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Perceptions of Important Personal and Leadership Characteristics for Newly Hired Principals to Be Successful School Leaders: Views of School Superintendents

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Abstract

Research has shown that a strong relationship prevails between principals' leadership characteristics, student engagement, teacher efficacy, and parental involvement toward responding to the demands of school accountability (Maxwell, Huggins, and Scheurich, 2010). Superintendents across the country are reporting the increasing difficulty of getting adept administrators (Cruzeiro and Boone, 2009). Superintendents who are primarily the ones responsible for the hiring of principals must be able to identify and assess the principal applicants as to their suitability and effectiveness as an administrator to meet the accountability and performance demands (Estes, 2011). This study sought to identify superintendents' perceptions of the important personal and leadership characteristics that newly hired principals exhibit which support their effectiveness in leading schools. This study made clear the value judgements that superintendents have of what constitutes an adept principal. This author used a descriptive qualitative research design approach to explore the perceptions of superintendents about the personal and professional characteristics of the newly hired principals that they have hired and/or supervised. Specifically, the study involved the use of semi-structured interviews with superintendents at 10 conveniently selected New York State Education Department (NYSED) identified school districts from the Hudson Valley region in New York State. The results of this study were used to aide in identifying gaps between the training of school administrators and superintendents' desired skills for newly hired principals. The results of the study are discussed according to eight findings that arose from the data: interpersonal and intrapersonal are necessary personal characteristics; participative, influential, and managerial skills are necessary leadership skills; inclusive, trust and transformational skills are characteristic that increase the likelihood of principal retention. Additional research should be conducted to determine whether district size is a factor that influences the leadership and personal characteristics required in newly hired principals by superintendents. In addition, a recommendation was made in terms of the practicality of the identified characteristics within the framework of certification programs and initially certified principals.

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Dedication

I dedicate this work to all the people in my life that supported me and made it possible for me to accomplish such an extraordinary task. First, I would like to acknowledge my wife, Kirsten, and my two children, Scott and Katy. Without their constant love, patience, and support, I could not have been able to focus on completing this dissertation. Thank you for all the times when you took on extra chores around the house and motivated me when I was feeling distraught and uncertain about where this was all headed. My love for each of you deepens every day!

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Lastly, I would like to dedicate this work to Walter T. Mandel. This is a man, who 38 years ago, took me under his wing when I was a mere 12 years old. We remain close friends to this very day. My success today is attributed to this one man in my life

that had the courage to affect change for one person. His selfless devotion to me when I was a child, has given me the strength to rise above my family's tragedies, traumas, and drug addiction. Walter has loved me in such a way that I have changed the trajectory of my own personal life, married a beautiful woman, and raised two wonderful kids. Most importantly, because of the one life that he saved, he inspired a boy to grow into a man that is now a leader of change and inspiration to others. As a principal of a middle school, I try to share the gifts that he gave to me a long, long time ago and continues to do to this day. For me, leadership is about affecting change one person at time. In my eyes, every person is a precious gift that must be nurtured, loved and honored. I believe in the power of mentorship and I try to model this philosophy as a leader and to those that I serve.

Biographical Sketch

William C. Rolón is currently the principal at CJ Hooker Middle School located in Goshen, NY. Mr. Rolón attended Mount Saint Mary College in Newburgh, NY from 1992-1995 and graduated with a Bachelor of Science degree in 1995. He majored in Hispanic Studies and earned a dual-certification in Elementary and Special Education. Mr. Rolón attended St. Thomas Aquinas College in Rockland County, NY from 1998-2001 and graduated with a Master of Science degree in Education and earned his certification as a Reading Specialist. He also attended the College at New Rochelle from 2003-2005 and earned a Master of Science degree in Educational Administration in 2006. Mr. Rolón began his doctoral studies in the Ed.D. Program in Executive Leadership at St. John Fisher College in the spring of 2015. He pursued his research of Superintendent Perceptions of Newly Hired Principals under the direction of Dr. W. Jeff Wallis and Dr. Adam Rockman.

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Research has shown that a strong relationship prevails between principals' leadership characteristics, student engagement, teacher efficacy, and parental involvement toward responding to the demands of school accountability (Maxwell, Huggins, and Scheurich, 2010). Superintendents across the country are reporting the increasing difficulty of getting adept administrators (Cruzeiro and Boone, 2009). Superintendents who are primarily the ones responsible for the hiring of principals must be able to identify and assess the principal applicants as to their suitability and effectiveness as an administrator to meet the accountability and performance demands (Estes, 2011).

This study sought to identify superintendents' perceptions of the important personal and leadership characteristics that newly hired principals exhibit which support their effectiveness in leading schools. This study made clear the value judgements that superintendents have of what constitutes an adept principal.

This author used a descriptive qualitative research design approach to explore the perceptions of superintendents about the personal and professional characteristics of the newly hired principals that they have hired and/or supervised. Specifically, the study involved the use of semi-structured interviews with superintendents at 10 conveniently selected New York State Education Department (NYSED) identified school districts from the Hudson Valley region in New York State. The results of this study were used to aide

in identifying gaps between the training of school administrators and superintendents' desired skills for newly hired principals.

The results of the study are discussed according to eight findings that arose from the data: interpersonal and intrapersonal are necessary personal characteristics; participative, influential, and managerial skills are necessary leadership skills; inclusive, trust and transformational skills are characteristic that increase the likelihood of principal retention.

Additional research should be conducted to determine whether district size is a factor that influences the leadership and personal characteristics required in newly hired principals by superintendents. In addition, a recommendation was made in terms of the practicality of the identified characteristics within the framework of certification programs and initially certified principals.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Background of the Study

In the ever-changing and complex world of education, effective school principals require an array of leadership, management, and visionary skills (Bredeson, 2016). A recent study also indicated that school superintendents' perceptions influence the assessment, hiring, training, retention, and development of the newly hired effective principals (Winter, Rinehart, Keedy & Bjork, 2007). Perception is the value-judgement that individuals have in any event, situation or object (Johnson, 1994). According to Cray and Weiler (2011), an individual's opinion can influence the attitude, attention, and understanding of any external and internal experience. This study sought to identify superintendents' perceptions of the important personal and leadership characteristics that newly hired principals exhibit which enable them to be effective in leading schools. Darling-Hammond, Meyerson, LaPointe, and Orr (2009) related effectiveness to the necessary leadership characteristics possessed by principals.

In the 21st century, schools have faced new challenges compared to the time they were first designed. George (1992) informed that since its inception in 1893, public institutions have been increasingly held accountable, not only for academics, but also for a multitude of areas in social development (McDonald & Cities and Schools Research Group, 2014). McDonald et al. (2014) laid more emphasis on the fact that accountability has made school performance an important goal among school districts. In 2001, the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) was enacted to ensure that every school's adequate yearly

progress (AYP) improved. This new regulation aimed for all students to perform

proficiently or at advanced level in every content area on standardized tests (United

States Department of Education, 2002). However, schools across America struggled to

meet the challenges of these vigorous accountability standards (Eaton, 2011). The

enactment of the No Child Left Behind Act by President George W. Bush was often

thought of as a hindrance towards progress rather than raising the standards (Kelley &

Peterson, 2007). NCLB resulted in consequences imposed on schools not meeting the

given standards, including the removal of principals (Li, 2010). Following the

difficulties encountered with the establishment of NCLB, the act was replaced with

President Barack Obama's new reform, The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) (2015).

