the ISLLC 2008 included the omission of indicators, which have been replaced by policy standards designed to set overall guidance and vision and a critical research base. This change to a policy-orientation resulted from the wide use of the standards as a model for state leadership policy. In response to concerns that the standards were inflexible, functions defining each standard have replaced the knowledge, skills, and dispositions. As with the original document, the 2008 ISLLC standards were designed to positively influence training programs, licensing and induction practices, performance evaluation, professional development, and working conditions. While the ISLLC standards were accepted by the profession as the de facto gold standard in the preparation and development of school building leaders (Murphy & Shipman, 1999), this emphasis may be problematic due to the lack of empirical evidence to support the constructs as having a positive impact on student achievement and instructional improvement (Babo, 2010).

According to Shipman and Murphy (2001), the leadership standards were most widely used to develop and implement assessment tools for licensure of educational administrators and the School Leaders Licensure Assessment (SLLA) was completed in 1998. Created and administered by the Educational Testing Service, the examination was designed to assess awareness of, and ability to apply, the standards to real-life situations (Holloway, 2002). Criticism of the assessment emerged, largely surrounding the

contention that examination scoring favors test-takers who generated superficial sound bits rather than those who engaged in thoughtful reflective discourse (Anderson, 2002).

The leadership standards are also frequently linked to quality professional development, resulting in the formation of the Collaborative Professional Development Process for School Leaders (CPDP). A decade after the inception of the ISLLC standards, schools throughout the nation linked leadership standards to the evaluation of school leaders (Murphy, 2003), correlating performance with professional development goals and growth (Van Meter & McMinn, 2001). The revised ISLLC 2008 policy standards and the former statements of knowledge, dispositions, and performances are consistent with the principles of professional learning communities (DuFour & Eaker, 1998). Creating a school community of caring and mutual concern requires not only a focus on the curriculum but on the connections between members of the community.

A comprehensive, multi-tiered system for assessing job performance of school principals was developed in the state of Delaware, with the ISLLC standards serving as the framework for emphasizing student success, teaching, learning, and school improvement. The Delaware Performance Appraisal System (DPAS II) is comprised of criteria connected to student learning and includes leadership skills and behaviors such as goal-setting that relies on data; management of resources; fostering a professional environment where teachers can teach and students can learn; promoting family and community involvement; and demonstrating improvements in achievement (Goldring et al., 2009; Maxwell, 2008). Similarly, the California Professional Standards for Educational Leaders (CPSEL) are linked to the ISLLC standards and, according to Kearney (2005), focused on what administrators must do to improve student

achievement. Kearney argued for standards-based evaluation of school leaders as essential to improving student achievement and summarized pertinent evaluations systems in states such as Washington, Missouri, Ohio, Indiana, Delaware, and Connecticut.

Using the ISLLC standards as a contextual model, Babo (2008) investigated what leadership functions and job responsibilities are held by chief school administrators (CSAs) in New Jersey as important when constructing summative evaluations for building principals. Results indicated that CSAs stated that principals should focus on instruction and learning (Standard II), act in an ethical manner (Standard V), develop and implement a vision (Standard I), manage the organization (Standard III), collaborate with the local community (Standard IV), and understand the larger global context (Standard VI). Overall, this study found ISLLC Standards II and V were considered the most important within the context of job evaluation (Babo, 2008). In an expanded survey of national superintendents, Babo (2010) found that Standard II (instruction and learning) was considered the most important, followed by Standard I (vision), Standard V (ethics), Standard III (management), Standard IV (community), and Standard VI (larger context).

Catano and Strong (2006) examined the degree to which evaluation instruments in the state of Virginia reflected instructional leadership and management attributes as identified in national (ISLLC) and state standards. The study revealed that school districts hold many common expectations for their principals that align with both state and professional standards, notably in the areas of instructional leadership, organizational management, and community relations. In a similar study, Kaplan, Owings, and Nunnery (2005) found that principals who were rated higher on school leadership standards have

schools with higher student achievement. These findings were discussed within the context of how the ISLLC framework can redefine school leadership from one that traditionally focused on managerial and administrative duties to one that centered on enhancing teaching and learning and on creating powerful learning environments. Application of an ISLLC rubric for focusing the school leader's role on actual professional practice can help school leaders articulate their job and can serve as a standards-based approach to describe levels of leadership performance. Although not originally developed for purposes of evaluating principals, many superintendents in the state of Washington used the ISLLC standards for this purpose (Derrington & Sharratt, 2008).

An ambitious application of the ISLLC standards is underway nationwide, with 300 schools taking part in a field test of a new way to assess principal effectiveness (Olson, 2008). This project, known as VAL-ED, for the Vanderbilt Assessment of Leadership in Education, resulted in an evaluation tool that may provide the first reliable way to identify principal strengths, development needs, and improvement over time. The evaluation was designed to give principals feedback about their performance; all teachers at a school, the principal, and his or her supervisor complete the evaluation. The assessment designers at Vanderbilt University argued that individual, team, and school goals for rigorous student academic and social learning should be aligned with local, state, and federal standards. Individual and collective responsibility for ensuring high standards of student performance should be evident in principal assessment instruments (Goldring et al., 2009).

A more recent review of eight principal performance evaluations conducted by Clifford and Condon, and reported by Maxwell (2010a), found the VAL-ED assessment was closest to measuring the leadership attributes and behaviors associated with how well students perform. VAL-ED also received the highest rating among the instruments for validity and reliability. The feedback component of this evaluation process was identified as particularly important in terms of improved leadership competencies (Maxwell, 2010a).

Other researchers have proposed a compromise between extensive lists of leadership requirements such as those based on the ISLLC standards and the vague assessments traditionally used in schools. In 2002 the National Leadership Evaluation Study led by Reeves (2004) concluded that the increasing shortage of educational leaders was "…accompanied by a leadership evaluation system that simultaneously discourages effective leaders, fails to sanction ineffective leaders, and rarely even considers the goal of improved leadership performance" (p. 52). The study was based on interviews, surveys, and documentary reviews. More than 500 leaders from 21 states were included in the survey and more than 300 leadership evaluation instruments were reviewed. This study found that "more than 18 percent of the leaders…had never received an evaluation, [and]…of the leaders…evaluated, 82 percent [perceived the process as]…inconsistent, ambiguous, and counterproductive. [Moreover,]…only 54 percent of leaders stated that their evaluation was based on clear standards" (p. 53). Reeves concluded that effective evaluation systems enable the evaluator and the person being evaluated to clearly understand differences between various levels of performance, provide frequent feedback, and provide multiple opportunities for continuous improvement.

More recently, Reeves (2009) offered a new model of leadership evaluation: a multidimensional leadership assessment (MLA), which provides frequent feedback with multiple opportunities for continuous improvement. MLA describes in specific terms the difference between performance that is *distinguished* and performance that is *proficient*, *progressing*, or *failing to meet standards*. The author indicated that one of the most important characteristics of standards-based leadership evaluation was that it provides a continuum of performance feedback across a broad range of complex leader behaviors. The MLA includes 10 dimensions of leadership: resilience, personal behavior, student achievement, decision-making, communication, faculty development, leadership development, time/task/project management, technology, and learning (p. 39). Each dimension includes subcategories of specific leadership behaviors.

Implications of the Literature

For many years I strived to put myself in an optimal position to eventually reach the ranks of central office administration, where from my perspective, I would have the best chance to effect change and to make a positive difference. Having now reached that pinnacle, I want to assume my responsibilities with the utmost consideration for effective and meaningful leadership, with the associated intention of facilitating changes that are not only beneficial to the organization but also embraced by all members therein. It is imperative to provide the type of central leadership and supervision suggested by West and Derrington (2009). The work of these researchers strengthen my position that it is the role of central office administrators to use the evaluation process to establish critical links between district initiatives at the highest levels and administrative leaders who hold the key to making goals a reality at all levels of the organization.

Research dedicated to the subject of evaluation of school administrators is fraught with inconsistencies in instrument format, performance improvement, relationship with instructional methodology, and linkage to district or professional development goals. The literature also did not reveal clear and consensual procedures related to the elements of who, when, how often, and why of the evaluation process. This was succinctly exemplified by Reeves (2004, 2009), who indicated that leadership evaluation is often compromised by a failure to identify clear performance standards and clear performance expectations. Reeves (2009) also found little relationship between evaluations perceived as positive and accurate by administrators, and subsequent improved performance or changed behavior. This action research project will provide additional data supporting consistencies in the format and implementation of administrator evaluations as well as effective analysis data gleaned through the formal evaluation process.

I consider the issue of positive performance evaluation versus improved performance critical in terms of developing an evaluation format and process that not only provides meaningful and applicable data, but also contributes positively to administrator retention, which represents a concern in my district. Blending important elements of the administrator evaluation process into classic collaborative and team-oriented management models characteristic of PLCs (DuFour & Eaker, 1998) has the potential to enhance leader satisfaction via a process intrinsically linked to feedback, sharing of expertise, peer observation and coaching, and reflection on quality practices. Although the formal evaluation process remains one firmly rooted within confidentiality, the monthly academic council meetings conducted in the district provide all administrators a place to reflect and a supported opportunity for leaders to share general

thoughts and to engage in inquiry regarding any component of their own roles as either an evaluator or one being evaluated.

The literature broadly suggests that districts nationwide develop their own instruments for measuring administrator performance, and my own experiences compel me to confirm the validity of Olson's (2008) contention that these instruments are rarely subject to any measure of statistical validation. The ISLLC guidelines offer a tremendous opportunity for both researchers and educators to tie administrator evaluation with leadership standards that have already been implemented in various functions across the nation. Already widely used for purposes of licensure and professional development for school leaders, the ISLLC standards have caught the attention of several leading institutions or individuals in the area of administrator evaluation. The aforementioned efforts of state leaders in Delaware and California are examples of broad initiatives in improving administrator evaluation, and researchers at Vanderbilt University are establishing a standards-driven evaluation tool for school principals. Finally, the MLA presented by Reeves (2009) promises much potential for continuous improvement through frequent feedback across a wide range of complex leadership behaviors. These and other contemporary efforts to reform administrator evaluation will serve as models and action frameworks for the current project.

In conclusion, this action research is particularly timely given current education initiatives at the national and state levels that address the topic of school administrator evaluation. The U.S. Department of Education announced in March 2009 a competitive grant, referred to as The Race to the Top (RTTT) (Race to the Top Fund, 2009, 2010). These funds are intended as incentive to substantially improve student achievement by

supporting states that demonstrate progress on four reform goals, one of which includes

linking student learning directly to teacher and principal performance evaluation. The

state of California improved their application position by proposing reforms to teacher

and principal evaluation (Parker-Burgard, 2009), while Delaware was awarded grant

funds subsequent to submitting plans to change evaluations for school personnel

(Maxwell, 2010b). Within my own state of New Jersey, Governor Christie on September

28, 2010 established a New Jersey Educator Effectiveness Task Force for School and

District-level Education Professionals through the enactment of Executive Order No. 42

(2010). The Task Force consists of a nine-member panel appointed by, and serves solely

at, the pleasure of the Governor. The Task Force's initial recommendations are due to the

Governor by March 2011 (Executive Order No. 42, 2010).

CHAPTER IV

METHODOLOGY

The primary intent of this action research study was to develop an evaluation

instrument and process for school administrators in a regional district constructed around

the ISLLC 2008 standards. Increased satisfaction with the evaluation instrument,

increased participation in the evaluation process, and an enhanced relationship between

administrators' evaluation and performance competence were also intended outcomes. It

was critical to select a research design that focused maximum attention on the stated

problem and that incorporated varied methods to identify applicable solutions (Creswell,

2009; Ivankova, Creswell & Stick, 2006).

Design

The design of this action research study consisted of sequential mixed methods

applied throughout three cycles of data collection and analysis. A quantitative approach

served as the primary methodology, with qualitative components also used as an analysis

technique. Creswell (2009) recognized that data collection and analysis via multiple

approaches is rigorous and time-consuming, but necessary for viable data collection

and analysis.

Creswell's (2009) conceptualization of mixed methods research, defined as "an

approach to inquiry that combines or associates both qualitative and quantitative forms"
(p. 4), was employed for this study. The application of mixed methods has been found to
provide greater insight into a problem than either qualitative or quantitative methods
alone (Creswell, 2009; Ivankova et al., 2006), and to reduce the effect or nullify biases
inherent in any single approach (Creswell, 2009). Creswell also reported that researcher,
Plano Clark, found "[this design] is more than simply collecting and analyzing both kinds
of data; it also involves the use of both approaches in tandem so that the overall strength
of a study is greater than either qualitative or quantitative research" (p. 4). Ivankova et al.
(2006) identified two limitations associated with a mixed methods design: (1) increased
time devoted to the study, and (2) viability of resources to collect and analyze both types
of data (p. 5). Being cognizant of the given benefits and limitations of a mixed method
approach, it was determined to be most appropriate for this study.

 Quantitative analysis. Quantitative analysis using descriptive statistics was
conducted via three separate surveys occurring in the first and third action research
cycles. The surveys were questionnaires, which have been identified by both Fink (2009)
and Patten (2001) as efficient methods to collect data and analyze results. Due to the
relatively small size of the population, straightforward format of the survey, and short
timeframe required to collect the completed responses, a sample was not used. This
action research is classified as a census study with data gathered on every member of the
population.

 An initial survey designed to ascertain administrators' satisfaction with the
previous evaluation instrument and process, as well as its perceived relationship to job
performance and professional growth, was administered in the first cycle. This cycle

included the concurrent purpose of identifying specific areas for improvement. Two additional surveys were administered as pre- and post- collections during the third cycle. These surveys assessed the administrators' perceptions of, and satisfaction with, the previous (pre-) and the newly developed (post-) evaluation tool and process, primarily in the areas of instrument components and professional growth and development. The directions on all surveys stated that participation was voluntary and anonymous.

Qualitative analysis. Qualitative analysis was employed using observation, interview, and artifact review during each of the three action research cycles. The purposes of qualitative analyses in the second and third cycles were to increase the administrators' understanding of various types of evaluation instruments and the components therein, and to discuss further and identify the administrators' perceptions and preferences of key components comprising an effective evaluation instrument for school leaders. Qualitative analysis was also intended to directly benefit participants directly by improving the dynamic between subjects and the organization in which this research occurred (Glesne, 2006). With a focus on the understanding of process rather than product, the design of this change project was intended to promote application of findings within the context of the study (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007).

Action Research Model

Action research was the overarching inquiry construct used to conduct this study. Hinchey (2008) presented a factual discussion of different action research models underscoring that there is no right way to embark on action research (p. 33). However, it was the words of McIntyre (2008) that elucidated for me an essential underlying tenet of action research with her statement, "Participatory action research *does* provide

opportunities for codeveloping processes *with* people rather than *for* people," (p. xii). She further presented the term participatory action research (PAR) as "an approach to exploring the processes by which participants engage in collaborative, action-based projects that reflect their knowledge and mobilize their desires (Vio Grossi, 1980)," (as cited in McIntyre, 2008, p. 5).

The PAR model of action research consists of and reinforces collaborative, dialectical, and reflective processes throughout the study between the researcher and participants. PAR affords participants opportunities to construct relevant and meaningful change distinctive to their organization; yet it is the uniqueness to an organization that limits the generalizability to other populations and contexts (McIntyre, 2008). More important, PAR facilitates through related activities a natural propensity to develop and enhance the capacities of all stakeholders. It is noted that this model is consistent with and supportive of my espoused situational leadership style advocated by Burns (2003), DePree (1992), Goleman et al. (2002), and Greenleaf (1977).

Population and Context

The population of participants for this research study consisted of all certificated administrators in a regional school district with a student population of approximately 1,900, serving grades 7 through 12, located in Burlington County, New Jersey with the exception of the superintendent, assistant superintendent, and business administrator. At the inception of this study, and during the data collection of the first and second cycles, the target population was comprised of 13 subjects including six directors, two principals, and five assistant principals. These members represented eight females and five males, with 30% racial diversity: three of the members being African American, one

Egyptian/Hispanic, and nine Caucasian.

Commencing with the third cycle, the target population reduced in size by one participant due to the district's reduced budget. Three participants exited the district but were replaced with new administrators. Causes for the three exits were: (a) the retirement of a principal, (b) the retirement of a director, and (c) a director accepting a promotional position in another district. The target population reflected in the third cycle consisted of 12 subjects including six directors, two principals, and four assistant principals, and represented seven females and five males, with 25% racial diversity. It is noted that the topic of this study represented a current district initiative and was not simply being performed to meet the requirements of this doctoral program. All participants were informed as a matter of routine discussion of district undertakings at administrative council meetings.

Data Collection

Survey. Three surveys were used to collect data throughout this action research study: an instrument designed for this research, a modified instrument, and an intact survey developed by a prominent educational researcher. During the first action research cycle, a survey questionnaire included all participants and consisted of 10 items to collect demographics, measure attitudes, and gather factual information. This survey design was classified as cross-sectional; one data collection to elicit subjects' attitudes relative to the utility of the previous administrative evaluation instrument and process, with the intention to plan for change. A concise and personalized introduction to the survey questionnaire was included as was a complimentary closing at the end of the survey. These sections addressed the critical elements of purpose, estimated time to answer the

items, the extent of confidentiality with responses, how and when to return the survey, and a "thank you" for completing the survey.