These laws called upon educators and families to focus on building on key areas of

progress in recent years to prepare all students adequately for success in college and

careers (The Every Student Succeeds Act [ESSA], 2015). Throughout the last two

decades, these education reforms in policy have emphasized student academic success

and have held teachers and school principals more accountable to the established

requirements (Björk, Glass, & Brunner, 2005).

The United States public education system has recently faced much scrutiny and

quality leadership has emerged as an important issue in every school (Bartoletti &

Connelly, 2013). A study by Clark, Martorell, and Rockoff (2009) found that principals'

leadership characteristics have a direct relationship with school performance. Due to the

increased accountability, immense responsibilities have been placed upon principals. In a

report by Bottoms and O'Neill (2001), accountability has been underscored for what

changed in carrying out roles of principals over the years. Bottoms and O'Neill argued

that a new breed of principals must rise in response to the era of higher standards and higher accountability. Considering school principals influenced the performance and accountability ratings of students, it becomes necessary for them to be evaluated based on their knowledge, dispositions, and skills during the hiring process (Bottoms & O'Neill, 2001). As a school leader, the principal is tasked with the role of setting the direction for a school and ensuring proper implementation of school policies. Many of these policies are performance-oriented to ensure that the students attain set goals (Louis & Wahlstrom, 2011). This means that a principal not only requires teaching skills but also needs to exhibit a high level of ability to lead others to run the school appropriately (Roden & Cardina, 1996). Another study by Horng, Klasik, and Loeb (2010), focusing on time management in relation to school effectiveness, found that the ability of a principal to decide the types of activities that time should be spent on had direct impact on the learners' performances. Horng et al. (2010) established that those school principals who chose to spend more time in organization management activities increased the performance of the students.

On the other hand, the superintendent, as the top executive officer in the school district, ensures that the vision of the school board is implemented through making decisions related to education programs, staff, spending, and facilities (Papa, Lankford, & Wyckoff, 2002). In addition to supervising, hiring, and managing principals, superintendents supervise the central staff members in a district school. The principals are accountable to superintendents, and the latter are held responsible by the education board, which is answerable to the government (Björk, Browne-Ferrigno & Kowalski, 2014). In an educational environment where performance appraisal is done regularly to

hold every stakeholder accountable, superintendents are compelled to look for highly competent, qualified, and performing principals during recruitment to ensure students' achievement and accountability standards are met in their schools (Engel & Curran, 2016).

There is, however, a growing concern over the declining availability and turnover of highly competent principals, which has been framed by national education advocates and groups (Roza & Swartz, 2003). A national study completed by Sava and Koerner (1998) indicated that half of the district schools' reports showed a decline in the number of qualified applicants for school principal positions. The investigators noted that this kind of shortage due to turnover existed in both the urban and rural schools across all educational levels (Harris, Rutledge, Ingle & Thompson, 2010). In addition, there have been increased expectations from superintendents for newly hired principals to arrive at the school with remarkable skills. These include building a relationship that enhances togetherness among shareholders with diverse opinions and views and employing exemplary pedagogical skills that enable them to be excellent leaders across school programs and classrooms (McDonald et al., 2014). Understanding superintendents' perceptions of what makes a successful principal will not solve the shortage problem; however, identifying the important personal and leadership characteristics of newly hired principals through the lens of the superintendent may foster new ideas for principal leadership retention, development, performance and accountability.

Superintendents have a significant responsibility in the hiring and supervising of principals (Parylo & Zepeda, 2016). However, there is very little evidence in the literature that supports superintendents' perceptions of what qualities are needed to be a

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successful newly hired principal. Even though investigators discovered that applicants demonstrated personal and professional characteristics that were viewed by the superintendent as basic qualifications during the hiring process (Malone, Sharp & Thompson, 2000), others found shortages of qualified candidates who apply for the principal posts (Cruzeiro & Boone, 2009). Most of these studies have supported the conclusion that there is a general crisis in the education sector due to a declining number of qualified school principals. This research examined superintendents' perceptions of important personal and leadership characteristics for newly hired principals to be successful in New York schools.

Effective principals are a prime commodity in the educational system (Lehman, Boyland & Shriver, 2014). Productive school administrators have been reported as the cause and reason for effective educational institutions as well as positive student outcomes (Lehman et al., 2014). Principals are leaders and managers; they are responsible for ensuring that teachers, students, and parents are fully engaged in the learning process (Lehman et al., 2014). They also inspire the atmosphere of collaborations and involvement for the benefit of the students (Lehman et al., 2014). These responsibilities, however, are difficult tasks. Thus, principals should be able to demonstrate such abilities even before they are hired so that the school and its stakeholders can benefit from the very beginning of a principal's tenure (Lehman et al., 2014).

Newly hired principals face the challenge of successful assimilation within the educational institutions that they lead. Principals must possess personal and leadership characteristics that will allow them to provide a good first impression. A good start will

allow these leaders to create a positive climate and culture, as well as set clear expectations. Even though superintendents can be influenced by their own perceptions and personal standards (Hart, 1993), superintendents who are primarily the ones responsible for the hiring of principals must be able to identify and assess the principal applicants as to their suitability and effectiveness as an administrator to meet the accountability and performance demands (Estes, 2011). Therefore, this research examined superintendents' perceptions of important personal and leadership characteristics for newly hired principals to be successful in New York schools.

Problem Statement

Principals are a crucial component in the effective running of schools and overall school performance (Williamson, 2011). Furthermore, literature has consistently shown that a strong relationship prevails between principals' leadership characteristics, student engagement, teacher efficacy, and parental involvement toward responding to the demands of school accountability (Maxwell, Huggins, & Scheurich, 2010). Because of new mandates and reforms, schools across America have struggled to meet the challenges of these vigorous accountability standards leading to the reality of a high rate of turnover of principals (Eaton, 2011). Superintendents across the country are reporting the increasing difficulty of getting adept administrators (Eaton, 2011). Additional research shows a decline in the number of qualified applicants for school principal positions (Harris et al., 2010; Roza & Swartz, 2003). Even though superintendents can be influenced by their own perceptions and personal standards (Hart, 1993), superintendents who are primarily the ones responsible for the hiring of principals must be able to identify and assess the principal applicants as to their suitability and effectiveness as an

administrator to meet the accountability and performance demands (Estes, 2011). This study examined the views of superintendents when it comes to perceptions of important personal and leadership characteristics for newly hired principals to be successful in New York schools.

Purpose Statement

This study sought to identify superintendents' perceptions of the important personal and leadership characteristics that newly hired principals exhibit which support their effectiveness in leading schools in New York State. This study provided information regarding the personal and leadership characteristics of principals that are valued by the superintendents when hiring them. Lastly, this study made clear the value-judgements that superintendents have of what constitutes an adept principal.

Research Questions

Since the purpose of this study was to examine superintendents' perceptions of important personal and leadership characteristics for newly hired principals to be successful school leaders, this study used a descriptive qualitative approach to provide answers to the following research questions:

1. What are the personal characteristics that superintendents perceive to be important for newly hired principals in New York State?