Returned surveys were numbered and scanned for data edits and missing answers. More in-depth analysis included the construction of frequency tables and computation of cross-tabulations, possibly yielding interesting and useful data regarding gender, administration position, years of administrative experience, and total years in education.

The framework for another questionnaire survey, administered as a pre- and post-survey in the third research cycle, was modified and developed from the work presented in the dissertation of Jeanmarie (2008). Jeanmarie (2008) modified a survey developed originally by Durecki-Elkins (1996), and both surveys focused on educators' perceptions of performance appraisals in their school districts, and applied a Likert scale rating.

I modified the last version of the survey (Jeanmarie, 2008) by reducing the total number of items from 50 to 32. The remaining items supported the goal of this study: to assess the administrators' perception of their evaluation instrument in the areas of *components* and *growth and development*. Jeanmarie's (2008) survey also incorporated a third area of *appraiser* with five indicators. I critically examined the appraiser category and did not incorporate items that may include elements of personal bias and subjectivity, or coercion of subordinate administrators. As a result, 2 of the 5 indicators, namely unbiased response and objectivity, were included in the final survey. These indicators represented 5 of 32 items or 16% of the survey items.

The nomenclature of the Jeanmarie's (2008) survey was revised to reflect the vocabulary understood by my subjects and was done without impacting the intended purpose of each survey item. Consistent with Patten (2001), it is advisable to involve

respondents that are not part of one's main study, yet are similar to the control group, to field test the survey. This process increases the likelihood of a high quality survey (p. 61). I solicited support from 12 members of the doctoral program cohort employed in administrative positions to field test my survey instrument.

There was a 75% response rate, which translated to 9 of the 12 potential testers. They supplied detailed annotations throughout the instrument and I entered their responses next to the respective survey items and then conducted a thorough item analysis. As a result, there were six thematic findings that became evident and which warranted revisions and/or elimination of survey items. The first theme that emerged was that the term *evaluation* was interpreted as too generic relative to instrument, process, or both. Subsequent to re-examination of how frequent the term was used, it was replaced with *evaluation process*, *evaluation instrument*, *evaluation performance*, or *evaluation instrument and process* increasing the specificity of the item. Other findings resulted in changes ranging from simple edits related to tense or modification of a key word to the complete elimination of a survey item that was unanimously found both vague and irrelevant. In other cases, survey items were re-written to increase specific reference to a clear topic or to clarify purpose.

The third questionnaire survey, also administered as a pre- and post-survey in the third research cycle, was an intact instrument developed by Douglas B. Reeves, PhD, author of numerous educational books and president of The Leadership and Learning Center, which is an organization dedicated to supporting school systems and governments in the areas of standards, assessments, and accountability. Reeves' (2009) organization conducted a National Leadership survey from March to September 2002 with a

nonrandom sample of 510 leaders from 21 states to ascertain demographic, attitudinal ratings, and descriptive data from school administrators about their evaluation instrument and process. For purposes of this action research study, only the 10 statements relating to attitudinal ratings via a Likert scale from this intact survey were used. Results after each administration were compared to the published results.

Observation. The observation component of this project included all participants, conducted at the two schools in the district, and occurred during a series of routinely scheduled administrative council meetings and committee meetings during the second and third cycles of the study. As assistant superintendent I routinely chair and facilitate these meetings and planned to initiate the discussion of this project providing an introduction of the topic as well as directions for subsequent activities. As a means of promoting natural observation, particularly in the second cycle, these meetings were predominately self-directed via small group work with a spokesperson from each group reporting out findings. My role was primarily one of observer with minimal participation during group work. While this process deviated from the standard dynamic nature of the administrative council meetings, it was predictable for me to include group work as part of the agenda.

Observation data were obtained via note taking while subjects reviewed and discussed the various evaluation instrument samples. The participants were instructed to complete a chart of the pros and cons of each component, which created an additional document for further examination of their collective perceptions and preferences. Information obtained via observation was organized into subcategories or indicators to better manage and to further refine the descriptive data.

During the third research cycle a committee was formed and was comprised of administrators interested in collaboratively revising the evaluation tool and process. My role transitioned to one of a participant-observer. Observation data were obtained via my reflections after each meeting and organized into subcategories or indicators to better manage and to further refine the descriptive data.

Interview. The second research cycle collected interview data via a focus group comprised of four district directors, all of whom participated in the initial observed academic council meetings. I purposely selected these directors to participate in a focus group, as opposed to conducting individual interviews. This was a deliberate measure to reduce elements of bias and subjectivity because I directly evaluated them. Being cognizant of my role as their evaluator, I developed and implemented a set of questions preserving the integrity of the process and eliciting responses that did not specifically address the narrative of their completed evaluation reports. Conversely, I developed an interview protocol to use with assistant principals, whom I did not directly evaluate. Interview questions targeted the narrative portion of their evaluation reports and the interview sessions were approximately one hour in duration.

Artifact. The collection of personnel data listing the names of individuals in all administrative positions in the district for the 11 previous years was obtained during the first cycle to confirm and validate a secondary problem identified at the onset of this action research study. Prior to scheduling observations or interviews with participants in the second and third cycles, I gathered samples of administrative evaluation instruments comprised of documents implemented in nearby districts, samples posted on the Internet, and exemplars from literature. Specific evaluation instrument components included:

checklist with rating scale, written narrative with recommendations and commendations, free form written narrative, goal setting, self-assessment, portfolios, and rubric of leadership dimensions. These samples were intended to increase awareness of varied components used to assess the performance of school leaders. In the third cycle the committee collaboratively developed and used a rating sheet while examining sample evaluations as a mechanism to maintain focus on stated objectives and preferred components expressed by the population.

The ISSLC 2008 standards and other references related to this document were also reviewed as artifacts. Increased exposure to these policy standards in the field of education administration potentially resulted in a concomitant increase in the validity of participant responses. It also increased the subjects' awareness of the relationship between school leader performance and possible standards-based evaluation of administrator competency. The ISLLC 2008 standards served as the foundational framework for the new assessment and evaluation instrument developed by the district's committee (Council of Chief State School Officers, 2008).

Action Research Cycles

This study consisted of three action research cycles occurring over 19 months from May 2009 through November 2010. Hinchey (2008) included the term *cyclical* within his definition of action research and Kurt Lewin, attributed with the origination of the term action research, associated the descriptor *spiral* when explaining the process (Hinchey, 2008, p.11). During each cycle the researcher plans, acts, observes, and then reflects. The next cycle begins with a revised plan based on the interpretative findings of the previous cycle followed by the aforesaid successive actions.

The plan of Cycle I was twofold: (1) to ascertain the administrators' satisfaction in my district with their current evaluation instrument and process, and its perceived relationship to their job performance and professional growth; and (2) to analyze the retention trends of administrators in my district for the previous 11 years. A questionnaire survey and review of artifacts were the actions.

Cycle II was comprised of two objectives: (1) to increase the administrators' understanding of various types of evaluation instruments and the components included therein; and (2) to discuss further and identify the administrators' perceptions and preferences of key components comprising an effective evaluation instrument for school leaders. Actions consisted of observations, interviews, group activities, and document review.

A multipronged plan was implemented in Cycle III: (1) to develop an evaluation instrument and process for administrators in my district based on results of the previous research cycles and in conjunction with the ISLLC 2008 policy standards; (2) to familiarize fully the administrators on their new evaluation instrument and process from both the roles of evaluator and recipient; and (3) to assess the administrators' perceptions of and satisfaction with the previous and new evaluation instrument and process, particularly in the areas of components and professional growth and development. A National Leadership Evaluation survey used in 2002 by Reeves (2009) and a varied iteration of a survey by Jeanmarie (2008) and Durecki-Elkins (1996), which focused on an educator's perceptions of performance appraisals in their school districts, was administered as a pre- and post-assessment. There was extensive committee work, journaling by the researcher, and a professional critique of the committee's developed

instrument by a field expert, Douglas Reeves, PhD (personal communication, February 15, 2010, August 15, 2010).

Data Analysis

This study triangulated different data sources to yield a coherent justification of concluding points (Creswell, 2009, p. 191). The quantitative and qualitative methods implemented yielded considerable findings. Specifically, survey results were subjected to extensive coding as a means of creating manageable and meaningful categories of information. Transcribed notes obtained via observation and interviews were coded and it was important to identify the most significant points embedded within this type of information. The data analysis process resulted in information that ultimately guided the action research, specifically those elements pertaining to the format and essential components of a new administrator evaluation instrument.

Validity and Reliability

It was critical that the data collected and methodologies employed via quantitative and qualitative research were accurate and efficacious, and more importantly, that readers were convinced of this accuracy. Member checking and peer debriefing were two strategies incorporated in this study strengthening the validity of the qualitative research (Creswell, 2009). A thorough examination of interview and observation transcriptions was conducted periodically to ensure the reliability of the qualitative procedures and a meticulous inspection of coding occurred to remain consistent with and true to the operationally defined codes.

Field-testing of the newly developed survey and the modified survey increased

the validity of the quantitative research portions. Creswell (2009) stated that field-testing is used to establish the content validity of an instrument and to improve questions, format, and scales (p. 150). The researcher of the original survey, Durecki-Elkins (1996), constructed the instrument as a result of an extensive review of related literature on performance appraisals in education and business and also used the professional services of three experts in educational administration (Jeanmarie, 2008). Creswell (2009) cautioned that the original validity and reliability may not be retained for the modified instrument, and it became important to reestablish validity and reliability during data analysis. Therefore, the internal validity and reliability of the modified survey instrument was rechecked using the software of *Statistical Package for Social Sciences* or SPSS.

Repeating the data collection process increased the overall reliability and validity. This was accomplished via multiple measures of common information related to perceptions and preferences in response to the previous and to the new administrator evaluation instrument. The decision to include both a preliminary survey designed exclusively for this study, and then a more sophisticated tool borrowed from other researchers, served as an indicator of response consistency and variability. It remained the central goal of this project to create an evaluation instrument that was more satisfactory and that had greater efficacy in terms of professional development and the priorities of the district.

Subjectivity and Generalizability

A notable compromise to the overall objectivity of this investigation was related to the position I hold within the organizational structure, and the related fact that I occupy a super ordinate role in my relationship with all participants. This situation was

challenging in terms of my interactions with those I immediately supervised and evaluated, and with those new to the profession and possibly daunted by the disparity in our respective positions. I minimized the effects of any subjectivity via careful selection of those who participated in individual interviews and by creating non-threatening and natural environments where data collection occurred. Although the observation component of this project included all participants, the interview format varied for those whom I did and did not have direct evaluation responsibilities. This measure reduced elements of personal bias and subjectivity associated with direct report within the administrative organizational chart.

The fact that the research took place in a single school district with a small population size represented serious concerns in terms of the extent to which outcomes may be generalized. These will remain as limitations to this study, but the incorporation of surveys used outside of the context which had been subjected to some degree of sound reliability and validity analysis, permitted statements of broad implications related to the new evaluation instrument, or at least to the perceptions that the participants have about it. At minimum, survey results and related information obtained via qualitative methods positively contributed to the overall knowledge base requisite for a sound decision about whether to move forward with the new instrument or not.

CHAPTER V

FINDINGS

Cycle I

At the inception of this action research, all administrators in my district and in the four sending municipalities of the regional school district serving students in grades pre-kindergarten through sixth (PK-6), were the population of this study. The 29 subjects consisted of 13 administrators employed in the regional district and 16 administrators employed in the four elementary districts. Although the overall results did not reveal a high level of satisfaction with existing administrator evaluation tool, analysis of disaggregated data did permit the conclusion that PK-6 leaders were more satisfied than their middle and high school counterparts. In terms of subsequent cycles, the population was limited to the 13 administrators of the regional district due to contracted employment status and to the specific results discussed herein.

The system for evaluating administrators in the regional district prior to this action research project was problematic for several reasons. It consisted of a single instrument linked to a generic administrator job description, did not include a process for conferencing between the evaluator and the evaluatee, and did not include a mechanism for self-reflection. The process was not linked to goals, professional development initiatives, student achievement, or standards-based leadership criteria. Ascertaining administrator satisfaction with the instrument and process was a fundamental purpose of

this project.

The plan of Cycle I was twofold: (1) to ascertain the administrators' satisfaction in my district and the sending districts with the existing evaluation instrument and process, and its perceived relationship to their job performance and professional growth; and (2) to analyze the retention trends of administrators in my district for the previous decade. A questionnaire survey and review of artifacts were the actions.

Cycle I addressed these sub-questions: (a) what was the level of satisfaction with the existing administrator evaluation instrument? (b) what format(s) (i.e., self-report, portfolio, standards-based) did administrators prefer?; and (c) to what extent did administrators perceive the existing evaluation process contributed to meaningful professional growth or performance improvement? Sub-question (a) examined the distinct themes of respondents' familiarity with both components and process associated with the existing evaluation instrument and the respondents' degree of satisfaction with the tool. This question was of high interest to me because the extent to which the respondents were satisfied with the existing instrument may have been a result of the process and not the components. Sub-question (b) solicited the subjects' preferred components within an administrative evaluation instrument; this information was used as a starting point for Cycle II. Sub-question (c) further probed the respondents' extent of satisfaction with the previous evaluation instrument specifically in the areas of professional growth and performance.

Data Analysis Plan. There was a 90% response rate, which translated to 26 of the 29 subjects in the population. The returned surveys were numbered and scanned for data edits and missing answers. Next, a quantitative analysis was conducted using

descriptive statistics.

Sub-question (a) reflected items 1-3 from the survey instrument (Appendix A).

Frequency Tables 1 - 3 were constructed and analyzed.

Table 1

Frequency of survey item 1: Cycle I

Procedural Components	YES	NO
Participated in a pre-conference	6	20
Participated in a post-conference	25	1
Composed a written self-assessment	12	13
Described evidence to document progress toward specific domains *(i.e., visionary, instructional, and strategic)*	18	8

Table 2

Frequency of survey item 2: Cycle I

Types of Formats Represented in Existing Instrument	*f*
Written narrative of commendations and recommendations	24
Written narrative of key roles and job performance tasks	13
Written narrative of leadership competencies, knowledge, dispositions, and skills	13
Checklist of job description criteria	11
Portfolio to include documents as evidence of mastery provided by the administrator	2
Target goal setting of student achievement outcomes	2
Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) standards	3
Self-assessment	7
360 – degree assessment (referred to as multisource feedback, full circle evaluation)	0
Rating of leadership elements/dimensions using a rubric with heading descriptors	0

Other. Please specify: 0

Table 3

Frequency of survey item 3: Cycle I

I am satisfied with my district's current administrative evaluation instrument.	
Strongly Agree	4
Agree	9
Neutral	5
Disagree	7
Strongly Disagree	1

Sub-question (b) represented item 6 from the survey questionnaire. Similarly,

frequency Table 4 was constructed and analyzed.

Table 4

Frequency of survey item 6: Cycle I

Types of Formats Represented in Preferred Instrument	*f*
Written narrative of commendations and recommendations	20
Written narrative of key roles and job performance tasks	9
Written narrative of leadership competencies, knowledge, dispositions, and skills	9
Checklist of job description criteria	4
Portfolio to include documents as evidence of mastery provided by the administrator	9
Target goal setting of student achievement outcomes	1
Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) standards	6
Self-assessment	7
360 – degree assessment (referred to as multisource feedback, full circle evaluation)	2

Rating of leadership elements/dimensions using a rubric with heading descriptors		3
Other. Please specify:		0

Sub-question (c) addressed items 4 and 5 from the questionnaire instrument. Frequency Tables 5 and 6 were also constructed and analyzed.

Table 5

Frequency of survey item 4: Cycle I

Do your existing administrative evaluations contribute to each professional growth area?	Very Much	Much	Some	None
Vision for leading and learning	10	5	8	3
Ethical behavior: leading with integrity	9	4	7	6
Sustaining an inclusive culture for learning	11	4	8	3
Collaboration with families and community to foster learning	10	4	9	5
Leading within the context of public education	9	6	8	3
Managing the learning community	10	3	10	3
Integrating technology to enhance learning and school management	9	5	7	5

Table 6

Frequency of survey item 5: Cycle I

Do your existing administrative evaluations contribute to your improved performance for each area?	Very Much	Much	Some	None
Evaluation criteria specific to job description	7	6	9	3
Correlation with professional improvement plan (PIP)	9	3	10	4
Relationship to ISLLC standards	8	1	11	6

Survey findings. A comprehensive depiction of data for 26 respondents is located in Appendix A.

Survey items 1 and 2. Existing administrative evaluation processes and formats in the five participating districts were assessed via survey items 1 and 2 and reported using valid percentages. Only 23% of respondents participated in a pre-conference, with a notable majority of 96% participating in a post-conference. There was no clear majority in terms of a written self-assessment (48% affirmative), although 69% of respondents are required to describe evidence to support progress towards the domains of visionary, instructional, or strategic. A comparative analysis between respondents from the PK-6 districts and the receiving regional district, which serves students in grades 7-12, revealed that the pre-conference process is used less frequently at the PK-6 districts (9% versus 36%) but that these administrators were more likely to compose a self-assessment (73% versus 31%). All PK-6 respondents reported that they describe evidence of progress towards the aforesaid domains.