2. What are the leadership characteristics that superintendents perceive to be important for newly hired principals in New York State?

3. Which personal and leadership characteristics increase the probability of a newly hired principal being retained by a school district in New York State?

Significance of Study

The significance of this study was threefold. First, this study intended to help public school organizations become more effective by developing criteria models for the assessment, hiring, training, retention, and development of the newly hired effective principals. Urban and rural districts with a poor track record of student achievement and high family poverty rates have been the focus of several studies showcasing struggling attempts by superintendents to fill vacant school principal positions (Farkas, Johnson, Duffett, & Foleno, 2001; Olson, 2008). Identifying the important personal and leadership characteristics of newly hired principals as viewed and perceived by superintendents may help school districts to bridge this gap and successfully retain newly hired principals while fostering a culture of ongoing leadership development to better address and meet rigorous demands of performance and accountability.

Second, this study aimed to inform existing practices by schools of education in the training and preparation of candidates for principalship. Considering the high rate of turnover among principals, there is more than ever a need by school boards and superintendents to hire new principals for their schools. According to several resources (Baltzell & Dentler, 1983; Hammond, Muffs, & Sciascia, 2001), 40% of the current principal workforce was set to retire by 2014. The Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) (2016) reported that from 2014 to 2024, the number of students enrolled in schools is projected to increase. Some additional schools may open to accommodate these students, resulting in a need for more principals. Due to increased job stress and complexity, further acceleration in retirement and attrition of the current principal workforce has been witnessed (Gates, Ringel, Santibañez, Ross, & Cheng, 2003). Being able to examine

leadership characteristics of newly hired principals provided an impetus to understand and inform existing practices in the training and preparation of the future generation of principals who will fill the numerous vacant positions.

Lastly, hiring an effective principal is a challenging task because a candidate's personal and leadership qualifications and abilities as defined by mandated standards can significantly differ from a superintendent's perception of those qualifications and abilities (Goldring, Taie, & Owens, 2014). This study helped to form a comparison of the personal and leadership characteristics, valued by superintendents, to the newly established leadership standards of 2015. Examining the perceptions of superintendents with regards to the important leadership characteristics newly hired principals should exhibit required assessing superintendents' views of leadership characteristics in comparison to newly established leadership standards.

Summary

Over the course of the last several decades, researchers have revealed significant evidence that associate effective principals to school success, including the positive impact that they have on student achievement. Recently, the United States public education system has faced much scrutiny and more debates have been argued to provide quality leadership in every school. As such, it was imperative to study superintendent perceptions of the necessary characteristics of newly hired principals to identify the most compelling attributes that school principals should have as they engage in management and control of these institutions.

Educational leadership at the building and district level has been widely researched during the last 20 years and continues to evolve through education reforms

(Fullan, 2002). Principals are a key component in the effective running of schools and overall school performance (Williamson, 2011). Furthermore, literature has consistently shown that a strong relationship prevails between principals' leadership characteristics, student engagement, teacher efficacy, and parental involvement toward responding to the demands of school accountability (Maxwell et al., 2010). Principals' leadership is therefore crucial in supporting and guiding current reforms (Willingham & Rotherdam, 2009). Thus, the role of educational leadership needed to be examined.

Newly hired principals face the challenge of successful assimilation within the schools they lead. Principals need to possess leadership characteristics that will allow them to not only provide a good first impression but that will allow these leaders and their constituents to create a positive climate and culture, as well as set clear expectations. This study determined the personal and leadership qualities and characteristics of school principals that superintendents perceived to be of importance not only to be effective principals but to become competent leaders.

A review of the literature is presented in Chapter 2. The research design, methodology, and analysis are discussed in Chapter 3. Chapter 4 presents a detailed analysis of the results and findings, and Chapter 5 discusses the findings, implications, and recommendations for future research and practice.

Chapter 2: Related Literature and Studies

Introduction and Purpose

This literature review first examined what constitutes effective leadership and what the expected personal and professional characteristics of principals should be within the context of educational leadership and standards. However, there is a clear limitation of current research outlining superintendents' perspectives and perceptions of the necessary personal and professional characteristics of newly hired principals. Therefore, the initial parts of this literature review were utilized to help inform the first two proposed research questions:

1. What are the personal characteristics that superintendents perceive to be important for newly hired principals in New York State?

2. What are the leadership characteristics that superintendents perceive to be important for newly hired principals in New York State?

The second part of this literature review focused on the significance of the superintendents as organizational leaders. It analyzed superintendents' characteristics of their own effective leadership, and identified their expectations of other administrators' leadership - the newly hired principals (Pijanowski, Hewitt, & Brady, 2009). The third part of this literature review focused on the principals and the theory of emotional intelligence and leadership efficiency (Hull, 2012) and how it was utilized to inform the third research question:

3. Which personal and leadership characteristics increase the probability of a principal being retained by a school district in New York State?

Leadership

Core definition of leadership. Galton (1869) commenced and shaped the idea that individuals possess innate or inheritable qualities that ultimately shape their personalities. Before the first half of the 20th century, it was believed that every future leader was born with permanent qualities that would lead to their individual greatness. This belief changed over time, and new ideas continued to evolve, defining other qualities that would differentiate leaders from non-leaders. Stogdill (1948) declared that decisiveness regarding judgment, eloquence, and interpersonal and administrative capabilities make up all qualifications that set leaders apart from the rest. Stogdill (1948) further described leadership as an influential process that is also interwoven with an array of personal skills. The leader can shape, regulate, control and change the attitudes, behavior and performance of his group members. The latter are supposed to comply with the former's desires and directives and partially suspend their own judgment and discretion. There exists a relationship between the leader and his or her group members which is characterized by interpersonal and social interaction.

Stogdill's (1948) theory, which opposed Galton's (1869), eventually changed beliefs about the making of the leader from the idea that such role is purely hereditary. Research has refined this theory to define leader traits as "relatively coherent and integrated patterns of personal characteristics, reflecting a range of individual differences, which foster consistent leadership effectiveness across a variety of group and organizational situations" (Zaccaro, Kemp, & Bader, 2004, p. 104). It was therefore

important to emphasize that there is a wide array of both personal and leadership characteristics that accurately distinguishes leaders from non-leaders which can assist in the assessment, hiring, training, retention, and development of future and existing principals.

The aspect or term leadership can therefore be defined as "the activity of leading a group of people or an organization or the ability to do this" (Zaccaro et al. 2004, p. 105). In addition, a leader is any "person who holds a dominant or superior position within a field and can exercise a high degree of control or influence over others" (Zaccaro et al., 2004, p. 106). Zaccaro et al. (2004), further stated that leadership involves: setting up a clear vision, influencing others using the formed vision, helping in giving out the information, knowledge, and methods to realize that vision and being skilled in managing conflicts among concerned individuals. The literature clearly supports a multi-dimensional definition of leadership, which is essential to understanding how complex educational leadership can also be.