Major components used in the five districts were clearly characterized by a written narrative of commendations and recommendations (96%), and were also comprised of a written list of key roles and job performance tasks (52%), a written narrative of leadership competencies, knowledge, dispositions, and skills (52%), and a checklist of job description criteria (44%). Only 28% of respondents were evaluated through a self-assessment component. All other formats were indicated at a rate of less than 15%. Key differences between PK-6 and regional (grades 7-12) administrative groups indicated that the latter group was more likely to receive evaluative feedback via a written narrative of key roles and performance tasks (71% versus 27%) and a checklist of

job description criteria (57% versus 27%). In contrast, PK-6 administrators were evaluated through self-assessment on a more frequent basis (55% versus 7%).

Survey items 3 to 5. Satisfaction with existing administrative evaluation instruments, measured by survey item 3, varied between the PK-6 and 7-12 groups, with 73% of PK-6 administrators indicating *agreement* (46%) or *strong agreement* (27%). Conversely, 50% of grades 7-12 administrators indicated *disagreement* (43%) or *strong disagreement* (7%) in terms of satisfaction.

Survey item 4 referenced the ISLLC 2008 standards relative to respondents' perceptions of the relationship between their evaluation instruments and professional growth. It is noted that only 12% of respondents reported that these standards were used within their evaluation instrument. Results obtained in response to item 4 revealed little differences across the standards. A notable difference emerged between the two administrative groups, with the PK-6 leaders indicating a much stronger relationship between the evaluation instrument and professional growth. The response option of *very much* was selected by this group 68% of the time versus 16% of the time for the middle and high school group.

The relationship between administrative evaluation instruments and improved performance was investigated through survey item 5. Although overall results did not establish a clear picture of respondents' perception, the elementary administrative group again selected the response option of *very much* at a higher rate than the 7-12 group. Specifically, 64% indicated a strong relationship between the instrument and their professional improvement plan (versus14%), 55% indicated a strong relationship between the instrument and ISLLC standards (versus 14%), and 50% indicated a strong

relationship between the instrument and evaluation criteria specific to job description (versus 14%).

Survey item 6. A mirror of survey item 2 was revealed in item 6 in terms of response options, with the key difference being the administrative evaluation format(s) used versus the format(s) preferred. A written narrative of commendations and recommendations again emerged as the most selected response option (77%), with three additional options selected at a rate of 35%. These included a written narrative of key roles and job performance tasks, a written narrative of leadership competencies, knowledge, dispositions, and skills, and a portfolio of documents as evidence of mastery. PK-6 administrators had a stronger preference for a written narrative of commendations and recommendations (91% versus 64%), while the regional administrators indicated a stronger preference for a written narrative of leadership competencies, knowledge, dispositions, and skills (50% versus 18%), and a written narrative of key roles and job performance tasks (43% versus 18%).

Survey items 7 to 10. These items collected demographic data and due to the straightforward nature of these results, they are presented in Table 7.

Table 7
Demographics of Respondents

Gender	Male	Female			
	50%	50%			
Grades of students enrolled in current administrative position	PK-6	MS (7–8)	HS (9-12)	Regional (7-12)	
	44%	12%	24%	20%	
Years administrative experience	Less than 4	4 – 8	9 – 13	14 – 18	19+
	44%	20%	20%	4%	12%
Years teaching & administrative	4 – 8	9 – 13	14 –	19 – 23	24+

experience					
			18		
	12%	44%	4%	16%	24%

Question findings. The degree to which respondents were satisfied with the

process and instrument used for administrator evaluation was a fundamental

consideration in decisions related to the need for, and certainly the extent of, change. It

was also impossible to interpret survey data without speculating about respondents'

familiarity with various instrument components, their knowledge of current literature and

research in the broad area of administrator evaluation, and the relationship between the

instrument used and their satisfaction with the evaluative results. The possibility that

respondents' satisfaction   was more a function of whether they were rated in a positive

or negative manner than   of the instrument itself emerged as an area of focus for Cycle

II early in the data   analysis process.

Strong feelings regarding overall satisfaction with the administrative evaluation

components(s) did not emerge on either end of the scale, although as previously noted, a

higher level of satisfaction was found among the PK- 6 leadership group. These

administrators were also more likely to engage in self-assessment and to describe

evidence of progress towards specific domains. This distinction was not reflected in their

preferred evaluation format(s), and their findings indicated a strong desire for evaluator-

driven narratives of commendations and recommendations. The PK-6 administrators

were characterized by fewer years of experience, with more than half of the respondents

(55%) having fewer than four years in a leadership position.

It was evident that traditional evaluation instruments are used at each of the five

districts and that post-conference discussion of written narratives constituted the norm for

process. It may have been relevant to ascertain the degree to which district superintendents are familiar with current research related to this topic, particularly in terms of contemporary emphasis on standards-based evaluation processes (Reeves, 2009), the role of self-assessment (Russo, 2004), and the relationship between professional development and performance proficiency (Elmore, 2005).

The issue of what type of administrator evaluation format(s) preferred was the basis of question (b). It was common for evaluation tools to consist of several primary components and, as a result, respondents were requested to check a maximum of three preferred formats. More than 3 out of 4 respondents indicated their most preferred component was a written narrative of commendations and recommendations, with just over a third choosing the format options of a written narrative of key roles an job performance tasks, a written narrative of leadership competencies, knowledge, dispositions, and skills, and a portfolio provided by the administrator.

Research in the area of PLC speaks to the importance of teachers engaged in purposeful dialogue about student data and about making progress toward identified benchmarks. It is notable that only one respondent chose the option related to goal setting of student achievement outcomes. This was in stark contrast to the State of New Jersey's initiatives of PLCs and the mandate that schools establish and administer interim benchmarks to monitor progress of student achievement. This finding appeared inconsistent with researchers DuFour and Eaker (1998) who strongly encouraged educators to establish PLCs in their districts. Similarly, only two respondents preferred a component that incorporated the rating of leadership dimensions through the use of a

rubric, often supported as best practice in evaluation research (Danielson & McGreal, 2000; Pollock & Ford, 2009).

Although the overall results indicated a clear preference for traditional, narrative-based, and evaluator-driven formats, further analysis of differences between existing and preferred components revealed findings of interest when considering elementary versus middle and high school leaders. The PK-6 respondents expressed a decreased interest in retaining a written narrative of commendations and recommendations (-9%), and of leadership competencies, knowledge, dispositions, and skills (-28%) in a preferred assessment tool. However, the elementary administrators indicated a 27% interest in the inclusion of a portfolio component that contains documents as evidence of mastery provided by the administrator. This may be notable in that this evaluation component does not consistently exist in the design of their current assessment tool.

Results of administrators of grades 7-12 revealed similar patterns of declining interests in their existing evaluation format(s), with decreased percentages reported for a narrative of key roles and job performance tasks (-28%), a checklist of job description criteria (-36%), and a written narrative of commendations and recommendations (-29%). Specific to this group of leaders were increases of 22% for a preferred instrument that also includes the ISLLC standards and self-assessment, and a 29% increase to include a portfolio of documents as evidence of mastery. These results suggested an overall preference for an administrator evaluation instrument that includes more contemporary and multiple measures of performance assessment.

The relationship between administrator evaluation and professional growth, and between administrator evaluation and improved performance, formed the basis of

question (c). Respondents selected the stem options of *very much* or *much* an average of only 37% and 17% times respectively, suggesting that a definitive and meaningful relationship between evaluation and professional growth has not been established in the districts participating in this investigation. Differences between PK-6 administrators and those in the middle and high school district again emerged with the PK-6 group indicating a strong relationship at a rate approximately four times that of their grades 7-12 counterparts.

As previously indicated, the construct of professional growth was depicted on the survey via a list of the ISLLC standards. These standards did not represent key elements of either currently utilized or even preferred evaluation formats, suggesting that the data do not permit meaningful interpretive considerations about the relationship between performance assessment and professional growth. The degree to which respondents were familiar with ISLLC standards or whether they recognized survey items as representative of these standards was unknown. More important, it can be postulated that neither the administrators surveyed nor their superintendents had an appreciable understanding of research that establishes the importance of linking professional growth with performance assessment (Van Meter & McMinn, 2001).

Similar results were obtained regarding the relationship between administrator evaluation and improved performance, with aggregate data revealing low frequency rates on the *very much* (mean of 3%) and *much* (mean of 13%) response stems. Again, differences were found when looking at data for the PK-6 administrators, over half of whom indicated relationships between their evaluation and their job description,

performance improvement plan, and ISLLC standards. In contrast, grades 7-12 leaders did not report a relationship between their evaluations and these performance indicators.

Artifact findings. The retention and succession of building and district administrative positions were examined from September 2000 through September 2010 for eight distinct titles: high school principal, middle school principal, high school assistant principal, middle school assistant principal, director of athletics, director of special services, director of counseling, and director of instruction. Each title was coded and analyzed by unduplicated count, turnover rate, maximum consecutive years employed, and reasons for transfer and/or exit.

Table 8 summarizes the results of unduplicated count, turnover rate, and maximum consecutive years for each title, and revealed that all but one titled position has been held by a minimum of two individuals for the past decade. Analysis of the building administrative positions of principal and assistant principal indicated the most significant change in terms of number of persons holding these titles, although the multiple titleholders at the assistant principal position included at least one member in each building with longevity exceeding that of either principal. Turnover rate, which may be a more meaningful element of the data relative to independence from number of titleholders, indicated similar findings for high school principal and both assistant principal positions. The position of middle school principal has been markedly more stable among the building level administrators. District administrative positions with a director title were more stable, with fewer individuals in the positions, a lower rate of turnover, and more years in the position.

Table 8

Administrative Positions School Years 2000-2010

Title (Number of Positions)	Unduplicated Count	Turnover Rate	Maximum Consecutive Years
Principal HS (1)	5	45%	3
Principal MS (1)	3	27%	4
Asst. Principal HS[1] (2; 3)	12	41%	5
Asst. Principal MS[2] (1; 2; 1)	8	44%	6
Director of Athletics (1)	2	18%	7
Director of Special Services (1)	1	0%	10
Director of Counseling (1)	3	27%	7
Director of Instruction[3] (1; 2; 3)	10	38%	5

[1] 2005 added a 3rd position
[2] 2004-2009 added a 2nd position; 2010 reduced to 1 position
[3] 2001-2005 added a 2nd position; 2006 added a 3rd position

An analysis of reasons for turnover is summarized in Table 9, which included each title and all possible determinants of departure from the position. The data did not readily expose patterns or trends, but suggested several interesting findings relative to future hiring, retention, and professional development practices. In the category of demotion, further analysis indicated that 3 of the 4 instances were due to budget cuts and the resulting move from an administrative to a position of lower rank. The other

demotion, related to performance, had implications in the area of hiring, training, and

decisions related to tenure. Ten instances of promotion represented a significant

percentage of turnover, although further analysis is required to ascertain the number of

those who advanced within the district versus those who chose to accept employment

elsewhere. The category of nonrenewal was represented by the highest percentage of

turnover, with 12 individuals over the past decade not offered a contract for the

subsequent year. The majority of these fell within the title of instructional director (six),

with an additional three nonrenewal instances in the position of assistant principal of the

high school. This finding had notable implications in terms of hiring, training, and

professional development.

Table 9

Reasons for Transfers/Exits

Title	Promotion	Non-renewal	Left Profession	Demotion	Lateral Position	Retirement
Principal HS	2	0	0	2	0	0
Principal MS	2	0	0	0	0	1
Asst. Principal HS	4	3	0	0	3	0
Asst. Principal MS	1	2	2	2	0	0
Director of Athletics	0	0	0	0	0	1
Director Special Services	0	0	0	0	0	0
Director of Counseling	0	1	0	0	1	0
Director of Instruction	1	6	0	0	0	0

Cycle II

As a result of Cycle I findings, I expanded my hypothesis to conclude that the formal evaluation of administrators in the regional school district did not receive adequate attention in terms of staff orientation or professional development. In broad terms, the results of the survey (Appendix A) administered in Cycle I revealed that administrators were not satisfied with the previous instrument, did not perceive a relationship between the evaluation process and performance competence, and did not consider district initiatives to be a factor in how they are evaluated. A logical starting point emerged in the need to determine perceptions and preferences surrounding integral components of an evaluation tool for school leaders. It was also evident that administrative staff would benefit from examples of different types of leadership evaluation practices such as multi-source feedback systems (Dyer, 2001), portfolio and authentic performance assessment (Russo, 2004), and assessment tools linked to leadership standards (Shipman & Murphy, 2001).

Specifically, Cycle II was comprised of two objectives: (1) to increase the administrators' understanding of various types of evaluation instruments and the components included therein; and (2) to discuss further and identify the administrators' perceptions and preferences of key components comprising an effective evaluation instrument for school leaders. Actions consisted of observations, interviews, group activities, and document review.

Prior to scheduling observations or interviews with participants, I gathered sample administrative evaluations from nearby districts, artifacts available on the Internet, and exemplars from literature. Specific evaluation instrument components included: checklist with rating scale, written narrative, goal setting, self-assessment, portfolios, and rubric of leadership dimensions. These samples were intended to increase awareness of varied components used to assess the performance of school leaders and to address the following sub-questions: (d) what was the level of familiarity with various evaluation instruments and their components? (e) what are the perceived pros and cons associated with various instruments and their components? and (f) subsequent to increased familiarity with various instruments, to what extent do administrators believe the evaluation process contributes to meaningful professional growth or performance improvement?

Interview and observation protocol. An interview protocol was developed and used with assistant principals who I did not directly evaluate. Interview questions (Appendix B) addressed the narrative of their evaluation reports. I conducted interviews with four assistant principals over two weeks for approximately an hour each in the school building to which they were assigned. In order to maintain a relaxed setting, I met these subjects in their offices during lunch or other mutually convenient times. It was noted that this study represented another phase of the district initiative to analyze staff evaluation instruments and was not simply performed to meet the requirements of my doctoral coursework. All subjects were informed that the administrative evaluation instrument was the second tool analyzed, with the teachers' evaluation recently revised,

and routine discussion and activities associated with this district undertaking occurred at administrative council meetings.

Observation data were obtained via note taking while administrators reviewed and discussed the various evaluation samples. The participants were required to complete a T-chart of the pros and cons of each component, thus creating an additional document for further examination of perceptions and preferences. As a means of organizing information obtained through notes from observations and interviews as well as the written comments generated by the subjects, I developed eight categories (Title, Evaluation Instrument, Type of Component, Feedback, Involvement in Evaluation, Preference of Component/Part, Preference for Change of Existing Administrative Tool, and Extent of Familiarity with Component) and 36 subcategories or indicators to further define the data (Appendix C).

Observation of the entire administrative team occurred on two separate occasions, September 17, 2009 and October 1, 2009 for a total of 4.5 hours. Participant attendance ranged from 11 to 13 administrators due to absences. The stated purpose of the first meeting was threefold: (1) to share broad results from the survey that administrators participated in during the spring, (2) to become familiar with components of administrative evaluations, and (3) to assess the pros and cons of each component. The structure was: (a) I functioned as a participant-observer; (b) introductory remarks to establish context and state purposes; (c) electronic presentation; (d) small group activity; and (e) return to whole group for participants to discuss their experiences using the new teacher evaluation instrument.

The purpose of the follow-up meeting was described as twofold: (1) share and respond to the perspectives presented by each small group pertaining to components of administrative evaluations, and (2) to conduct routine business. The format was: (a) I functioned as a participant-observer; (b) introductory remarks and sharing activity [group responses to T-charts]; (c) housekeeping items relating to timelines for submission of proposed new courses, programs of studies for 2010-2011, and interim reports; and (d) monitoring updates from director of special services, principal of middle school, and the superintendent.

On September 30, 2009 data were also collected via a focus group comprised of four district directors, all of whom participated in the first large group meeting. The purpose of this two-hour gathering was to review and discuss the pros and cons of each sample evaluation tool that were identified by the large group. The structure of the focus group was: (a) I functioned as a participant-observer; (b) explanation of process to include question guide; (c) consent to tape record; and (d) discussion using a rotation. I purposely selected these directors to participate in a focus group as opposed to conducting individual interviews as a deliberate measure to reduce elements of bias and subjectivity because I directly evaluate them. Being mindful of my role as their evaluator, I developed a set of questions intended to preserve the integrity of the process and elicit responses that did not specifically address the narrative of their completed evaluation reports.

Observation findings. The aforesaid coding system (Appendix C) was applied to each of the methods of data collection, commencing with the two administrative team observations that were conducted in the general office conference room of the middle

school and the media center conference room of the high school respectively. This first

coding process also included data gleaned from the focus group with the district directors.

Data were first coded according to administrative title and the frequency of each

participant's commentary, which revealed that the instructional directors offered their

perspective more frequently than any other position. Conversely, the principals did not

participate actively during observation of either the large or small group discussions.

Ratings of sample instruments were coded in terms of existing versus ideal, with a strong

majority offering positive and enthusiastic commentary about a desired change in the

current process for evaluating administrators.

The most notable finding was a distinct dislike for checklists. While no

component emerged as a distinct frontrunner, goal setting had much interest. During the

second Academic Council meeting, both principals as primary evaluators and the

assistant principals and directors as evaluatees agreed to the benefits of incorporating

goal setting in the district's instrument. They stated, "keeps you focused," "your

evaluator can easily provide specific feedback or strategies for improvement," and

"shows progress throughout the year." The preference of this component was closely

followed by self-assessment, portfolio, narrative, and a leadership rubric. Coding

pertaining to the type of feedback provided to the administrator being evaluated was

inclusive, with similar preferences recorded for the areas of unique job tasks,

progress of annual goals, overall professional growth, leadership standards, and

artifact documentation.

In terms of participation in the evaluation process, an overwhelming majority of

participants indicated preference for an instrument and process that included reciprocity

between them and the evaluator. "I like the idea of being able to complete a self-assessment based on mutually agreed upon objectives and goals prior to my actual evaluation with my supervisor," stated a director with eight years experience. Relative to specific observation of reaction to the current administrator evaluation instrument, the majority of participants desire or are at least receptive to change. Finally, data were analyzed in terms of familiarity with a variety of administrator evaluation instruments. These findings indicated that most participants were either familiar or highly familiar, although several administrators indicated they were not familiar. Personal experience appeared to have an influence on each administrator's level of familiarity. For example, one director stated, "I think I am fairly familiar with the different components having just completed the Leaders-2-Leaders mentor program. In our cohort meetings, we discussed evaluations…we also discussed how our jobs related to the ISLLC standards."

Interview findings. As previously indicated, the identical coding process was applied to data obtained via interviews with four assistant principals, identified herein with the last four letters of the alphabet. The first interview with assistant principal W occurred on September 22, 2009 from 12:00 pm to 1:05 pm (65 minutes) in W's office and lunch was served during the session. The second interview with assistant principal X occurred on September 28, 2009 from 3:00 pm to 3:50 pm (50 minutes) in X's office and we both enjoyed bottles of water during the session. The third interview with assistant principal Y occurred on September 30, 2009 from 3:30 pm to 4:15 pm (45 minutes) in Y's office and we ate snacks during the session. The fourth interview with assistant principal Z occurred on October 2, 2009 from 1:30 pm to 2:20 pm (50 minutes) in Z's office and we had hot beverages during the session.

The coding application revealed that interview data were generally consistent with information gleaned through the observation process. However, these results more notably indicated a negative perception of evaluation instruments comprised of checklists or rating scales. In particular, assistant principal W remarked, "A checklist is not useful because it really does not give me any defining terms of what I need to do to better myself or give me strategies to improve." Assistant principal Y also conveyed a dislike for the checklist components with the comment, "I do know that the checklist was not useful because I do not think they pertain to my responsibilities here, they are more general statements." The previously identified preference for goal setting was even more distinct with this group; self-assessment and portfolios were also perceived as having value. Interestingly, there was little or no preference indicated for a narrative and rubric assessment compared to data from the entire administrative team.

In response to inquiry regarding the existing evaluation instrument, the assistant principals consistently indicated an absence of feedback associated with the process. This was particularly evident regarding unique job responsibilities and overall professional growth, and to some extent leadership standards and artifact documentation. Assistant principal Y expressed candidly overall perceptions of received evaluation reports with the statement, "To be honest, after the first evaluation I took the second two not as serious so I haven't committed them to memory." All four participants identified a relationship between the existing instrument and progress toward annual performance goals. The desire for a participative evaluation process was very strongly indicated in the data, although again this was not necessarily desired in the form of a pre- and post-conference

meeting. The overall data did not lend itself to coding application in the area of familiarity with different administrator evaluation components.

Discussion findings. Upon first glance, it appeared that all participants were actively and enthusiastically involved in the observation process and I was surprised that the coding application revealed that principals actually commented only on a minimal basis. They did represent a minority population in that their total of two was fewer than the total of five in each of the assistant principal and director representatives. It is also possible that because they evaluate the assistant principals and can potentially evaluate the directors, it resulted in their reluctance to participate openly.

In accordance with previously gathered survey data, the results in Cycle II were conclusive relative to a desire for change and there was again a conclusive consensus that a checklist evaluation format was not desired. The absence of a clear frontrunner in terms of preference indicated that more professional development was needed before drawing defining conclusions. Perceptions and preferences remained somewhat unclear regarding options such as goal setting, rubric, self-assessment, portfolio, and narrative formats. Completed samples may help the group to develop stronger opinions regarding the merits of different options, and therefore I obtained completed documents both from outside sources and via internal simulated completion of samples.

The related issue of familiarity may also explain the absence of a clear preference regarding evaluation format, and again substantiates the need for additional professional development. On positive note, the degree and depth of familiarity appeared to be much improved since the beginning of the research study. Other than checklist and narrative varieties, the group did not appear to have knowledge of other types of evaluation

formats discussed here. Subsequent to the activities described, collegial dialogue regarding the topic comfortably included self-assessment and goal setting.

Regardless of the type of evaluation format, it was clear that participatory methods were highly desired in terms of both instrument and process. Participants also indicated they did not have a high regard for traditional pre- and post-conference elements and it was likely additional time will need to be devoted to exploring alternatives for increasing meaningful interactions between the evaluator and evaluatee, or perhaps between the person being evaluated and the document used for that purpose. This is among the most salient findings of this research project, with comments regarding the desire to have input in the process emerging with both frequency and passion, and from both new administrators and those who have held leadership positions for many years.

The expressed need to participate in the process, in conjunction with a frequently stated desire for feedback, appeared to be related in administrators' uncertainty that they are meeting expectations or competencies. This finding provided additional evidence that the existing checklist format did not provide evaluative information that was meaningful, and was likely to result in status quo even in situations in which an evaluator desires some degree of change. This was particularly notable with regard to the less experienced administrators who verbalized frustration with the existing process, in which they did not have opportunity to provide information, and which does not result in feedback that they can use to either validate current functions or to correct possible problem areas that are not reflected, simply due to the constraints of the evaluation tool and process.

Overall, there were positive findings to continue with this study. The participants appeared very interested in the topic and authentically committed to change the existing evaluation instrument and process. I was especially pleased that two directors and one assistant principal voiced an interest in serving on a committee to construct a new administrative evaluation tool. I was also encouraged that participants expressed an interest in formats that are more time consuming, and often more complicated, expressing a willingness to exchange the ease of a checklist for the benefit of rich information gleaned from alternatives of goal setting, rubric, and/or portfolio. The fact that both new and veteran leaders desired a participatory process strongly indicated that the majority of these subjects wanted to improve, to learn from each other, and to have an ongoing and positive impact across diverse areas of district functions.

Cycle III

The activities and subsequent findings of Cycle II provided a solid foundation for the final phases of the research project. Cycle III was multifaceted from its inception in February 2010. The objectives for Cycle III were: (1) to develop an evaluation instrument and process for administrators in my district based on results of the previous research cycles and in conjunction with the ISLLC 2008 policy standards; (2) to fully familiarize the administrators with their new evaluation instrument and process from both the roles of evaluator and recipient; and (3) to assess the administrators' perceptions of and satisfaction with the previous and new tool and process. Activities included administration of two surveys on two separate occasions, extensive subcommittee work, consultation with field expert Dr. Reeves, in-service with the entire administrative team, presentation to the board of education personnel committee, and committee work

for evaluators.

Subcommittee work. An outcome of Cycle II was the formation of a subcommittee comprised of administrators interested in collaboratively revising the evaluation tool and process. Although interest to participate on a subcommittee was sought at multiple academic council meetings, a separate electronic correspondence was sent in January 2010 to ascertain which administrators were truly interested in serving on this committee. It was essential to have a critical mass of stakeholders involved in this change project. Not surprisingly, 7 of the 13 administrators volunteered as subcommittee members.

Participants reflected both ethnic and gender diversity: six females and two males, one African American, one Middle Eastern/Hispanic, and six Caucasians. The job titles reflected three instructional directors, one special services director, two assistant principals, one principal, and me as the assistant superintendent. Moreover, 2 of the 8 members also served as 2 of the 3 evaluators for the administrative staff, and all positions within the administration were represented.

There were 13 subcommittee meetings that occurred within a five-month span beginning February 3, 2010 and concluding June 25, 2010. My role during each meeting was: (a) functioned as a participant-observer; (b) developed and presented the agendas and documents; and (c) established and maintained the meeting calendar. The first meeting held on February 3, 2010 clearly defined the committee's purposes to collaborate throughout this change project, incorporate the key concepts from the results of Cycle II, and develop an evaluation instrument and process for endorsement by the entire administrative team with subsequent approval by the superintendent.

Although all subcommittee meetings were productive, the initial session was most memorable as evidenced by the exchange of candid viewpoints, the succinct time allotment, and the sequence and types of activities included. During the first session the subcommittee (1) discussed broad results from the survey conducted in Cycle I and the collective points that emerged from the qualitative activities of Cycle II, (2) became better acquainted with relevant literature, and in particular, the ISLLC 2008 policy standards, and (3) analyzed two sample evaluation instruments. While reflecting upon the initial meeting, I was reminded that Reeves (2009) presents a convincing argument for school leaders when reframing change with the assertion, "Leaders [They] gain buy-in through getting results that demonstrate that the effect of change is in the best interest of all stakeholders" (p. 86). At that point in the action research process, it was evident that this subcommittee of administrators were committed to change.

During the last portion of the first meeting, participants expressed their views pertaining to sample documents. The two documents represented components desired by the administrators as part of the findings from Cycle II. One example, a formative evaluation, consisted of three major sections to include job performance responsibilities, leadership dimensions, and commendations and recommendations. These responsibilities were the exact criteria from the job descriptions, the leadership dimensions consisted of Likert ratings described in a detailed rubric, and the last section was a narrative of commendations and recommendations authored by the evaluator. The process applied to the leadership dimension section involved a self-assessment by the person being evaluated and then a collaborative conference comparing the subject's ratings with the

evaluator's ratings that were independently completed. There was also the provision for multiple evaluators to provide input.

The other document was a summative evaluation also consisting of three separate sections: a description of artifacts relating to the ISLLC standards, a summary pertaining to the leadership dimensions, and a professional improvement plan. It is an intensely participatory process for both parties; a desire for increased participation was a significant finding from the previous research cycle. The administrator being evaluated assumed responsibility for submission of evidence relating to the ISLLC standards and completed a written draft of the first section, consistent with a portfolio component. Deliberately, the evaluator completed solely the middle section that described the administrator's progress toward the leadership dimensions. The final section had two subparts where the administrator described progress of his/her last year's professional goals and then developed jointly with the evaluator professional goals for the upcoming school year. The reactions from the participants were extremely positive and productive. They stated how these two evaluation documents incorporated the desired components as well as increased the participation of the administrator being evaluated.

The next four meetings, February 17, 2010 through March 29, 2010, continued with an intensive review of 10 different evaluation instruments that were a combination of documents used in nearby districts and exemplars obtained from the Internet. A template was developed and used collectively by the group to permit a systematic record of the benefits and limitations of components contained in each sample. The components listed on the template represented the major components as described in the literature base (i.e., narrative, checklist, portfolio, goal setting, self-assessment, rubric, ISLLC,

relationship to student achievement, full circle evaluation, and other). Although it was apparent that there was not a single document depicting the desired elements of this administration, the subcommittee determined that components from at least two of the samples could be customized to satisfy the administration's collective needs.

The remaining eight committee meetings were conducted between May 5, 2010 and June 25, 2010. The tasks addressed during these two months consisted of the inspection of and revision to all job performance responsibilities for each administrative title and the development of nine leadership dimensions and detailed indicators. Reeves' (2009) multidimensional leadership assessment (MLA) matrix was the framework used by the subcommittee to develop the rubric of nine leadership dimensions and 20 indicators. At this point, the subcommittee completed the final draft of the new administrative evaluation instrument comprised of two sections: job performance responsibilities and leadership dimensions. The next step involved a presentation to the entire administration during a summer retreat.

Field expert. The critique by field expert, Douglas Reeves, PhD (personal communication, August 15, 2010) provided the subcommittee an unbiased perspective on the draft product prior to examination by the district's entire administration. The services of   Dr. Reeves were secured in February 2010 via email during which he granted authorization to use 10 survey items from his organization's 2002 National Leadership survey. Dr. Reeves offered several points that the committee considered and subsequently they incorporated two of his references into the product. He recommended "extending the comment page to include an opportunity for the person being evaluated to submit evidence – not just comments – of particularly strong performance in order to justify an

'exemplary' rating" (personal communication, August 15, 2010). This recommendation was accomplished through the modifications of the directions of part two. Reeves second recommendation pertained to the section of job performance responsibilities.

> Part I of the instrument appears to be binary – either someone is
> "professional competent" or they are not. I would dissent from that
> point of view, as the rest of the instrument illustrates clearly that there
> is a range of competencies in each of those categories. When
> evaluations are binary, then only the very worst performance is called
> out, and a lot of mediocre performance is called "professionally
> competent." (Reeves, personal communication, August 15, 2010)

The committee decided to maintain the intent of the first section, and in response to Dr. Reeves' advisory remark, an in-service for evaluators was scheduled after draft evaluation reports were composed, but prior to conferencing with recipients. This mechanism was intended to reinforce a consistent interpretation of the document and to increase inter-rater reliability.

In-services. Two professional development sessions occurred during the 2010 summer administrative retreat on July 27, 2010 and August 18, 2010 in which the evaluation instrument and process were introduced and deliberated by the administration. The first session focused on job performance responsibilities for each position and consisted of small group activities followed by a whole group forum. There were two small groups separated by job titles: five directors in one group, and assistant principals and principals in the other group. The task was to review the responsibilities for each job title represented in the other group for perceived accuracy in terms of selected action verb

(i.e., provides visionary leadership… or supports the visionary leadership). Suggestions for change were recorded as colored text on the electronic files.

After an hour the groups exchanged the files for further inspection and debate by the opposite group. During the second hour, each group discussed the suggested edits on their job descriptions as perceived by their colleagues and decided to accept, discard, or modify the recommendations. Lively and constructive professional conversations ensued. The final activity consisted of a whole group forum discussing and finalizing the job performance responsibilities of all positions. At the conclusion, the three activities resulted in an increased understanding of performance tasks for each administrative position within the district, a clearer understanding of the district's organizational hierarchy for decision making, a more cohesive administrative team, and minor modifications of job descriptions to present to the board of education's (BOE) personnel committee for endorsement and approval. On August 30, 2010, the BOE unanimously approved these job descriptions, which were incorporated into Part I of the new evaluation instrument.

The second administrative retreat session on August 18, 2010 was devoted to reflection upon and examination of the leadership dimensions and indicators within the rubric. The group initially reviewed the rubric in small committees and as a large group the language and meaning was clarified further and revised to yield a final document (Appendix D). Throughout this session, it was evident by the members' feedback and body language that they understood the actions described within the rubric to achieve the various designations of *exemplary*, *proficient*, *progressing*, or *not meeting standards* on the continuum.

On September 23, 2010 the new evaluation instrument, rubric, and process was presented and explained at an academic council meeting. Members were instructed to complete a self-assessment of the instrument and to anticipate a scheduled meeting with their respective evaluator, which was the person of direct report, within the upcoming weeks. As a measure of inter-rater reliability, the three evaluators met in early November with the superintendent to collaboratively discuss drafts of evaluations reports and to further refine the process and intent of the parts within the evaluation instrument. All post conferences were conducted by November 23, 2010.

Surveys. Two surveys were administered as pre- and post- assessments in Cycle III: an intact survey, a National Leadership Evaluation survey, used in 2002 by Reeves (2009) and a varied iteration of a survey by Jeanmarie (2008) and Durecki-Elkins (1996), which focused on an educator's perceptions of performance appraisals in their school districts. At the inception of Cycle III there were 12 respondents to both of the pre-surveys. During the administration of the post- surveys, which occurred 10 months later, the population had decreased from 12 to 11 participants, and there was also a change of three administrators. Although the three new administrators responded to the post-surveys, it was noted that only 8 of the 12 original respondents completed both the pre- and post- surveys. The retention and succession of administrators resulted from varied reasons as

outlined in Cycle I. One of the three evaluators also changed from the administration of the pre-survey.

Intact survey. A recap from the methodology chapter states that the 10 leadership perception statements from the National Leadership survey were included in this research

study. The National Leadership survey was conducted from March to September 2002 with a nonrandom sample of 510 leaders from 21 states to ascertain demographic, attitudinal ratings, and descriptive data from school administrators about their evaluation instrument and process (Reeves, 2009). Table 10 compared the results from this action research project to the published results. Appendix E illustrates a detailed analysis.

Although post- survey results for 9 of the 10 leadership perceptions reflected an increase from the pre-assessment and the results of the national survey, statement nine (*The leadership evaluations I have received were based on clear standards that I knew would be the focus of my evaluation.*) represented the highest increases from the pre-survey to the post- survey (+83.3%) and also from the post- survey compared to the results of the national survey (+46%). This marked increased may be a direct outcome of the respondents' improved understanding of the new instrument resulting from an in-service training and clarification of the components by the evaluator during post conferences. Conversely, statement five, which addressed that *evaluations received are generally positive*, represented the only decrease in perception rating from the pre-survey to the post-survey (-9.9%) and also from the post- survey to the results of the national survey (-7.2%). The change in evaluators and respondents suggested these variances.

Table 10
National Leadership Survey: Research Population (Pre- & Post-) and National Results

Leadership Perception	Agree or Strongly Agree (pre-)	Agree or Strongly Agree (post-)	National Leadership Survey
1. The leadership evaluations I have received helped me to improve my performance.	25%	90.9%	58%
2. The leadership evaluations I have received improved my personal	25%	100%	60%

motivation.			
3. The leadership evaluations I have received were directly related to the mission and vision of our school system.	8.3%	81.8%	65%
4. The leadership evaluations I have received were related to student achievement results.	16.7%	63.6%	47%
5. The leadership evaluations I have received are generally positive.	91.7%	81.8%	89%
6. The leadership evaluations I have received were consistent with my original expectations for my job.	41.7%	100%	76%
7. The leadership evaluations I have received were accurate.	41.7%	100%	79%
8. The leadership evaluations I have received were specific – I knew exactly how to improve performance and exactly what performance I should continue.	25%	90.8%	47%
9. The leadership evaluations I have received were based on clear standards that I knew would be the focus of my evaluation.	16.7%	100%	54%
10. During my last evaluation, I had the opportunity to make suggestions to improve organizational support for me and my colleagues.	41.7%	80.8%	46%

Modified survey. Table 11 organized the modified survey by category and indicators and the survey results of both administrations (February 4, 2010 and November 23/24, 2010).