Educational leadership. There is an abundance of research supporting educational leadership as a complex process (McCann, 2011; Stronge, Richard, & Catano, 2008; Wagner, 2010). To define effective educational leadership, the literature stresses the importance to consider the various leadership skills in question (McCann, 2011). McCann (2011) identified several of these skills through a research survey conducted in two rural educational institutions located in southwest Virginia. This study sought to investigate educators' opinions concerning principal-related qualifications that school heads must possess to ensure their effectiveness as good leaders. Teacher respondents were chosen from schools that were classified as fully accredited by the No

Child Left Behind Act qualifying standards that changed their institutions from *Needs Improvement* in the academic years 2005 to *Fully Accredited* for academic years 2006 through 2009. Among those skills, McCann determined that school heads ought to have the skills to maximize evidence-based practices (EBP) to sustain high student achievement and teacher accountability. To improve or increase student achievement, these evidence-based practices would require changes not only in instructional practices, but also, educational leadership practices.

As part of an effort to determine the quality of leadership in our schools, Levine (2005) outlined a need to refocus educational leadership preparation programs. Following a 4-year study of school leadership preparation programs across the country, Levine created a 9-point template to judge the quality of these institutions that prepare future school administrators. This shift permitted the articulation of some new educational leadership models among which nine characteristics are highlighted (Levine, 2005). Several of these characteristics focus on the ability to effectively prepare its future leaders in the areas of instruction, organization development and change management, as well as linked goals, learning activities and assessments to shared values, beliefs, and knowledge about effective organizational practices. Next, Levine identified field-based internships as evidence of effective leadership preparation. These opportunities enable principals-in-training to apply leadership knowledge and skills under the guidance of an expert practitioner, and mentoring or coaching that supports modeling, questioning, observations of practice and feedback.

Levine (2005) also stressed the learning of strategies that promote critical thinking skills. These strategies are necessary for educational leaders because they are

problem-based learning strategies and will lead to case methods and projects that support reflection and link theory to practice, as well as a structure that enables collaboration, teamwork and mutual support among principals-in-training (Levine, 2005). Collaboration between universities and school districts to create coherence between training and practice, as well as pipelines for recruitment, preparation, hiring and induction is also outlined as an important characteristic. Finally, Levine pointed out two final characteristics of effective leadership preparation programs: the vigorous recruitment of high-quality candidates with experience as expert, dynamic teacher and commitment to instructional improvement, and financial support that enables principals-in-training to complete an intensive program with a full-time internship.

The vital need for effective educational leadership therefore means that there is a need for identifying the appropriate leadership standards against which principals need to be evaluated to determine their suitability for the position and the possibility of their success as school leaders. Each state adopted its own standards for effective principals, while national associations for elementary and secondary school principals came up with their standards and definition of a competent principal (Lehman et al., 2014).

Leadership standards 2015. The New Leadership Standards (National Policy Board for Educational Administration, 2015) identify 10 professional standards of education leaders that are a must for all principals and are the basis for the assessment of essential skills and performance. The following are the ten standards:

1. Having the ability to develop, enact and advocate visions, missions and core value of a quality education, which facilitates the well-being, and success of learners;

2. Acting ethically as a leader per professional norms and the ability to strive for equal chances in education and promoting culturally responsive practices, which enhances students' performance;

3. Striving for equity of educational opportunity and culturally responsive practices that promotes academic success and well-being;

4. The capacity to develop and support coherent systems of curriculum, assessment, and instructions to improve the academic performance of learners;

5. Having the ability to cultivate an inclusive supportive and caring school community that enhances education performance as well as the well-being of learners;

6. Having the skills of developing professional capacity of all school personnel to ameliorate the performance and welfare of students;

7. Having the capacity building within professional communities, staff and teachers, which assist in promoting the performance of students;

8. The ability to engage families and community meaningfully;

9. Having the ability to manage operations and resources in a school;

10. Having the capacity to act as agents of continuous improvement in a school.

These standards clearly identify the functions and the scope of a school principal that encompass delivering instruction, ensuring student learning, building a positive and supportive school environment, and involving parents and stakeholders in the school's expansion. These standards are essential requirements for the hiring and sustaining of new principals, which superintendents can use throughout the hiring process and in their evaluation of principals.

Leadership skills versus leadership characteristics. In the early 1990s, a group of researchers from the U.S. Army and Department of State began to test and develop a theory of leadership based on problem-solving skills in various organizations (Mumford, Zaccaro, Harding, Jacobs, & Fleishman, 2000). The studies were conducted over a period of six years and used a sample of more than 1,800 officers. The project used a series of new measures and tools to assess the skills and characteristics of the officers. The goal of the research was to explain the underlying elements of effective leadership. Based on these findings from this extensive research, Mumford et al. (2000) formulated a "skill-based model to leadership" outlining the relationships between characteristics, skills, and performance. An important finding was that leadership skills can be developed over time through education, training, and experience. This suggests that many people have the potential to become effective leaders.

In addition, Weber (2009) determined the perceptions of superintendents on the leadership characteristics of principals from both new and existing elementary schools in Indiana. Weber's research explored the differences between the characteristics of a principal candidate for a new school compared to the skills of the principal of an existing school. The study made use of descriptive statistics, one-way within subjects MANOVAs, Bonferroni post hoc tests, and a one-way between subjects MANOVA. Using Pearson correlation, significant differences were found among the categories that determined the preference of characteristics per the superintendents' perceptions of what principals' skills should be. Demir (2008) suggested that differences between the managerial and organizational characteristics and the other five categories were found in both the new hire and replacement hire surveys. This literature is important in the

framework of this study in that leadership does not have to be approached only from the perspectives of what principals should do to be effective. It considers their individual characteristics in making effective leadership possible. Among these individual characteristics, Demir identified cognitive ability, motivation, and personality to be of importance.

Significance of superintendents. There is a clear limitation of current research outlining superintendents' perspectives and perceptions of the necessary personal and professional characteristics of newly hired principals. Since the focus of this study lies in the effectiveness of principals as building leaders through the lens of superintendents' perceptions, this portion of the literature review highlights the superintendents' own leadership skills and effectiveness, which in turn influences their perceptions of effective principals.

Research has shown that superintendents are the driving force behind successful principals and school districts (Waters, Marzano, & McNulty, 2006). The maintenance of successful student achievement in a school had always been incumbent upon the superintendents' primary responsibility to focus on providing direction and instructional leadership to principals (Coleman and LaRocque, 1990; Jones, 1987; Murphy and Hallinger, 1986; Wimpelberg, 1986). The superintendents' role is much different today (Goens, 2009). Superintendents are organizational leaders and their role spans beyond the classroom or the building level (DiPaola & Stronge, 2003). The superintendents' role as organizational leaders require a different set of personal and leadership characteristics than school principals to effectively run a school district (Portis & Garcia, 2007).

Superintendents as organizational leaders. The analogy of an orchestra conductor is synonymous to superintendents of schools (Domenech, 2009); they are the conductors of administrative performances and facilitate the performance of all personnel. Superintendents respond to and persuade audiences with varying ideas about the performance and leadership of the district. The superintendent, in short, personifies the aspirations and responsibilities of the entire organization (DiPaola & Stronge, 2003). Literature about educational leadership shows a strong correlation between the quality of district leadership and the achievement of said school districts (Waters et al., 2006).

In one of the very few rigorous empirical studies available on superintendents' leadership, Murphy and Hellinger (1986) examined 12 successful school districts in California. Through in-depth, 2.5-hour interviews of superintendents, as well as the analysis of archival data, the researchers' goals were to understand the extent of administrative controls upon principals and to determine how these controls differ among superintendents' best practices for successful leadership. From their findings, the work of superintendents was summarized as: "active involvement in establishing district direction in the areas of curriculum and instruction, in ensuring consistency and coordination among technical case operations, and in monitoring internal processes and inspecting outcomes" (Murphy and Hallinger, 1986, p. 228). In addition, to be effective instructional leaders, Murphy and Hallinger found that these superintendents were accustomed to heavily administrative controls, and were actively and locally involved in students' instruction.

Superintendents have seen their roles and responsibilities change over the years. Meador (2015) defined the superintendent of today as the CEO of the school district.

Beyond that, a superintendent is the main representative and overseer of the district; superintendents are responsible for the successes – and failures – of the entire district under their leadership. In addition to providing direct supervision of the principal, superintendents handle many more roles throughout the district (Meador, 2015). First, the superintendent, upon appointment, becomes a liaison for the board of education, keeping it abreast of the events that take place in the schools. Second, the superintendent performs the role as a leader for many more positions under him/her such as the assistant superintendent, principals and assistant principals, teachers, and coaches, and even for the hiring, maintaining, and terminating support personnel. It is imperative that superintendents set up systems that facilitate effective employee selections at all levels throughout the district (Wagner, 2010). Third, the superintendent must also be able to manage daily and long-term operations such as building improvements and bond issues and ensuring that the district meets local, state, and national curricular standards. The superintendent also extends his/her leadership by constantly evaluating the district improvements, policies, reports, and pupil personnel services (Ansar, 2015).

The superintendent also lobbies for the district (Hendricks, 2013). A superintendent builds relationship with everyone in the community (Hendricks, 2013). The community includes parents, students, the business sector, and non-direct members of schools, such as senior citizens (Hendricks, 2013). This function of the superintendent helps to reduce and increase the value of the superintendent's authority during the time that a bond issue is to be passed. Since the superintendent is considered as the face of the district, he/she is supposed to work with the media on significant times in the district, such as during crises and celebrations (Hendricks, 2013). Superintendents often advocate

for their district and their students through the media (Meador, 2015). A forward-thinking superintendent would use the opportunity to work with the media for promoting the schools and a good image for them (Meador, 2015).

Superintendents' effective leadership. As organizational leaders, the role of superintendents is in constant change. For several years, the role of these organizational leaders was to effectively manage fiscal, physical, and personnel resources (Glass, 2005). Even though this is still current, the effective organizational leadership also requires a vision, and the ideal of the current model superintendent is one who communicates strongly, builds relationships, and demonstrates political acumen (Björk et al., 2005). It is essential to maintain successful professional rapport with neighboring districts, not only for administrative duties but also for communication purposes (Blank, Jacobson, & Melaville, 2012). These community-school partnerships can have a positive impact on student achievement and can be a tool of effective leadership in sharing best practices (Blank et al., 2012).

Superintendents stand to benefit even more when they create a strong rapport with government leaders because they get to influence important political and social issues that may impact the districts (Kowalski, 2005). Despite this simple dichotomy between manager and leader (Goens, 2009), understanding superintendents' effective leadership requires one to understand which effective leadership is practiced and how it may influence the superintendent- principal relationship.

Forner, Bierlein-Palmer, and Reeves (2012) conducted a study of superintendents in a rural district of the Midwest in an attempt to examine superintendents' behaviors linked to their leadership effectiveness. Forner et al. (2012) selected, via a sampling

strategy, seven superintendents whose districts witnessed a significant increase in test scores to determine if these superintendents used the effective leadership principles by Waters and Marzano (2006). The determining factors of the superintendents' effective leadership that were sought for by Forner et al. included: established goals and expectations, personal conversation to build reform support, intervention strategies for students and teachers, removal of low-performing teachers and principals, leverage of a close working relationship with principals, and taking a hard line in union negotiations. The findings revealed that seven superintendents practiced these principles with one exception in that superintendents did not practice collaborative goal setting. What was revealed is that the superintendents used personal communication in order to have the school board and community at large support the goals that he or she set (Forner et al., 2012). The study concluded that the seven superintendents increased student achievement by setting high expectations for every student, establishing clear parameters and guidelines for principal autonomy, and monitoring principals' leadership function at the building level (Forner et al., 2012). The research also pointed out the importance of documenting intervention strategies with teachers and principals by the seven superintendents, and removal of ineffective teachers and principals to ensure high quality staff through all the schools. Forner et al. did not outline characteristics of ineffectiveness as it applied to superintendents, teachers, and principals. However, Forner et al. stressed that because of the school district sizes, these rural superintendents were not as distant from school buildings as urban superintendents (Forner et al., 2012).

In another study, Petersen (2002) concluded that superintendents and principals in urban school districts have vastly different instructional leadership roles and that the

superintendents' effective leadership styles may therefore differ from their counterparts' in rural districts. The sample for this study consisted of urban elementary and middle school principals from one large district and two small districts. The findings identified that district size does make a difference in superintendents' ability to effectively lead in a district and attain outcomes. Petersen sought to discover if correlations may have existed between the superintendents' ability to organize and foresee effective curriculum frameworks that affected academic outcomes in school districts. Petersen recognized that no clear indicator of how superintendents could influence decision making existed. However, Petersen noted that the relationship between superintendents and principals are important to districts' academic success in that superintendents can establish effective leadership by fostering a positive district culture through the relationship he or she sets with principals. This focus on best practices for superintendents in the literature is important to this study as it may help draw a parallel between superintendents' own effectiveness as organizational leaders and how they in turn may perceive their principals' effectiveness as school building leaders.

Superintendents' perceptions of school principal candidates. Research by Baron (1990) claimed that superintendents' effectiveness is the key to a successful instructional program. There is a direct correlation between principals' effectiveness as building leaders and superintendents' effectiveness as district leaders (Waters, Marzano, & McNulty, 2003). Effective leadership may be noticeable at the time of hire of new principals. In a preliminary investigation of superintendents' perceptions regarding recruitment and selection of school principals, Baron concluded that there is a considerable lack of uniformity among superintendents regarding principal recruitment

and selection, and most likely expectations of the principal candidates. Of the 80 surveys

mailed to a random sample of the nation's superintendents, 35 usable surveys rating the

importance of 42 recruitment and selection procedures were completed and returned.

Baron further assessed that the development of an accurate job description and

professional references ranked the highest in their respective categories. A total of six

factors were extracted from 22 selection tools. Three factors related to how well the

candidate fits into the school system and community, two pertained to advanced

academic training, and the last related to the candidate's personal background. Two

findings are particularly important to note in that school superintendents valued

instructional experience more importantly than administrative experience, and

superintendents did not attach too much importance to professional training beyond the

requirements for state licensure. Baron further continued his research on

superintendents' perceptions of principal candidates by reporting a prioritized list of

candidate characteristics (Baron, 1990). The characteristics were reported in the

following prioritized (mean) order as:

1. ability to listen effectively - 4.671;

2. ability to motivate others - 4.650;

3. ability to communicate effectively - 4.642;

4. ability to work with other people - 4.261;

5. human relation/interpersonal skills - 4.580.