A composite mean score was calculated for each of the 32 questionnaire items for both the pre-survey (2.8) and post-survey (3.9) as well as for each item (Appendix F). The mean of 2.8 for the pre-survey in terms of the corresponding Likert scale rating approached an overall *neutral* response as compared to the mean of 3.9 for the post-survey which suggested an overall *agreeable* response. There were 19 or 59.4% items

from the post-survey with a mean of 4.0 or greater, which further supported the *agreeable* perceptions of the respondents. It is also noted that no item on the pre-survey reflected a mean of 4.0 or greater. Questionnaire item 3 (*The specific objectives on which performance is being assessed were discussed prior to the evaluation process*.) indicated the highest mean of 4.7 from the post-survey results.

With respect to three categories of *tool*, *growth and development*, and *appraiser*, 9 of the 11 indicators within *tool* had a mean of 4.0 or greater. Although item 27 (*The school district monitors the progress of the administrator not meeting standards*.) with a mean of 3.9 was one-tenth below the rating *agree*, item 8 (*The central office in my school district does not clearly define its evaluation policy*.) revealed a contrasting point. The mean for item 8 on the pre-survey of 3.1 was greater than the mean calculated on the post-survey of 2.9. It is unclear as to the suggested rationale for this decrease from the pre-administration to the post-administration.

Interestingly, the findings on the post-survey for each of the five indicators within the category of *appraiser* had a mean of 4.1 or greater. The mean for the five indicators on the pre-survey was 2.9, which suggested a *neutral* perception of the appraiser. As stated previously, one of the three evaluators was new to the district.

The results from the pre-survey to the post-survey revealed discernible increases of agreement from the respondents in all three categories of growth and development, tool, and appraiser. The ranges of aggregate results reflecting the ratings of *agree* and *strongly agree* for the nine distinct category and indicator combinations are 54.5% to 93.9%. Both noticeable and favorable attitudinal percentages increased in the categories of tool and appraiser. The highest rating of 93.9% (*agree* and *strongly agree*) for the

category of tool with the indicator of input represented an increase of 85.6%. This same

category and indicator combination also revealed a significant decrease of 72% for the

ratings of *strongly disagree* to *disagree* from the pre- to post- survey (75% to 3%). This

notable increase suggested a direct relationship to the work of the subcommittee, which is

described in a subsequent heading.

Percentages for the rating of *neutral* increased for 3 of the 4 indicators within the

category of growth and development subsequent to the post- survey. These increased

percentages (24.7%, 21.8%, and 18.2%) may suggest that it was premature for the

respondents to commit to either a favorable or unfavorable rating. The *neutral* rating

for the categories and indicators of tool and appraiser all indicated decreased percentages

with the combination of appraiser and objectivity representing the largest decrease

of 24.2%.

Table 11

Modified Survey by Category

Category: Growth and Development; goal setting		
1.	The evaluation instrument and process helps develop better communication between the evaluator and evaluatee.	
2.	The evaluation instrument and process provide time for feedback from the evaluator to the evaluatee on job performance.	
14.	The evaluation process is essential in setting organizational goals.	
	Pre-survey Category %	Post-survey Category %
1 (SD)	13.9 %	0.0 %
2 (D)	19.4 %	9.1 %
3 (N)	16.7 %	6.1 %
4 (A)	41.7 %	39.4 %
5 (SA)	8.3 %	45.5 %

Category: Growth and Development; performance outcomes

7.	Evaluations influence job effectiveness.
9.	A negative evaluation could affect my job performance.
10.	I believe that job commitment is related to the results of the evaluation process.
11.	A positive change has occurred in my job performance based on the performance evaluation.
19.	I acquired knowledge applicable to my job from the information gained by the performance evaluation process.
22.	My evaluation examines progress toward district and school level goals and initiatives.
23.	The administrator is held accountable for providing effective leadership for student achievement.

	Pre-survey Category %	Post-survey Category %
1 (SD)	15.5 %	0.0 %
2 (D)	26.2 %	11.7 %
3 (N)	15.5 %	24.7 %
4 (A)	38.1 %	44.2 %
5 (SA)	4.8 %	19.5 %

Category: Growth and Development; personal development		
20.	As a result of the performance evaluation process, I experienced an improvement in my attitude that resulted in improved job performance.	
29.	Because the evaluation process is established, I feel a greater commitment to achieving the objectives of my job.	
30.	The school district provides professional development based on data collected from the administrators' evaluations.	
31.	The district's professional development concentrates on important skill sets dealing with leadership.	
32.	I receive meaningful professional development for administrators in our school district.	

	Pre-survey Category %	Post-survey Category %
1 (SD)	20.0 %	3.6 %
2 (D)	38.3 %	20.0 %
3 (N)	10.0 %	21.8 %
4 (A)	31.7 %	52.7 %
5 (SA)	0.0 %	1.8 %

Category: Growth and Development; remediation		
26.	The school district provides assistance to the administrator not meeting standards.	

	Pre-survey Category %	Post-survey Category %
1 (SD)	16.7 %	0.0 %

2 (D)	25.0 %	9.1 %
3 (N)	16.7 %	18.2 %
4 (A)	41.7 %	45.5 %
5 (SA)	0.0 %	27.3 %

Category: Tool; input	
3.	The specific objectives on which performance is being assessed were discussed prior to the evaluation process.
4.	The specific objectives on which performance is being assessed were mutually agreed upon.
6.	The evaluation process, as used in this school district, allows for input in its design.

	Pre-survey Category %	Post-survey Category %
1 (SD)	16.7 %	0.0 %
2 (D)	58.3 %	3.0 %
3 (N)	16.7 %	3.0 %
4 (A)	8.3 %	33.3 %
5 (SA)	0.0 %	60.6 %

Category: Tool; instrument	
5.	The format used for evaluation was created by the school district.

	Pre-survey Category %	Post-survey Category %
1 (SD)	8.3 %	0.0 %
2 (D)	16.7 %	0.0 %
3 (N)	25.0 %	9.1 %
4 (A)	33.3 %	36.4 %
5 (SA)	16.7 %	54.5 %

Category: Tool; process	
8.	The central office in my school district does not clearly define its evaluation policy.
15.	The time scheduled for evaluations has been mutually agreed upon by both parties.
16.	The frequency of evaluations is appropriate.
17.	The evaluation process provides adequate time for visitations by the evaluator.
18.	The evaluation process provides adequate time for feedback.
21.	The performance evaluation system is based on a systematic examination of the job being evaluated.
27.	The school district monitors the progress of the administrator not meeting standards.

	Pre-survey	Post-survey

	Category %	Category %
1 (SD)	14.3 %	1.3 %
2 (D)	32.1 %	7.8 %
3 (N)	8.3 %	10.4 %
4 (A)	44.0 %	54.5 %
5 (SA)	1.2 %	26.0 %

Category: Appraiser; unbiased response	
12.	The evaluation process allows for open discussion between the evaluator and the evaluatee regarding evaluation performance.
13.	The evaluation process is essential in setting individual goals.

	Pre-survey Category %	Post-survey Category %
1 (SD)	12.5 %	0.0 %
2 (D)	25.0 %	9.1 %
3 (N)	16.7 %	0.0 %
4 (A)	41.7 %	45.5 %
5 (SA)	4.2 %	45.5 %

Category: Appraiser; objectivity	
24.	Accountability standards by which administrators are evaluated are fair.
25.	The evaluation system holds all administrators to the same standards.
28.	The evaluation system is based on an objective examination of the job being analyzed.

	Pre-survey Category %	Post-survey Category %
1 (SD)	8.3 %	0.0 %
2 (D)	27.8 %	0.0 %
3 (N)	33.3 %	9.1 %
4 (A)	30.6 %	63.6 %
5 (SA)	0.0 %	27.3 %

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

This dissertation project was conducted for purposes of changing the formal

evaluation for school administrators to one constructed around the ISLLC 2008

standards. The basis for this change initiative was twofold, the first being informal but

nonetheless distinct statements by many administrators that they were dissatisfied with

the previous instrument and process. The second change catalyst was compelling research

in the area of leadership evaluation that led me to conclude the previous tool and process

were inconsistent with best practices espousing self-reflection or other participatory

mechanisms (Dyer, 2001; McCleary, 1979; Russo 2004), leader satisfaction and retention

(Litchka, 2007; Lovely, 2004) correlation between performance evaluation and

professional development (DuFour & Eaker, 1998; Van Meter & McMinn, 2001),

standards-based assessment of leadership competencies (Babo, 2008; Buchanan &

Roberts, 2000; Shipman & Murphy, 2001), or measurable change in motivation and

behavior (Reeves, 2009).

At the inception of this research I had recently completed my first year both at the

district and as a central office administrator. As the assistant superintendent in a regional school district in New Jersey serving students in grades 7 through 12, my responsibilities included direct evaluation of five district administrators and supervisory oversight of eight building-level administrators. During my first year, I played an integral role in the modification of the district's teacher evaluation instrument and subsequently recommended to the superintendent that a change to the evaluation instrument for the administration would be a natural follow-up initiative. Informal dialogue with members of the administrative team revealed support for changing evaluation processes for our district's leaders.

This chapter is intended to review the findings from this action research study within the context of the literature, relative to each phase of data collection and analysis, and in accordance with leadership concepts for change.

1. What is the level of satisfaction and perceived pros and cons with the existing administrator evaluation instrument and process?

2. To what extent do administrators perceive the existing evaluation tool and process contributes to meaningful professional growth or performance improvement?

3. What is the level of satisfaction and perceived pros and cons with the new administrator evaluation instrument?

4. To what extent do administrators perceive the new evaluation tool and process contributes to meaningful professional growth or performance improvement?

5. How does my leadership demonstrated through this project match my espoused leadership theory?

The design of this action research study consisted of sequential mixed methods (Creswell, 2009) and included three distinct cycles of data collection and analysis. A quantitative approach was the primary mechanism of analysis and a qualitative component was also included to assist with further investigation and to enhance participant benefit (Glesne, 2006). Due to the relatively small size and ready access to all school leaders, every member of the identified population participated in the project. During the last data collection cycle the population decreased by one member and the reduced population had a change of three members. As a result 72.7% of the initial population remained consistent throughout all cycles.

Cycle I Conclusions

Cycle I procedures proved to be a highlight in terms of both collegial interactions, and the catalyst for modifying the initial intention of the method and design. The original purpose of this project was to include administrators from my own district as well as those from the regional relationship. Accordingly, the first phase of data collection was inclusive of five districts and had the potential to develop and strengthen administrative relationships between and among respective regional leaders. However, matters of logistics and the unexpected finding that data varied significantly between administrators from the sending districts and from my own, resulted in the difficult decision to focus exclusively on the leaders of the receiving district. The four sending districts serve students in grades K-6 in their represented municipalities. In retrospect, this ultimately had the dual advantage of initially exposing my team of administrators to diverse opinions and processes in the area of evaluation and also evolved into an intense and highly focused assessment of our own procedures for determining

leadership competencies.

Ascertaining administrators' satisfaction with the previous instrument and process was a fundamental purpose of this project. While the undertaking of this study was based on an informal but apparently uniform perception that the instrument was no longer relevant to contemporary topics in education, the results of this cycle of research confirmed an overall dissatisfaction with the instrument and also provided a foundation of why the administrative group supported a change in this area. This phase of data collection also confirmed that many of the administrators lacked familiarity with leadership evaluation as a construct, from a philosophical perspective, and as a process potentially related to professional development. This finding is consistent with Van Meter and McMinn (2001) regarding their assertion that school leaders are too frequently unfamiliar with the purpose and desired outcomes of the performance evaluation process.

It became increasingly apparent during this point of the project that technical training would be a prerequisite to further investigate this matter. The results indicated that all participating districts employed traditional administrative evaluation instruments and not surprisingly, a preference for primarily narratives and evaluator driven formats emerged. Although administrators in my district indicated an undesirable level of satisfaction with the instrument and process, the results also suggested they did not have the prerequisite knowledge of alternative measures to sufficiently respond to inquiry regarding their perceptions of such.

At this juncture, the imperative to expose participants to best practices, to artifacts of alternative formats, and to expected policy mandates at the state and national level emerged as key components of the next research phase. Concurrent orientation to

national leadership standards such as the ISLLC 2008 was also considered necessary for subsequent understanding of administrative evaluation trends at the national level (Murphy, 2003) as well as relationships to professional growth (Van Meter & McMinn, 2001).

Finally, the data from the first research cycle did not reveal notable trends or patterns in terms of administrator retention. This was both disappointing and discouraging in that this project was initially intended to examine possible precursors to frequent administrative turnover in the district. Data ultimately suggested that the variability across leadership positions and the diverse reasons for leaving among a relatively small sample size of administrators simply did not lend itself to further scrutiny. However, in terms of future hiring and professional development practices, the district may find it beneficial to ascertain a candidate's long-term aspirations as well as other characteristics that may result in a better fit with the goals and culture of the organization. Administrator mentoring initiatives or the establishment of professional learning communities for school leaders (Piggot-Irvine, 2006) may also prove useful in retaining valued members.

Cycle II Conclusions

The first phase of research revealed that administrators were not satisfied with the instrument, did not perceive a relationship between the evaluation process and performance competence, and did not consider district initiatives to be a factor in how they were evaluated. However, additional understanding of specific contributors to satisfaction level, in terms of the components of the instrument and the evaluation process were required for meaningful application of research data. At that point, the

action project revealed minimally the requisite changes required for a more acceptable level of satisfaction or more clearly delineated perceived benefits of the performance evaluation. Cycle II placed a greater emphasis on qualitative data and permitted an extensive assessment of personal as well as group perceptions and preferences.

Participants' comments and personal observation suggested that the topic of formal evaluation of administrators was poorly understood and insufficiently addressed in terms of staff orientation. The use of actual evaluation documents proved to be instrumental in providing a sufficient foundation of familiarity and knowledge among the administrators in the regional district. The follow-up activity in which administrators rated the pros and cons of each artifact appeared to be a useful learning experience and one that was both enjoyable and collegial. An unanticipated but appreciated outcome of this group activity was the development of a common understanding of leadership assessment and an emerging consensus regarding desired outcomes of the evaluation process. The ancillary discourse that evolved from the group activities revealed increased knowledge about the topic and resulted in the formation of clearly delineated thoughts about format component options that would be effective in our district.

While the overall impressions from the first research cycle revealed a preference for traditional evaluation components, the more in-depth analysis of alternatives indicated unfavorable impressions of instruments comprised of checklists or rating scales. While it was challenging for participants to form a consensus regarding preferred components, the majority disclosed preferences for an instrument and process that included reciprocity between them and the evaluator. This was considered to be an important outcome and signaled the first meaningful preference that resulted from a synthesis of individual

perception and collaborative discussion. Administrators, regardless of personal characteristics, also uniformly expressed a desire for the process to be participatory and to provide meaningful feedback that would indicate if they were meeting expectations and strategies for growth and improvement.

The data resulting from the second cycle indicated that participants remained ambiguous regarding other component options of goal setting, rubric scoring, self-assessment and portfolios. Although insights regarding ideal process characteristics did emerge, the absence of a clear format preference indicated the need for ongoing professional development and more in-depth analysis of administrator perceptions regarding this topic.

Cycle III Conclusions

In retrospect, the third and final stage of data collection and analysis was an ambitious undertaking and exorbitantly time consuming. It was the only cycle, however, to result in the creation of a tangible product that was a prerequisite for responding to research questions about a new administrator evaluation tool. The duration of time committed to this research phase was especially noteworthy with respect to the demonstrated commitment of the subcommittee members, who agreeably attended many meetings over a period of almost half a year. Their regular attendance and active participation at these meetings spoke positively to their collective belief in the change process, specifically in terms of how an administrative evaluation tool has the potential to improve overall district functions. Their collegiality and demonstrated commitment to the change process exceeded expectations.

This stage of the research also resulted in increased and more substantive

knowledge of the literature regarding leadership evaluation, ISLLC 2008 standards as

they relate to the evaluation process, and familiarity with various instrument components.

Artifact samples included formative and summative alternatives, and it was evident that

the differences between the two components of evaluation became increasing integrated

into the thought processes of the subcommittee members. Nonetheless, the need to

include this topic in future professional development activities for all administrators

became very apparent.

The limited participation of a recognized field expert occurred during this phase

of the research, and input from Douglas Reeves was important to obtain a professional

critique from an independent expert. Additionally, it was this element of the project that

resulted in the inclusion of research-based leadership dimensions in the evaluation

instrument, and which enhanced credibility to decision-making and final format

outcomes. From a more humanistic, albeit a less scholarly perspective, Dr. Reeves'

comments increased participants' interest in and excitement about the project.