It was therefore important to this study to review the literature based on how

superintendents' expectations or perceptions of effective principal candidates may have

evolved.

Literature has constantly shown that quality leadership plays a crucial role in school improvement (Davidovich, Nikolay, Laugerman, & Commodore, 2009). Educational leaders are important people tasked to set the direction and vision for school improvement while ensuring student learning (Habegger, 2008). They institute changes that will stimulate innovation and will often challenge norms to improve student achievement (Habegger, 2008). Horng, Kalogrides, and Loeb (2009) described that principals greatly influence student achievement and other significant institutional events with sufficient competence because they choose teachers and can motivate teachers to dedicate themselves to improving student achievement. They set the vision and goals for the school and find ways to manage resources. Like superintendents who are organizational leaders, principals also develop structures of the school organization to improve class instruction and productive learning (Horng et al., 2010).

Weber (2009) determined the qualities that the superintendents from the public schools of South Dakota seek when hiring principals. In this study, 149 superintendents across the state were given similar survey instruments testing their perceptions on ideal principal traits based on five entities: headship, management, qualifications, communication, and exterior relations. About 120 superintendents responded to the research, which was then evaluated using descriptive analyses and MANOVAs. Weber found, through quantitative analysis, that instructional leadership is valued among superintendents. Therefore, ideal principals should be able to influence and motivate their teachers to continuously work on their manner of instruction inside the classroom. Weber also found that being able to manage conflicts among students and creating an

environment where learning can easily take place are also some of the most sought-after criteria for potential principals.

Weiler and Cray (2012) mentioned traditional preparatory programs for leaders did not meet the expectations to produce qualified school leaders to handle the challenges of the 21st century education reforms. For over 10 years, The Wallace Foundation (2013) has given project grants to many district schools throughout 28 states to improve leadership in public schools. The grants focus the research on two primary axes: the efficiency of preparatory programs for principals, and on the evaluation of principals. With all this collaborative effort, a great deal of the school principal's job description and reasons that make them efficient educational leaders were determined. The Wallace Foundation outlined five core elements that effective principals should demonstrate: high standards and vision for success in academics, climate for suitable learning, growing leadership in others, improvement of class instruction, and superior management skills to foster development.

A survey by the University of Washington examined better ways for superintendents, the Board of Directors, educators, as well as other campuses to understand the intricate duties of principals and boost their morale (Portin, Schneider, DeArmond, & Gundlach, 2003). The study created a new perspective in that it focused on what the principal could do and bring to the school in the long term. It particularly underscored the notion of principals developing their leadership potential on the job as opposed to looking to hire a perfect leader with a predefined set of leadership skills or characteristics. The comprehensive survey with instructors from 21 campuses in four jurisdictions drew a conclusion that rather than looking for the perfect principal, district

educational heads ought to acknowledge that various principal candidates are viable in

varied educational business structures. The study also suggested that instead of

discouraging these structures, educational district leaders, state administrators and

colleges of education can adapt and accept it (Portin et al., 2003). Even though the

literature shows clear expectations from superintendents as to what may constitute an

effective principal at the time of hire (Weber, 2009), it is also essential to consider that

superintendents as organizational leaders require some flexibility in the perceptions of

leadership skills of these candidates.

  Flexibility in perceptions of leadership skills. Flexibility can be defined as the

way to which principals as leaders adapt their leadership role to the needs of the current

environment. It is synchronous with the concept of transformational leadership (Spillane

& Sherer, 2004). Deering, Dilts, and Russell (2003) described the flexibility of

leadership skills in terms of mental agility. Furthermore, Lashway (2001) discussed the

acceptance of diverse opinions and notes that effective leaders support, drive and initiate,

without fear of retribution from those who offer different views. Lashway (2001)

identified specific behaviors associated with this responsibility, among which include

adapting leadership style to the needs of specifics situations, and being directive or

nondirective as the situation warrants. Lashway (2001) also emphasized that leaders

must be able to express diverse and contrary opinions, and to be comfortable with making

major changes in how things are done. The set of leadership skills may be perceived

differently depending on the school demands and priorities and is not uniform and one

size fits all (Stronge et al., 2008). Superintendents must show flexibility in their

perceptions of leadership skills, perhaps simply by the fact that principals' leadership

itself is a more contentious, complex, situated, and dynamic phenomenon than previously thought (King & Bouchard, 2011). Furthermore, superintendents need to be flexible in the perceptions of leadership skills (Stronge et al., 2008) because schools are now complex and diverse where the evolving nature of school environments has placed high demands on educational leaders.

A study by Stronge et al. (2008) emphasized that the duty and function of a school principal, or educational leaders, centers around creating a change in children's vivacity and growth, and ultimately in children's achievement in each environment. Stronge et al. (2008) delineated factors and revealed methods of how principals can effectively accommodate the demand and greatest priorities of their school while continuously developing and redefining their leadership skills. The following indicators, supported by this research, were identified as: instructional leadership with vision, positive school climate and supportive work culture and standards, superior skills in human resource management, superior skills in organization management, transparent and effective communication across all organizational levels, and professional role modeling for others and high ethical standards.

The flexibility in perceptions from superintendents of principals' leadership skills stems from the importance of the nexus between effective leadership and students' achievement in various school contexts (Stronge et al., 2008). The literature allowed us to examine superintendents' characteristics of their own effective leadership, and to identify their expectations of other administrators' leadership, the newly hired principals (Pijanowski et al., 2009). The third part of this literature review focuses on the principals

and the theory of emotional intelligence and leadership efficiency (Hull, 2012) and how it can be utilized to inform the third research question:

3. Which personal and leadership characteristics increase the probability of a principal being retained by a school district in New York State?

The Principal

The position of principal in educational institutions is demanding and requires exceptional leadership skills (Stronge et al., 2008). The leadership role of an effective school principal is based upon the ability to inspire and demonstrate a deep and thorough understanding of the real need for a school that will lead to meaningful organizational change (The Wallace Foundation, 2013). The actions needed from a leader underscore the importance of having a shared vision, empowering others to initiate action, and providing an environment suitable for change, which are vital practices that successful principals provide when leading a school (Kouzes & Posner, 2002). In order to examine the effectiveness of newly appointed principals through the lens of superintendent perceptions, it is essential to understand their role and the historical significance of the principals in school districts.

While the superintendent watches over a district of schools, a principal focuses on a single school during his or her entire term in the principalship. Moody (2007) defined principal as the head of a school, college, or other educational institution. The principal has the executive authority in the entire institution and has the power to rule how the school runs. When decision-making is necessary, a principal can share the executive authority with fellow teachers, students, parents, and the community (Gamage & Antonio, 2006). Additionally, the principal may be more involved in students' learning

environment, academic progress and instructional activities throughout the school over the superintendent.