Another example of unanticipated but necessary tasks emerged when it became

apparent that the subcommittee recommended revision of administrative job descriptions

for inclusion in the job performance section of the evaluation instrument. This also

resulted in additional professional development commitments, although it was quickly

apparent that associated exercises resulted in improved understanding of responsibilities

for and differences between respective administrative positions. Final job descriptions

also more accurately represented actual duties and responsibilities consistent with

contemporary leadership standards, and were eventually perceived as essential precursors

to the inclusion of an evaluation component based on definitive performance indicators.

An unexpected difference emerged between veteran administrators and those new to the profession, with more experienced leaders expressing greater appreciation for the leadership dimensions. This difference may be that the less experienced administrators are still learning the mechanics and technical aspects of the job, and have less time to reflect on leadership skills or personal capacity for effecting change. It was also surprising that favorable results were found in reference to the *appraiser* category rather than the actual tool or the evaluation process. This finding was more significant on the post- versus the pre-survey outcomes, and may be due to the desire for increased interaction, input, and feedback that was expressed by participants during the first research cycle. An additional explanation may be the preliminary conference between the three evaluators that was held as a means of increasing inter-rater reliability and to again reference participant request for additional feedback and interaction with evaluator.

Given the ample opportunity for all administrators to participate in the development of the final administrator evaluation instrument, it was unanticipated that all indicators within the category of *tool* were not rated positively. One explanation for this may be that the data were based on initial implementation of the instrument, which yielded multiple ratings that may have been perceived as disappointing by the recipient. For example, all administrators evaluated using the new instrument received a rating of *progressing* on indicators surrounding the issue of student achievement and the related item on the survey received unfavorable ratings.

An unanticipated but appreciated outcome was the degree to which the post-conference process was enhanced by the structure of the instrument and the evaluation process, and the rich and detailed data that emerged about each administrator being

evaluated. The simple act of completing the document itself, with requirements for evidence and anecdotal records inherently resulted in a vastly increased knowledge of the administrators' performance and provided ample opportunities to share information about specific factors underlying the ratings ultimately selected. This was further enhanced by the data provided by the administrators' self-assessments, and their concomitant obligation to provide evidence perceived as important and relevant to the evaluation process.

Implications, Limitations, and Possible Biases

The format of the administrator evaluation instrument and process resulting from this action research is consistent with current research in the areas of leadership and standards-based performance evaluation (Reeves, 2009). That it is grounded within sound research principles provides a reasonable rationale for application in a typical school district setting, and presents with the potential for ongoing implementation in my own district as well as in other school organizations that may find it useful. However, current political leanings in the state of New Jersey suggest assertive movement towards an instrument based not on recognized leadership qualities or behaviors, but on student outcomes reflective of statewide testing results. While it seems inevitable that policymakers will be successful in their efforts to link administrative evaluation with students' standardized assessment results, a more desirable outcome would be the concurrent inclusion of dynamic performance evaluations such as the one resulting from this dissertation project.

In terms of my own leadership and professional development, I remain optimistic that the new instrument will result in improved relationships among and between

administrators and a more clearly delineated correlation between administrators'

performance and district goals. I also continue to firmly contend that it is essential for

school administrators to have an active and meaningful role in their own evaluation, one

that not only promotes professional development but also sustains commitment to

improved outcomes across all district functions. Much work remains to be done for

continued professional improvement at the administrative level, and I take seriously the

responsibility of leading the effort via ongoing dialogue and reciprocity in the overall

leadership relationship.

This project has frequently been described as change oriented and readily resulted

in significant transformations to the administrative evaluation instrument and the process,

but more importantly in relationships between and among administrators (Fullan, 2001).

As a result of time devoted to the topic during administrative meetings, committee and

sub-committee meetings specifically related to this research project, and numerous

professional development activities surrounding the subject of leadership evaluation, the

project participants developed stronger professional relationships. Further, they engaged

in more regular dialogue and reflection about the subject of evaluation and have shared

that professional discourse includes ideas as how to link their performance assessment

with specific interests and initiatives within respective areas of responsibility.

Consistent with Fullan's (2007) assertion that the best people should work on the

problem to effectively elicit change, and in retrospect it was the contributions of

administrators who made the most difference in the end result of this project. Their

comments at the inception were critical in determining perceptions and preferences, and

those who participated on the sub-committee voiced clear and definitive ideas about the direction the administrator evaluation process should take. It proved important to have members representing all titles of the administration, across areas of gender, ethnicity and experience. The knowledge that the final evaluation document represented their ideas facilitated overall acceptance from the larger group. It will be essential for me as a central office leader to continue to ensure that all members of the building and district administration continue to maintain adequate knowledge of their roles and responsibilities, both as evaluators and as those being evaluated. This issue of clarity, as defined by Fullan (2007), will serve as the foundation for sustained change in the area of administrator evaluation.

The results of this dissertation are grounded within basic parameters of action research and are not intended to have broad implications in terms of the body of literature regarding administrator evaluation or leadership performance assessment. They are therefore, limited in scope to specific application in my own district and have already had an impact on how administrators are evaluated. While these limits are recognized, the overall findings can serve as a model to other school organizations that may expect to conduct similar research cycles. It is cautioned that the evaluation components and procedure outlined in this project not be adopted in totality, but rather adapted via district-specific and collegial investigation of preferences and perceived pros and cons that are unique to respective organizations.

The findings here are also limited relative to the early phase of implementation in which the district remains. Longitudinal investigation of enduring perceptions and outcomes are necessary in order to claim sustained linkages between administrator

evaluation and outcome constructs of changes in performance or professional growth. Strident administrative oversight will be required to ensure continued commitment to meaningful administrative evaluation, correct application of the new instrument, and ongoing established relationships between the evaluation process and valued district functions.

Future inclusion of components explicitly linked to student achievement or possibly even to teacher performance may be necessary in response to legislative and policy changes currently on the horizon. School leaders at the highest levels will be challenged to provide administrator evaluation processes that manage to meet the competing demands of job satisfaction, desired levels of competence, and measures of accountability established by outside forces. However, it is argued that creating multi-faceted administrative evaluation tools that remain true to what most educational leaders value while also complying with anticipated regulations is preferable to enforcing and implementing state or national instruments that may inadequately address the former.

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Appendix A

Cycle I Survey with Results

Administrative Evaluation Instrument Survey

Dear Colleague:

Thank you for taking time from your busy schedule to participate in this survey. I am conducting a survey that addresses the utility of administrative evaluation instruments. Your responses will help your district to identify specific areas to improve the evaluation instrument and process currently used. Be assured that your responses are **strictly confidential**. You are not being asked to provide your name on the questionnaire; therefore **all responses are anonymous.** This survey will only take a few minutes to complete.

Sincerely,

Kathy McCormick
Northern Burlington County Regional School District
Assistant Superintendent

1) Below is a list of recognized procedural components related to an administrative evaluation. Which of the components applied to you during the 2008-2009 school year? *(Check one response for each item)*

Participated in a pre-conference	23% yes	77% no
Participated in a post-conference	96% yes	4% no

Composed a written self-assessment   48% yes   52% no
Described evidence to document
  progress toward specific domains   69% yes   31% no
(i.e., visionary, instructional, and strategic)

2) Below is a list of recognized formats of administrative evaluation instruments. Which of the following formats do you believe <u>most accurately describes</u> the instrument currently used in your district? *(Check all that apply)*

 96% written narrative of commendations and recommendations
 52% written narrative of key roles and job performance tasks
 52% written narrative of leadership competencies, knowledge, dispositions, and skills
 44% checklist of job description criteria
  8% portfolio to include documents as evidence of mastery provided by the administrator
  8% target goal setting of student achievement outcomes
 12% Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) standards
 28% self-assessment
  0% 360 – degree assessment (referred to as multisource feedback, full circle evaluation)
  0% rating of leadership elements/dimensions using a rubric with heading descriptors
  0% other. Please specify:

          _____

3) The following statement refers to your level of **satisfaction** with your district's current administrative evaluation instrument. Please indicate your level of agreement with the statement by placing a mark in the appropriate box. *(Check only one response)*

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I am satisfied with my district's current administrative evaluation instrument.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
	16%	35%	19%	27%	4%

4) To what extent do your administrative evaluations contribute to your <u>professional growth</u> for each area? *(Check one response for each item)*

	Very Much	Much	Some	None
Vision for leading and learning	39%	19%	31%	12%
Ethical behavior: leading with integrity	35%	15%	27%	23%
Sustaining an inclusive culture for learning	42%	15%	31%	12%
Collaboration with families and community to	39%	15%	27%	19%

foster learning				
Leading within the context of public education	35%	23%	31%	12%
Managing the learning community	39%	12%	39%	12%
Integrating technology to enhance learning and school management	35%	19%	27%	19%

5) To what extent do your administrative evaluations contribute to your improved performance for each area? *(Check one response for each item)*

	Very Much	Much	Some	None
Evaluation criteria specific to job description	28%	24%	36%	12%
Correlation with professional improvement plan (PIP)	35%	12%	39%	15%
Relationship to ISLLC standards	31%	4%	42%	23%

6) Below is a list of recognized formats of administrative evaluation instruments. Which of the following describes your preferred format(s) for an administrative instrument? *(Check a maximum of 3 preferred formats)*

 77% written narrative of commendations and recommendations
 35% written narrative of key roles and job performance tasks
 35% written narrative of leadership competencies, knowledge, dispositions, and skills
 15% checklist of job description criteria
 35% portfolio to include documents as evidence of mastery provided by the administrator
 4% target goal setting of student achievement outcomes
 23% Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) standards
 27% self-assessment
 8% 360 – degree assessment (referred to as multisource feedback, full circle evaluation)
 12% rating of leadership elements/dimensions using a rubric with heading descriptors
 0% other (please specify _____)

It would be helpful to me if you provided the following information.

7) Your gender: *(Check only one response)*   50% male   or   50% female

8) Which of the following best characterizes the grade spans of the students enrolled in the school(s) of your current administrative position? *(Mark only one response)*

 44% pre-kindergarten to elementary school (PK – grade 6)
 12% middle school (grades 7 – 8)
 24% high school (grades 9 – 12)
 20% middle school and high school (grades 7 – 12)
 0% pre-kindergarten to high school (PK – grade 12)

9) How many years of <u>administrative</u> experience do you have in the field of education? *(Mark only one response)*

  44%   Less than 4   4% 14 – 18
  20%   4 – 8   12%   19 +
  20% 9 – 13

10) How many <u>total</u> years of experience (<u>teaching and administrative</u>) do you have in the field of education? *(Mark only one response)*

  12%   4 – 8   16%   19 – 23
  44% 9 – 13   24%   24 +
   4% 14 – 18

Thank you for your cooperation and participation in this survey. It is important for me to better understand how to revise the administrative instrument to increase its utility to you and the organization. For your convenience, kindly **fax** your completed survey to **(XXX) – XXX – XXX**

Appendix B

Interview Protocol: Cycle II

A. Before beginning the interview, I will describe the project as contained in my scripted lay summary and I will also have a promise of confidentiality note signed prior to the actual start of interview questions.

Script
Welcome. As you are aware, I am in a doctoral program through Rowan University, which affords me with opportunities to examine current practices within our district through projects, varied research studies, and eventually an action research dissertation.

First, thank you for your participation in a survey I administered in the spring which ascertained school leaders' satisfaction with their current administrator evaluation tool and process, and its perceived utility to job performance and professional growth. As a follow-up to last week's academic council meeting, you have willingly and graciously agreed to participate in an interview to further discuss your perceptions and preferences of key components that comprise an effective evaluation instrument for school leaders. I anticipate that the interview will take about 30 minutes.

I would like your consent to tape record this interview, so I may accurately document the information you convey. If at any time during the interview you wish to discontinue the use of the recorder or the interview itself, please feel free to let me know. All of your responses are confidential and will be used to develop a better understanding of how you and other administrators in our district view leadership evaluation. The purpose of this study is to increase understanding of various types of evaluation instruments and the components included in them. In addition, I have this promise of confidentiality note for both of us to sign that reflects this agreement. You will receive one copy and I will keep the other copy in a secure location. Thank you.

Do you have any questions or concerns before we begin? (Pause) Then with your permission we will begin the interview.

B. Interview questions to include possible probe questions. I plan to involve the respondent immediately using background/demographic prompts followed by a combination of experience/behavior, knowledge, opinion/value, feeling, and sensory questions. Each question/prompt is labeled by type.

1. For ease of transcribing, please state your first name and how many years total you have been in education, including this year, both as a teacher and administrator. *[Background/demographic]*

2. How long have you been working in this school district? Total years in education as teacher and administrator? *[Background/demographic]*

3. Thinking about the time you decided to become a school administrator, what factors would you identify as influencing your decision? Please explain why you think these are factors were important. (Probes: list responses, assess if positive or negative influences, and reasons why.) *[Experience/behavior]*

4. Describe the extent of your familiarity with the components of the district's <u>current</u> administrator evaluation instrument and process. *[Experience/behavior]*

5. Prior to our most recent academic council meeting, what was your familiarity with components that may comprise administrators' evaluation instruments? *[Experience/behavior]*

6. Elaborate on the discussion that ensued during your the small group at our last academic council meeting. (Probes: extent of distribution of voices, consensus, agreement, disagreement on responses written on the pro and con chart, tone of dialogue) *[Opinion/value]*

7. (First, provide copies of sample components that were used at the academic council meeting during the group activity to the respondent. Referring to the first sample ask the prompt:) Describe a benefit/limitation of each component. (Probe: assess the reason why; does the stated benefit outweigh the limitation? if this component was included on our proposed new evaluation instrument, do you believe it provides utility and facilitates improved job performance? if this component was included on our proposed new evaluation instrument, do you believe it provides utility and facilitates professional growth as a leader? *[Opinion/value]*

8. Kindly elaborate about an observation report you received that you think was useful to your job performance. (Probes: what made it useful? identify the components of the instrument; describe the evaluation process; assess if the

positive experience was linked directly to the evaluator and/or instrument) *[Opinion/value]*

9. Now contrast this experience to an observation report that you received that you think was NOT useful. (Probes: what made it useful; identify the components of the instrument; describe the evaluation process; assess if the positive experience was linked directly to the evaluator and/or instrument)) *[Opinion/value]*

10. How have your evaluation reports improved your performance in your job? As a school leader? (Probes: process consisting or pre-conference and/or post-conference) *[Opinion/value]*

11. What do you believe is the most integral component of your evaluation instrument? *[Feeling]*

12. Describe a positive, productive post conference and how it made you feel. *[Feeling]*

13. What does it look like during your current post conference with your evaluator? What do you envision it will look like with a new tool and process? *[Sensory]*

14. As a result of the sample evaluation instruments you recently reviewed and discussed in small groups, what elements would you include in an instrument of your design? *[Opinion/value]*

15. Before, we conclude this interview, what additional information would you offer that will assist with the process? *[Opinion/value]*

Thank you.

Appendix C

Coding System: Cycle II

Title
1. TSUPT   Superintendent
2. TIDIR   Instructional Director
3. TSDIR   Student Services Director
4. TPRIN   Principal
5. TAPRIN   Assistant Principal

Evaluation Instrument
6. CEVAL   Current
7. IEVAL   Ideal

Type of Component
8. CCHEC   Checklist and ratings scale
9. CNARR   Written statements (narrative)
10. CGOAL   Goal setting (management by objectives)
11. CSELF   Self-assessment
12. CPORT   Portfolios
13. CRUBR   Rating of leadership elements - rubric

Feedback
14. FJOB   Related to unique job responsibilities/tasks
15. FGOAL   Related to progress of annual goals
16. FGROW   Related to overall professional growth
17. FISLLC Related to Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium
            (ISLLC) standards
18. FDOCS   Related to submitted documentation (portfolio, artifacts)

Involvement in Evaluation
19. INONE   None other than post conference
20. IPRPO   Pre and post conference
21. IPART   Participative

Preference of Component/Part
  22. PHPRFD Highly preferred
  23. PPRFD   Preferred
  24. PNPRFD Not preferred
  25. PHNPRFD Highly not preferred
  26. PNEUT   Neutral

Preference for Change of Existing Administrative Tool
  28. ΔHPRFD Highly preferred change
  28. ΔPRFD   Preferred change
  29. ΔNPRFD Not preferred change
  30. ΔHNPRFD Highly not preferred change
  31. ΔNEUT   Neutral change

Extent of Familiarity with Component
  32. FVERY   Very familiar
  33. FAMIL   Familiar
  34. FNFAMIL Not familiar
  35. FNVERY Not very familiar
  36. FZERO   Not at all

Appendix D

New Administrator Instrument and Leadership Dimensions Rubric

Anytown School District

HIGH SCHOOL PRINCIPAL EVALUATION

Name: _____   ____ of ____

Name and title of evaluator: _____

Part I – Job Performance Responsibilities

Directions: *This section reflects the performance responsibilities in the approved job description for the respective position. The evaluator is expected to assess each item by indicating a 'P' or 'X'. Supporting statements are required for each denoted 'X".*

	P = Professionally Competent X = See summary comments (commendations and/or recommendations)

	1. Establishes and maintains cooperative and collaborative working relationships with students, teachers, parents, administrators, and community.
	2. Provides visionary leadership and sets the parameters for defining the culture of the school which includes initiating, implementing, and sustaining necessary change consistent with the district's mission and the school's long range goals.
	3. Adheres to state, and federal regulations, and board and district policies recommending revisions as appropriate.
	4. Oversees the implementation of the school's code of conduct and procedures and attendance procedures and requirements, recommending revisions as appropriate.
	5. Conducts meetings of staff for the monitoring, development, and improvement of programs and procedures.
	6. Ensures that students have met all local and state graduation requirements before issuance of diplomas.
	7. Completes and maintains required records and reports for district, state, and federal

	monitoring systems.
	8. Authors a bulletin of scheduled activities and events on a weekly basis.
	9. Coordinates the development of the building portion of the budget for the general school, principal's accounts, athletics, and activities accounts in accordance with established procedures and protocol.
	10. Oversees the student activities account and co-signs checks drawn from such accounts.
	11. Inspects of buildings and grounds and takes appropriate remedial action via the director of facilities and superintendent as appropriate.
	12. Provides oversight for co-curricular, extra-curricular, and athletic programs and recommends the appropriate staff appointments.
	13. Supervises and evaluates of certificated and support personnel, and provides recommendations to the superintendent for tenure.
	14. Collaborates in the selection and provides recommendations to the superintendent for the appointment of teaching and instructional support staff.
	15. Assists in the development, research, and evaluation of curriculum.
	16. Assumes responsibility for the assignment of classes and assignment of teachers following review of recommendations from the district directors.
	17. Assists teachers in achieving and maintaining effective communications among and/or between support personnel and/or teachers and/or parents and/or teachers and students.
	18. Reviews, revises and supervises all staff and student publications before dissemination.
	19. Participates in all meetings of the established parent organization.
	20. Organizes and implements the supervision of the co-curricular program and shares in the administrative supervision of evening and weekend activities.
	21. Participates in district and school based committees such as Local Professional Development.
	22. Participates in articulation efforts with high school and constituent districts to plan transitional programs and maximize their effectiveness.
	23. Participates in professional meetings and attends programs designed for professional growth.
	24. Assumes other necessary duties as assigned by the superintendent and assistant superintendent.

Evaluator's COMMENTS:

Part II – Leadership Dimensions

Directions: *This section reflects leadership dimensions representing the Interstate School Leaders Licensure (ISLLC) standards. Descriptions of each leadership dimension, indicator, and rating category are detailed in a separate document, Appendix.*

*The evaluator and evaluatee (high school principal) complete independently a rating for each dimension and indicator using the leadership rubric. The high school principal is required to submit evidence to support a rating of "exemplary." During a conference, final ratings will be inputted. Supporting statements are required for each designation of '**progressing** or **not meeting standards'**.*

Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) Standards I & II

- Vision of learning shared by all stakeholders;
- School culture and instructional program conducive to student learning and staff professional growth.

Leadership Dimension & Indicators	Exemplary	Proficient	Progressing	Not Meeting Standards
1) Learning				
1.a Understanding of research trends in education and leadership				
1.b Application of learning in education and leadership				

Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) Standards I & VI

- Vision of learning shared by all stakeholders;
- Political, social, economic, legal, and cultural context.

Leadership Dimension & Indicators	Exemplary	Proficient	Progressing	Not Meeting Standards
2) Decision Making				
2.a Factual basis for decisions, including specific reference to internal and external data on student achievement and objective data on curriculum, teaching practices, and leadership practices				
2.b Decisions linked to vision, mission, and goals				
2.c Decisions evaluated for effectiveness and revised where necessary				
2.d Appropriateness of decision-making process				

Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) Standards II & V

- School culture and instructional program conducive to student learning and staff professional growth;
- Acting with integrity, fairness, and in an ethical manner.

Leadership Dimension & Indicators	Exemplary	Proficient	Progressing	Not Meeting Standards
3) Student Achievement				
3.a Goal setting for and results of student achievement				
3.b Understanding student requirements and decision-making relating to academic standards				

Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) Standards II & IV

- School culture and instructional program conducive to student learning and staff professional growth;
- Community interests and needs, and mobilizing community resources.

Leadership Dimension & Indicators	Exemplary	Proficient	Progressing	Not Meeting Standards
4) Faculty Development				
4.a Assessing faculty strengths and development needs				
4.b Documented and informal feedback to colleagues with the exclusive purpose of improving performance				

Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) Standards IV, V, & VI

- Community interests and needs, and mobilizing community resources;
- Acting with integrity, fairness, and in an ethical manner;
- Political, social, economic, legal, and cultural context.

Leadership Dimension & Indicators	Exemplary	Proficient	Progressing	Not Meeting Standards
5) Resilience				
5.a Constructively handles to disagreement with leadership and policy decisions				
5.b Constructively handles dissent from subordinates				
5.c improvement of specific performance areas based on the leader's previous evaluation				

Leadership Dimension & Indicators	Exemplary	Proficient	Progressing	Not Meeting Standards
6) Personal Behavior				
6.a Integrity and work ethic				

Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) Standards I, IV, & VI

- Vision of learning shared by all stakeholders;
- Community interests and needs, and mobilizing community resources;
- Political, social, economic, legal, and cultural context.

Leadership Dimension & Indicators	Exemplary	Proficient	Progressing	Not Meeting Standards
7) Communication				
7.a Two-way communication with stakeholders				
7.b Delivery and dissemination of information				

Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) Standards I, III, & V

- Vision of learning shared by all stakeholders;
- Management of the organization, operations, and resources for a safe, efficient, and effective learning environment;
- Acting with integrity, fairness, and in an ethical manner.

Leadership Dimension & Indicators	Exemplary	Proficient	Progressing	Not Meeting Standards
8) Task/Project Management				
8.a Choices for time management reflect a focus on the most important priorities				
8.b Projects have clear objectives and coherent plans				

Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) Standards II & III

- School culture and instructional program conducive to student learning and staff professional growth;

- Management of the organization, operations, and resources for a safe, efficient, and effective learning environment.				
Leadership Dimension & Indicators	**Exemplary**	**Proficient**	**Progressing**	**Not Meeting Standards**
9) Technology				
9.a Demonstrated use of technology to improve teaching and learning				
9.b Personal proficiency, growth, and adaptability in using technology				

Evaluator's COMMENTS:

High School Principal's COMMENTS

_____

High School Principal   **Date**

_____

Superintendent or Assistant Superintendent   **Date**

- Vision of learning shared by all stakeholders; - School culture and instructional program conducive to student learning and staff professional growth				
1) Learning	**Exemplary**	**Proficient**	**Progressing**	**Not Meeting Standards**
1.a Understanding of research trends in education and leadership	Pursues ongoing professional readings in the field of educational research that are both extensive and current. The leader provides case studies, experimental results, and research questions to serve the interests of others in the school community.	Ongoing professional reading, learning, and teaching of educational research trends.	Occasional educational research reading and some interest in professional reading and learning.	Little or no evidence of professional learning and research.
1.b Application of learning in education and leadership	In addition to meeting all the criteria for proficient performance, this leader takes every learning opportunity to advance the efficiency of the organization. In addition, this leader regularly shares these application tools with other leaders to maximize the impact of the leader's personal learning experience.	There is clear and consistent demonstration of skills in applying knowledge and experiences to advance the organization. This leader analyzes issues and invests resources to effectively resolve problems within the organization.	Occasional demonstration of skills in applying knowledge or experiences to advance the organization.	Tends to merely collect data rather than placing it within a meaningful context.

ISLLC Standards I & VI				
- Vision of learning shared by all stakeholders; - Political, social, economic, legal, and cultural context.				
2) Decision Making	**Exemplary**	**Proficient**	**Progressing**	**Not Meeting Standards**
2.a Factual basis for decisions, including specific reference to internal and external data on student achievement and	Decision-making is neither by consensus nor by leadership mandate, but consistently based on the factual analysis of data	Consistently uses data analysis as the basis of sound decision-making. The leader uses this information to promote best practices, to	Occasionally uses data analysis as the basis of decision-making. At times, however, decisions reflect personal	Rarely uses factual analysis of data as the basis of decision-making.

objective data on curriculum, teaching practices, and leadership practices	from multiple sources including global, national, state, district and classroom. The leader cites and shares this with the school community. The leader also cites specific examples of practices that have been changed, discontinued, and initiated based on the data analysis.	facilitate professional development, and to share with others who may benefit from such information.	preferences and tradition as opposed to what is consistent with best practices or district goals.	
2.b Decisions linked to vision, mission, and goals	The vision, mission, and goals of the leader and the organization are visible, ingrained in the culture of the organization, and routinely used as a reference point for decisions. The leader promotes these guideposts and inspires others to better understand and embrace the demands for growth inherent within them.	The leader's decision-making is aligned with the district's organizational guideposts of vision, mission, and goals.	While acknowledgement of the district's organizational guideposts of vision, mission, and goals is visible, they do not consistently influence the leader's decision making.	The leader is unaware or non-responsive to the organizational guideposts of vision, mission, and goals. There is insufficient evidence of the relationship between the leader's decision making and these guides.
2.c Decisions evaluated for effectiveness and revised where necessary	The leader provides clear and consistent evidence of assimilating newly acquired information and in using this information to appropriately revise or alter decision-making. In doing so, the leader models responsible and responsive leadership that raises the awareness of others and inspires similar patterns of behaviors.	The leader evaluates past practices and actively assimilates newly acquired information. The leader has an established track record of using reflective practices to inform decision-making.	The leader evaluates past practices and gives intellectual consent to newly acquired information. However, the leader has not yet established a consistent record of placing these reflections into action.	There is little or no evidence of reflection and reevaluation of previous decisions.
2.d Appropriateness of decision-making process	The leader successfully discerns and utilizes the	The leader has adapted a variety of decision-making strategies that are	The leader has begun to establish a clear style or pattern of	The leader has not established a clear style or pattern of

appropriate decision-making strategies required by specific situations. In doing so, the leader may call upon a range of strategic responses that include autocratic and collaborative decision-making models.	known and consistently used in comparable situations. The leader shares with staff and receives appropriate feedback that may subsequently influence decision-making and outcomes.	decision-making. However, The rationale behind these decisions is not consistently clear.	decision making. This lack of clarity gives the appearance of ambiguity that complicates the leader's ability to securely guide others. Decisions are made in isolation or cannot be made independently.

ISLLC Standards II & V

- School culture and instructional program conducive to student learning and staff professional growth;
- Acting with integrity, fairness, and in an ethical manner.

3) Student Achievement	Exemplary	Proficient	Progressing	Not Meeting Standards
3.a Goal setting for and results of student achievement	Goals and strategies reflect a clear relationship between actions of teachers and leaders and the impact on student achievement. Results show steady improvements based on these leadership initiatives. To this end, the leader has a consistent record of improved student achievement based on multiple indicators of student success, and has focused on improving performance. Where new challenges emerge, the leader highlights the need, creates effective intervention, and reports improved results.	The leader routinely introduces and requires the use of teaching and curriculum development strategies to advance student outcomes. The leader encourages collaboration and ongoing training to enhance teacher professional development. As the result of these efforts, there is tangible evidence of student learning as documented in both aggregate and disaggregate data concerning student groups who have been previously identified as being in need of improvement.	The leader understands the impact of teachers' attitudes on student achievement and has articulated goals for student learning. Consistency is needed, however, in addressing concerns that compromise teacher planning and instructional delivery. This leader has taken action, and there is some evidence of improvement, but insufficient evidence of changes in leadership, teaching, and curriculum that will lead to the improvements necessary to achieve student performance.	The leader is unaware or unable to focus teachers' actions on student achievement and has not taken decisive action to change teacher assignments, curricula, leadership practices, or other variables to improve student achievement. In addition, the leader allows or perpetuates the use of demographic stereotypes to justify instructional and academic underperformance.

| 3.b Understanding student requirements and decision-making relating to academic standards | The leader is adept in discerning the relational dynamics between sound curricula and student achievement. In addition, the leader shares this understanding with various stakeholders through the use of data analysis and knowledge transference in regard to curricula development, student assessments, and achievement outcomes. | The leader understands the importance of developing sound curricula and uses multiple data sources, including state and district assessments, to evaluate its efficacy.   In addition, the leader takes concrete actions to positively impact curricula, teaching, and the ongoing evaluation of student achievement. | The leader understands the role of curricular standards in advancing student learning and recognizes the need for consistency in instructional delivery and content. The leader has taken some actions to ensure instructional cohesion and integrity; these efforts, however, have often lacked consistency or/and depth. | The leader sees classroom curriculum is a matter of individual discretion and is hesitant to intrude or is indifferent to decisions in the classroom that are at variance from the requirements of academic standards. |

ISLLC Standards II & IV

- School culture and instructional program conducive to student learning and staff professional growth;
- Community interests and needs, and mobilizing community resources.

4) Faculty Development	Exemplary	Proficient	Progressing	Not Meeting Standards
4.a Assessing faculty strengths and development needs	The leader shows exemplary skills in discerning the professional development needs of staff and in securing the resources necessary for the successful implementation of professional development plans. Furthermore, the leader successfully models continued personal development by demonstrating a commitment to lifelong learning and by demonstrating a commitment of time and intellect to learn. The leader routinely shares professional development	The leader facilitates the creation of individualized professional development forums that meet a diverse array of needs. In addition, the leader uses available resources to create opportunities throughout the year for continued collaboration on the topics and skills explored within the professional development forums.	The leader demonstrates awareness of the differentiated needs of faculty and occasionally develops more specialized professional development forums.	The leader orchestrates professional development forums that are typically "one size fits all" and lacks any tailored approach to identifying specific teacher needs.

	opportunities with other leaders, departments, districts, or organizations to build the professional knowledge opportunities of the entire community.			
4.b Documented and informal feedback to colleagues with the exclusive purpose of improving performance	The leader is an effective communicator who is adept at providing and receiving constructive feedback. In addition, the leader takes personal responsibility to model skills, such as active listening and personal reflection strategies that enhances the quality of feedback given to and received by others.	The leader provides documented feedback consistent with district personnel policies and provides informal feedback to reinforce good performance. Feedback is explicitly linked to organizational goals and is used to improve individual and organizational performance.	The leader adheres to personnel policies in regard to providing documented feedback. Work in this area, however, is perfunctory in nature and lacks depth and on-going reflection.	Documented feedback is formulaic and unspecific. Informal feedback is rare and more likely to be associated with negative than positive behavior.

ISLLC Standards IV, V, & VI

- Community interests and needs, and mobilizing community resources;
- Acting with integrity, fairness, and in an ethical manner;
- Political, social, economic, legal, and cultural context.

5) Resilience	Exemplary	Proficient	Progressing	Not Meeting Standards
5.a Constructively handles disagreement with leadership and policy decisions	Once a decision is made, the leader fully supports and enthusiastically implements organizational policy and leadership decisions with ownership. When disagreement occurs, the leader challenges executive authority and policy leaders appropriately with evidence and constructive criticism.	Accepts and implements leadership and policy decisions. In disagreements with said decisions, the leader is able to articulate concerns, to advocate for a point of view based on the best interests of the organization.	The leader sometimes challenges executive and policy leadership without bringing those concerns to appropriate authorities. Sometimes implements policies unenthusiastically or because the leader is directed.	The leader ignores or subverts executive and policy decisions.

5.b Constructively handles dissent from subordinates	Creates constructive contention, assigning roles if necessary to deliberately generate multiple perspectives and consider different sides of important issues. Recognizes and rewards thoughtful dissent and uses this dissent to learn and grow.	Leader acknowledges dissent and constructively uses it to inform final decisions, improve the quality of decision-making, and broaden support for final decisions.	Leader tolerates dissent but lacks the ability or willingness to constructively channel it.	The leader avoids or denies any dissent.
5.c Improvement of specific performance areas based on the leader's previous evaluation	Previous evaluations are combined with personal reflection and feedback to formulate an action plan that is reflected in the leader's daily choices and is consistent with the leader's role within the organization.	Previous evaluations are explicitly reflected into projects, tasks, and priorities. Performance on each evaluation reflects specific and measurable improvements along the performance continuum	Leader is minimally aware of previous evaluations, shows limited progression toward developing an action plan.	Leader is aware of previous evaluations, but has not translated them into an action plan.

6) Personal Behavior	Exemplary	Proficient	Progressing	Not Meeting Standards
6.a Integrity and work ethic	The leader meets commitments – verbal, written, and implied. Commitments to individuals, students, community members, and subordinates have the same weight as commitments to superiors, board members, or other people with visibility and authority. The leader's commitment to integrity is clear.	The leader meets commitments or negotiates exceptions where the commitment cannot be met. Verbal commitments have the same weight as written commitments.	The leader meets explicit written commitment. The need for documentation does not allow others to make assumptions that verbal statements have the weight of a commitment.	The leader does not follow through with tasks, priorities, or performance, despite a commitment to do so.

ISLLC Standards I, IV, VI

- Vision of learning shared by all stakeholders; - Community interests and needs, and mobilizing community resources; - Political, social, economic, legal, and cultural context.				
7) Communication	**Exemplary**	**Proficient**	**Progressing**	**Not Meeting Standards**
7.a Two-way communication with stakeholders	The leader proactively communicates and utilizes active listening strategies in addressing articulated concerns. In addition, the leader demonstrates savvy in identifying issues related to said concerns and respects the confidentiality of all parties involved. When it is necessary to involve other persons for conflict resolution, the leader exhibits appropriate discretion.	The leader proactively communicates in addressing articulated concerns. The leader is adept in identifying the underlying issues that generate concerns and includes other relevant administrative supports as appropriate.	The leader is somewhat attentive to articulated concerns. The leader listens and takes immediate action without exploring repercussions or involving other relevant administrative supports.	The leader is inattentive, unresponsive, or dismissive when called upon to address articulated concerns.
7.b Delivery and dissemination of information	All communications are timely, clear, delivered in an effective manner, and demonstrate proficiency in a variety of methods.	All communications are clear and concise.	Discerns appropriate communications, but delivery is inconsistent.	Communications lack clarity and may be interpreted as abrasive.