A study by Moody (2007) was conducted in various K-12 school districts throughout the state of Arizona. A survey of the population focused on all public unified K-12 school districts within the state of Arizona that met the requirement of employing newly hired principals within their district. A newly hired principal was defined as a principal who had been in their respective position for 3 years or less. This descriptive study incorporated a multi-method approach by using questionnaires with open-ended questions and field interviews. The findings concluded that competent principals shared common traits regarding experience, vision, school, community cultural awareness, and collaboration. The newly hired principals, on the other hand, turned out to have fewer competencies, less experiences, and showed a lack of understanding of the school and community culture as well as politics in education. The study concluded that experience in a previous administrative role holds the most significant key factor in increasing competency and success.

For some, the process of building a trait is more important than initially determining whether an official has the good or bad aspect of a trait. Jones (2014) investigated the impact of programs focusing on principals' practices and self-efficacy during their first year. The study examined the effects of principal-focused programs under the Educational Services Center of Cuyahoga County, OH. The information gathered explored the impact of mentoring first-year principals regarding practices through the Kouzes and Posner Leadership Practices Inventory (LPI). The latter's self-efficacy was tested through the Ohio Leadership Advisory Council (OLAC) inventory.

The participants were then asked to provide personal reflection after a year in the program. Outcomes of the investigation revealed a marked rise regarding self-efficacy and leadership skills. The participants' responses coincided with the program's focus on increasing the positive performances of principals.

Principalship in new school contexts. Schools have shaped and evolved in a multitude of ways, in part due to education reforms, since their first appearance as public institutions in the late nineteenth century (George, 1992). Leadership was not as much of a focus for principals as it has been in the last 10 years. In major school reforms, leadership was not always seen as an essential vehicle to school improvement and student achievement (Branch, Hanushek, & Rivkin, 2013). It is only in recent years that principal leadership in schools started gaining momentum and traction in relation to the increased need of better student performance and teacher productivity (Demir, 2008). Immense responsibilities have also been placed upon principals throughout the last 15 years, creating a new and more demanding context for principalship. In 2001, the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB) conducted a study to answer two questions (Bottoms and O'Neill, 2001): What do successful education leaders need to know and be able to do? How do you prepare and develop effective school leaders? Bottoms and O'Neill (2001) conducted a focus group discussion with 15 exemplary school leaders to determine how they improved student achievement and what tools or training had prepared them to do so. This study interviewed educational leadership faculty as well as expert principals and teacher leaders to determine their perceptions concerning: applicant screening; content to be taught, including functions, knowledge, skills, and dispositions; teaching and learning strategies; field experiences; and induction support. The

researchers found considerable agreement across the three groups. Bottoms and O'Neill emphasized accountability for what changed in carrying out the demanding roles of principals over the years and establishing a new context for the roles of principals. The paper argued that a new breed of principals must rise in response to the era of higher standards and higher accountability. Under A Blueprint for Reform (United States Department of Education, 2010), President Barack Obama stated:

Every child in America deserves a world-class education…this is a moral imperative – the key to securing a more equal, fair, and just society. The efforts will require the skills and talents of many, especially our nation's teachers, principals, and other school leaders. Our goal must be to have a great teacher in every classroom and a great principal in every school (p. 1).

Principals' roles have historically changed. The new 21st century context for principals was defined by the 2001 No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) which enacted laws requiring that every school ensure that progress is made toward the goal that every student perform proficiently or at an advanced level in every content area on standardized tests by 2014. Because of this mandate, schools across America struggled with vigorous accountability standards, which affected principals' leadership in that principals would need to be effective instructional leaders (Stronge et al., 2008). The Every Student Succeed Act of 2015, instituted by President Obama, replaced the No Child Left Behind Act which was often thought to hinder progress rather than to raise standards. In a study to examine the changing role of principal as school leader, the Wallace Foundation (2013) noted:

Traditionally, the principal resembled the middle manager suggested in William Whyte's 1950's classic *The Organization Man* – an overseer of buses, boilers and books. Today, in a rapidly changing era of standards-based reform and accountability, a different conception has emerged – one closer to the model suggested by Jim Collins' 2001 *Good to Great*, which draws lessons from contemporary corporate life to suggest leadership that focuses with great clarity on what is essential, what needs to be done and how to get it done (p. 6).

This shift brings the principalship into a new context, with essential changes in what public education expects from principals (Branch et al., 2013). In the new contexts, principals are not to function as building managers; they are to become leaders of learning who can develop a team delivering effective instruction. To that extent, the literature brings us to examine the principals' leadership closer by looking at what principals' personal and leadership characteristics in this new context may be.

School principals' personal characteristics. Troubled schools are turned around by powerful leaders (Leithwood, Louis, Anderson & Wahlstrom, 2004). School reform in the 21st Century requires leaders to transform schools into "autonomous, systems-thinking organizations, revolving around professional learning communities that can embrace change and create a high performing learning environment for students and teachers" (Moore, 2009, p. 20). Much of the literature on the transformational leadership of schools clearly outlines the turmoil, resistance, stress, anger, frustration, and other emotions experienced during the process (Blankstein, 2004; DuFour & DuFour & Eaker, 2008; Evans, 1996; Moore, 2009). It is therefore essential for principals to be leaders

skilled in emotional intelligence in order to effectively run a school in the 21st century (Moore, 2009).

Emotional intelligence. Emotional intelligence refers to "the ability to perceive, control and evaluate emotions" (Hine, 2003, p. 271). "Emotional Intelligence is the subset of social intelligence that involves the ability to monitor one's own and others' feelings and emotions, to discriminate among them and to use this information to guide one's thinking and actions" (Salovey & Mayer, 1990, p. 191). It is widely believed among researchers that emotional intelligence can be learned and strengthened (Ashworth, 2013; Eichmann, 2009; Gardner, 1993; Rojas, 2012). A school culture of excellence is never acquired and principals need to foster such culture. To that extent, school leaders need to learn, develop, and demonstrate high levels of emotional intelligence (Moore, 2009). In a paper discussing the impact of emotional intelligence on school reforms, Moore (2009) stated that emotional intelligence leaders can provide a common vision for their school while fostering a sense of student achievement, and allowing a culture of trust and respect to thrive.

Salovey and Mayer (1990) proposed four hierarchical branches of emotional intelligence: emotional perception, emotional reasoning, emotional understanding, and emotional management. In juxtaposition to these four branches of emotional intelligence, Gardner (1993) came up with a different definition of intelligence. He described intelligence as "the ability to create or solve a problem or fashion a product that is valued in one or more community or cultural settings" (Gardner, 1993, p. 41). Later, Gardner (1999) expanded on Salovey and Mayer's (1990) classifications of emotional intelligence by identifying seven kinds of intelligence, as opposed to the previous four categories.

The seven consist of linguistic, logical-mathematical, musical, spatial, bodily-kinesthetic, interpersonal, and intrapersonal intelligence. He then later added naturalistic, spiritual, and existential intelligence to his initial list.

Craig (2008) delved into an in-depth analysis of emotional intelligence and its competencies such as self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and relationship management. He concluded that effective and efficient principals should have high emotional intelligence and good professional relationship with teachers. Sensitivity for own and others' emotions are a trait of principals with high levels of emotional intelligence. Additionally, these people also had superior skills in the emotional management of both self and others which then correlated to positive connections with colleagues and teams.