ISLLC Standards I, III, & V

- Vision of learning shared by all stakeholders; - Management of the organization, operations, and resources for a safe, efficient, and effective learning environment; - Acting with integrity, fairness, and in an ethical manner.				
8) Task/Project Management	**Exemplary**	**Proficient**	**Progressing**	**Not Meeting Standards**
8.a Choices for time management reflect a focus on the most important priorities	There is a clear alignment between the priorities of the organization and the leader's. By looking at the leader's calendar and prioritized task list, one would immediately infer	The priorities of the organization and the priorities on the task list are closely matched. The leader regularly removes tasks, or delegates tasks, where there is an	The leader is aware of organizational priorities, but only prioritizes some of the tasks.	The leader is unaware of or indifferent to organizational priorities. The leader is reactive in addressing concerns rather than working

	the priorities of the organization. The leader not only removes diversions and obstacles from the leader's task list, but also helps to focus the entire organization.	insufficient link between the task and the leader's and organization's priorities.		proactively to guide and manage them.
8.b Projects have clear objectives and coherent plans	In addition to meeting all of the criteria for proficient project management, the leader also uses project management as a teaching device, helping others in the organization understand the interrelationships of project goals throughout the organization. The leader uses project management to build systems thinking throughout the organization. Accomplishments are publicly celebrated and project challenges are open for input from a wide variety of sources.	Projects are managed using clear action plans. Project management and documents are revised and updated as goals are achieved or deadlines are changed. The leader understands the impact of a change in a goal or deadline n the entire project, and communicates those changes to the appropriate people in the organization.	Projects are managed via appropriate action plans, but are infrequently updated regardless of unanticipated variables.	Project management is haphazard or nonexistent. There is little or no evidence of organizational skills in this area.

ISLLC Standards II & III
- School culture and instructional program conducive to student learning and staff professional growth; - Management of the organization, operations, and resources for a safe, efficient, and effective learning environment.

9) Technology	**Exemplary**	**Proficient**	**Progressing**	**Not Meeting Standards**
9.a Demonstrated use of technology to improve teaching and learning	In addition to meeting the criteria for proficient performance, the leader serves as a model for technology implementation. The links between technology implementation and	The leader uses technology personally in a competent manner and links technology initiatives of the organization to specific teaching and learning objectives.	The leader is personally proficient in technology and appears to be an advocate for the use of instructional technology, but does not always differentiate	The leader does not display personal competence in technology applications. The leader does not link the installation of technology to specific teaching

	learning successes are clear and public. The leader facilitates staff awareness on the relationship between the use of technology and organizational success		between technology implementation and a clear impact on teaching and learning.	and learning objectives.
9.b Personal proficiency, growth, and adaptability in using technology	In addition to the skills required of proficient leader, the leader creates new opportunities for learning and uses the organization as an example of effective technology implementation. Leading by example, the leader provides a model of continued learning.	Personally uses word processing, spreadsheets, presentation software, databases, and district software. Personal study and professional development reflect a commitment to continued learning.	The leader mastered some, but not all of the software required for proficient performance. The leader takes initiative to learn new technology.	The leader is not technologically literate with little or no evidence of taking personal initiative to learn new technology.

Appendix E

Cycle III Intact Survey with Results

Leadership Evaluation Survey

The Center for Performance Assessment in 2002 conducted research into the nature of leadership evaluations by author Dr. Douglas Reeves. Similar to the previous survey, this instrument will also be administered on separate occurrences to ascertain your perceptions of and satisfaction with the district's current and newly developed evaluation tool and process for administrators. You may also anticipate at a future Academic Council meeting a presentation sharing our district's results relative to the national results published for the Leadership Evaluation Survey. Thank you for your continued support and interest.

Pre-survey was administered on February 4, 2010; N= 12
Post-survey was administered on November 23 and November 24, 2010; N=11

Place reflect on your evaluation experience by noting your agreement or disagreement with the following statements. Use the scale below and check √ for each statement. 5 = Strongly Disagree (SD) 4 = Disagree (D) 3 = No Opinion (NO) 2 = Agree (A) 1 = Strongly Agree (SA)		5 (SD)	4 (D)	3 (NO)	2 (A)	1 (SA)	
1.	The leadership evaluations I have received helped me to improve my performance.	1 8.3% 0 0%	7 58.3% 1 9.1%	1 8.3% 0 0%	3 25% 6 54.5%	0 0% 4 36.4%	N=12 % N=11 %
1.	Results of National Leadership Survey	42%			58%		N= 510
2.	The leadership evaluations I have received improved my personal motivation.	3 25% 0 0%	5 41.7% 0 0%	1 8.3% 0 0%	3 25% 7 63.6%	0 0% 4 36.4%	N=12 % N=11 %
2.	Results of National Leadership Survey	40%			60%		N= 510
3.	The leadership evaluations I have received were directly related to the mission and vision of our school system.	4 33.3% 0 0%	5 41.7% 0 0%	2 16.7% 2 18.2%	1 8.3% 5 45.4%	0 0% 4 36.4%	N=12 % N=11 %

#	Statement	5 (SD)	4 (D)	3 (NO)	2 (A)	1 (SA)	N=
3.	Results of National Leadership Survey	35%			65%		N= 510
4.	The leadership evaluations I have received were related to student achievement results.	7 58.3% 0 0%	1 8.3% 1 9.1%	2 16.7% 3 27.3%	2 16.7% 5 45.4%	0 0% 2 18.2%	N=12% N=11%
4.	Results of National Leadership Survey	53%			47%		N= 510
5.	The leadership evaluations I have received are generally positive.	0 0% 0 0%	0 0% 0 0%	1 8.3% 2 18.2%	8 66.7% 4 36.4%	3 25% 5 45.4%	N=12% N=11%
5.	Results of National Leadership Survey	11%			89%		N= 510

Place reflect on your evaluation experience by noting your agreement or disagreement with the following statements. Use the scale below and check √ for each statement. **5 = Strongly Disagree (SD)** **4 = Disagree (D)** **3 = No Opinion (NO)** **2 = Agree (A)** **1 = Strongly Agree (SA)**	**5 (SD)**	**4 (D)**	**3 (NO)**	**2 (A)**	**1 (SA)**	
6. The leadership evaluations I have received were consistent with my original expectations for my job.	0 0% 0 0%	2 16.7% 0 0%	5 41.7% 0 0%	5 41.7% 6 54.5%	0 0% 5 45.4%	N=12% N=11%
6. Results of National Leadership Survey	24%			76%		N= 510
7. The leadership evaluations I have received were accurate.	0 0% 0 0%	3 25% 0 0%	4 33.3% 0 0%	5 41.7% 6 54.5	0 0% 5 45.4%	N=12% N=11%

#	Statement						N
					%		
7.	Results of National Leadership Survey	21%			79%		N=510
8.	The leadership evaluations I have received were specific – I knew exactly how to improve performance and exactly what performance I should continue.	0 0%	9 75%	0 0%	3 25%	0 0%	N=12%
		1 9.1%	0 0%	0 0%	5 45.4%	5 45.4%	N=11%
8.	Results of National Leadership Survey	53%			47%		N=510
9.	The leadership evaluations I have received were based on clear standards that I knew would be the focus of my evaluation.	2 16.7%	6 50%	2 16.7%	2 16.7%	0 0%	N=12%
		0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	5 45.4%	6 54.5%	N=11%
9.	Results of National Leadership Survey	46%			54%		N=510
10.	During my last evaluation, I had the opportunity to make suggestions to improve organizational support for me and my colleagues.	1 8.3%	2 16.7%	4 33.3%	5 41.7%	0 0%	N=11%
		0 0%	0 0%	2 18.2%	5 45.4%	4 36.4%	N=12%
10.	Results of National Leadership Survey	54%			46%		N=510

Thank you for your cooperation and participation in this survey. It is important for the committee to better understand how to revise the administrative instrument to increase its utility to you and the organization.

Appendix F

Cycle III Modified Survey with Results

Administrators' Perceptions of Evaluation

Pre-survey was administered February 4, 2010; N=12
Post-survey was administered November 23 and 24, 2010; N=11

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

Place a check mark (√) in the column that most closely matches your agreement with each of the following statements: [Mark only ONE rating for each statement]		1	2	3	4	5	
1.	The evaluation instrument and process helps develop better communication between the evaluator and evaluatee.	1 8.3%	3 25%	3 25%	5 41.7%	0 0%	N=12 %
		0 0%	0 0%	1 9.1%	3 27.3%	7 63.6%	N=11 %
2.	The evaluation instrument and process provide time for feedback from the evaluator to the evaluatee on job performance.	1 8.3%	2 16.7%	1 8.3%	8 66.7%	0 0%	N=12 %
		0 0%	1 9.1%	0 0%	4 36.4%	6 54.5%	N=11 %
3.	The specific objectives on which performance is being assessed were discussed prior to the evaluation process.	2 16.7%	8 66.7%	2 16.7%	0 0%	0 0%	N=12 %
		0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	3 27.3%	8 72.7%	N=11 %
4.	The specific objectives on which performance is being assessed were mutually agreed upon.	2 16.7%	7 58.3%	2 16.7%	1 8.3%	0 0%	N=12 %
		0 0%	1 9.1%	1 9.1%	3 27.3%	6 54.5%	N=11 %
5.	The format used for evaluation was created by the school district.	1 8.3%	2 16.7%	3 25%	4 33.3%	2 16.7%	N=12 %
		0 0%	0 0%	1 9.1%	4 36.4%	6 54.4%	N=11 %
6.	The evaluation process, as used in this school district, allows for input in its design.	2 16.7%	6 50%	2 16.7%	2 16.7	0 0%	N=12 %
		0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	5 45.4%	6 54.5%	N=11 %
7.	Evaluations influence job effectiveness.	1 8.3%	3 25%	1 8.3%	5 41.7%	2 16.7%	N=12 %
		0 0%	0 0%	3 27.3%	6 54.5%	2 18.2%	N=11 %

		1	2	3	4	5	
8.	The central office in my school district does not clearly define its evaluation policy.	2 16.7% 1 9.1%	2 16.7% 5 45.4%	1 8.3% 0 0%	7 58.3% 4 36.4%	0 0% 1 9.1%	N=12 % N=11 %
9.	A negative evaluation could affect my job performance.	1 8.3% 0 0%	1 8.3% 4 36.4%	3 25% 3 27.3%	6 50% 3 27.3%	1 8.3% 1 9.1%	N=12 % N=11 %
10.	I believe that job commitment is related to the results of the evaluation process.	2 16.7% 0 0%	4 33.3% 4 36.4%	1 8.3% 3 27.3%	5 41.7% 4 36.4%	0 0% 0 0%	N=12 % N=11 %

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

Place a check mark (√) in the column that most closely matches your agreement with each of the following statements: [Mark only ONE rating for each statement]		**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	
11.	A positive change has occurred in my job performance based on the performance evaluation.	3 25% 0 0%	2 16.7% 0 0%	2 16.7% 7 63.6%	5 41.7% 4 36.4%	0 0% 0 0%	N=12 % N=11 %
12.	The evaluation process allows for open discussion between the evaluator and the evaluatee regarding evaluation performance.	0 0% 0 0%	2 16.7% 1 9.1%	2 16.7% 0 0%	8 66.7% 4 36.4%	0 0% 6 54.5%	N=12 % N=11 %
13.	The evaluation process is essential in setting individual goals.	3 25% 0 0%	4 33.3% 1 9.1%	2 16.7% 0 0%	2 16.7% 6 54.4%	1 8.3% 4 36.4%	N=12 % N=11 %
14.	The evaluation process is essential in setting organizational goals.	3 25% 0 0%	2 16.7% 2 18.2%	2 16.7% 1 9.1%	2 16.7% 6 54.5%	3 25% 2 18.2%	N=12 % N=11 %
15.	The time scheduled for evaluations has been mutually agreed upon by both parties.	1 8.3% 0 0%	2 16.7% 1 9.1%	1 8.3% 0 0%	7 58.3% 6 54.5%	1 8.3% 4 36.4%	N=12 % N=11 %

#	Statement	1	2	3	4	5	N
16.	The frequency of evaluations is appropriate.	2 16.7%	4 33.3%	0 0%	6 50%	0 0%	N=12 %
		0 0%	0 0%	1 9.1%	6 54.5%	4 36.4%	N=11 %
17.	The evaluation process provides adequate time for visitations by the evaluator.	2 16.7%	4 33.3%	1 8.3%	5 41.7%	0 0%	N=12 %
		0 0%	0 0%	2 18.2%	7 63.6%	2 18.2%	N=11 %
18.	The evaluation process provides adequate time for feedback.	1 8.3%	4 33.3%	1 8.3%	6 50%	0 0%	N=12 %
		0 0%	0 0%	1 9.1%	7 63.6%	3 27.3%	N=11 %
19.	I acquired knowledge applicable to my job from the information gained by the performance evaluation process.	1 8.3%	5 41.7%	3 25%	3 25%	0 0%	N=12 %
		0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	6 54.5%	5 45.4%	N=11 %
20.	As a result of the performance evaluation process, I experienced an improvement in my attitude that resulted in improved job performance.	1 8.3%	5 41.7%	1 8.3%	5 41.7%	0 0%	N=12 %
		0 0%	0 0%	4 36.4%	7 63.6%	0 0%	N=11 %
21.	The performance evaluation system is based on a systematic examination of the job being evaluated.	2 16.7%	8 67.7%	0 0%	2 16.7%	0 0%	N=12 %
		0 0%	0 0%	1 9.1%	6 54.5%	4 36.4%	N=11 %
22.	My evaluation examines progress toward district and school level goals and initiatives.	4 33.3%	4 33.3%	1 8.3%	3 25%	0 0%	N=12 %
		0 0%	0 0%	2 18.2%	5 45.4%	4 36.4%	N=11 %
23.	The administrator is held accountable for providing effective leadership for student achievement.	1 8.3%	3 25%	2 16.7%	5 41.7%	1 8.3%	N=12 %
		0 0%	1 9.1%	1 9.1%	6 54.5%	3 27.2%	N=11 %

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

Place a check mark (√) in the column that most closely matches your agreement with each of the following statements: [Mark only ONE rating for each statement]	1	2	3	4	5	

#	Statement	1	2	3	4	5	N
24.	Accountability standards by which administrators are evaluated are fair.	1 8.3%	3 25%	4 33.3%	4 33.3%	0 0%	N=12 %
		0 0%	0 0%	1 9.1%	6 54.5%	4 36.4%	N=11 %
25.	The evaluation system holds all administrators to the same standards.	1 8.3%	3 25%	3 25%	5 41.7%	0 0%	N=12 %
		0 0%	0 0%	2 18.2%	6 54.5%	3 27.3%	N=11 %
26.	The school district provides assistance to the administrator not meeting standards.	2 16.7%	3 25%	2 16.7%	5 41.7%	0 0%	N=12 %
		0 0%	1 9.1%	2 18.2%	5 45.4%	3 27.3%	N=11 %
27.	The school district monitors the progress of the administrator not meeting standards.	2 16.7%	3 25%	3 25%	4 33.3%	0 0%	N=12 %
		0 0%	0 0%	3 27.3%	6 54.5%	2 18.2%	N=11 %
28.	The evaluation system is based on an objective examination of the job being analyzed.	1 8.3%	4 33.3%	5 41.7%	2 16.7%	0 0%	N=12 %
		0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	9 81.8%	2 18.2%	N=11 %
29.	Because the evaluation process is established, I feel a greater commitment to achieving the objectives of my job.	2 16.7%	6 50%	2 16.7%	2 16.7%	0 0%	N=12 %
		0 0%	2 18.2%	2 18.2%	6 54.5%	1 9.1%	N=11 %
30.	The school district provides professional development based on data collected from the administrators' evaluations.	3 25%	5 41.7%	1 8.3%	3 25%	0 0%	N=12 %
		1 9.1%	2 18.2%	2 18.2%	6 54.5%	0 0%	N=11 %
31.	The district's professional development concentrates on important skill sets dealing with leadership.	3 25%	5 41.7%	1 8.3%	3 25%	0 0%	N=12 %
		1 9.1%	4 36.4%	2 18.2%	4 36.4%	0 0%	N=11 %
32.	I receive meaningful professional development for administrators in our school district.	3 25%	2 16.7%	1 8.3%	6 50%	0 0%	N=12 %
		0 0%	3 27.3%	2 18.2%	6 54.5%	0 0%	N=11 %

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

Place a check mark (√) in the column that most closely matches your agreement with each of the following statements: [Mark only ONE rating for each statement]	1	2	3	4	5	

This instrument developed as part of the following dissertations:

Durecki-Elkins, C. (1996). The relationship between teachers' perceptions of performance appraisal and job satisfaction. Ed.D. dissertation, Wayne State University, United States -- Michigan. Retrieved November 17, 2009, from Dissertations & Theses: A&I.(Publication No. AAT 9715831)/(UMI No: 9715831)

Jeanmarie, T. (2008). The relationship between principals' perceptions of performance appraisal and level of job satisfaction. Ed.D. dissertation, Wayne State University, United States -- Michigan. Retrieved November 17, 2009, from Dissertations & Theses: A&I.(Publication No. AAT 3300460)/(UMI No: 3300460)