Effective principals with high EQ (emotional intelligence) also have well-developed optimism, self-awareness, empathy, and remarkable achievement orientation (Craig, 2008). These qualities are basic competencies of EQ which help create a good working atmosphere on the perimeter (Craig, 2008). There are several studies about resonance and leadership and how people with such qualities transcend organizations to succeed (Ainsworth, 2010; Wilcox, 2004; Wilson, 2008). One of the reasons is because there is a general satisfaction among employees in the work area (Ainsworth, 2010). Thus, safeguarding professional relationships by empowering them and growing meaningful experiences with the team is a critical tool in preparation for times where disagreements may arise, as the strong bond among employees will save principals and teachers from failure (Craig, 2008).

Brinia, Zimianiti, and Panagiotopoulos (2014) carried out a qualitative study to explore the impact of emotional intelligence and its role in leadership skills in principals. The study dispatched anonymous questionnaires to 301 educators and 36 principals from elementary schools in Athens, Greece. The study's questionnaires consisted of 14 questions; 10 of these questions were directed towards probing indicators of emotional intelligence in principals while the other four questions asked about their leadership capacities. The findings supported the hypothesis that emotional intelligence impacts better leadership performance for principals and school heads. Integrating these two standpoints, i.e. emotional intelligence and leadership efficiency, could be utilized by training colleges to facilitate future principals in becoming proficient leaders (Hull, 2012). The nurturing of adept emotional intelligence competencies enhances expert leadership capabilities including self-efficacy, aggressiveness, strategic planning, trust, and a thirst for accomplishment needed by principals to actualize their agendas.

Garrison-Wade, Sobel, and Fulmer (2007) conducted a study, courtesy of a western university, to determine the levels of preparedness of pre-service principals in the aspect of readiness to improve class instruction. This was a mixed methods study and a total of 124 participants took part in it. Focus groups and survey data were gathered from the records of both current and alumni students. Through the two activities, data were collected to determine the effectiveness of the program that prepared its administrators to lead inclusive schools. Findings from Garrison-Wade et al. (2007) concluded that principals that demonstrated more emotional intelligence can inspire more and facilitate reserved cultures by adopting and observing the values of understanding, trust, prospect,

achievement and effectiveness as well as combining emotions, beliefs, vision and values with great flexibility.

Interpersonal and intrapersonal intelligence. Goleman (1998) asserted that interpersonal and intrapersonal intelligence are also important contributors in emotional intelligence. Knowing oneself is vital in improving oneself (Goleman, 1998). Interpersonal and intrapersonal intelligence reflect the four attributes of emotional intelligence, i.e. self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and relationship management (West & Derrington, 2009). Goleman noted that emotional competence determines how we manage ourselves. Goleman identified six components to emotional competencies: self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, social competence, empathy, and social skills. These competencies are particularly of interest to this research in that they help understand how newly hired middle school principals may anticipate some of the leadership responsibilities and characteristics to be acquired.

Personal characteristics including various intelligences are an essential part of the literature when it comes to what contributes to effective leadership of principals (Goleman, Boyatzis, & McKee, 2002; Heifetz & Linsky, 2002). George (2000) indicated that emotional intelligence and personal characteristics are crucial to the process of leading, and should be considered an integral component of effective leadership. In addition, Van Rooy and Viswesvaran (2004) conducted a meta-analysis of 69 emotional intelligence studies and concluded that emotional intelligence along with personal characteristics could be considered a valuable predictor of job performance. There is enough research to suggest that leaders high in emotional intelligence may be more skillful or develop better skills in influencing, inspiring, intellectually stimulating, and

growing their staff (George, 2000; Goleman, 2000; Goleman et al., 2002). In the scope of this study, it is important to examine the importance of these personal characteristics and particularly, to better anticipate which characteristics superintendents may perceive to be of importance for newly hired principals to be successful leaders.

   Pro-social behavior. According to a study by Horng et al. (2009), another quality that principals must possess is pro-social behavior. Pro-social behavior is identified as actions that can benefit a person or a group of people (Eisenberg & Mussen, 1989; Kidron & Fleischman, 2006). Though often confused with altruism, pro-social behavior pertains to the action of a person and not the motivation behind it. Pro-social behavior includes actions like sharing, comforting, rescuing, and helping a crying child. Altruism is what refers to the motivation that fuels pro-social behavior. It is the genuine concern for the well-being of others - helping without expecting something in return. An example of altruism includes the anonymous donation to charity. The act of donating is the pro-social behavior.

   As Wispé (1972) explains, the phrase *pro-social behavior* was introduced in 1972 as the opposite term for *anti-social behavior*. Nevertheless, Boyd (2005) stressed the importance for people in the educational sector to develop such attributes as pro-social behaviors bring forth positive outcomes in teaching overall. Bergin (2014) defined pro-social education as the best practices in education designed to promote pro-social behavior, moral reasoning, social skills, civic engagement, social-emotional learning, and character. A school principal with high levels of emotional intelligence and pro-social behaviors is more likely to present satisfactory results than one who is easily subdued with burnouts from intense and heavy workloads (Bergin, 2014).

West and Derrington (2009) asserted that while superintendents believe they have some form of teamwork among their principals, many team members are involved in a play to look good on the surface or in front of the "boss" which they termed as "cosmetic" teamwork. It was suggested that such event takes place when the superintendent claims desire for teamwork but is unwilling to give up any control. Choosing a member to lead team recognition and rewards seem to be the solution to effect pro-social behaviors, although temporarily. West and Derrington argued that superintendents wanting to develop positive team relationships among principals should avoid using top-down command as this will only engage principals to comply for the superintendent's leader-power. Thus, superintendents should have collective competence and pro-social behaviors to achieve district-wide goals.

Summary

This literature review first examined what constitutes effective leadership, in particular, what the expected personal and professional characteristics of principals should be within the context of educational leadership and standards. However, there is a clear limitation of current research outlining the perspectives and perceptions of superintendents whose leadership skills are at the center of theses educational institutions. In addition, the second part of this literature review focused on the significance of the superintendents as organizational leaders. It analyzed superintendents' characteristics of their own effective leadership, and identified their expectations of other administrators' leadership, the newly hired principals (Pijanowski, Hewitt, & Brady, 2009). The third part of this literature review focused on the principals and the theory of emotional

intelligence and leadership efficiency (Hull, 2012) and how it could be utilized to inform the third research question.

This chapter detailed superintendents' perceptions regarding the necessary qualifications and characteristics of newly hired school principals. This chapter delineated how school principals influence the performance and accountability ratings of students; it becomes necessary for them to be evaluated based on their knowledge, dispositions, and skills during the hiring process. It also outlined how superintendents are compelled to look for highly competent, qualified, and performing principals during recruitment to ensure students' achievement and accountability standards are met in their schools (McCann, 2011). Descriptions of leadership, roles of the superintendents, the principal, the history and rise of the principal leadership, and the personal characteristics of a competent principal are given.

This review found that certain particularly valued qualities of principals are essential when taking on this role. Effective principals should have high emotional intelligence and pro-social behaviors. The way principals carry out their day-to-day experiences are vital to determining success in this position. Fundamental characteristics of leadership are considered when choosing and maintaining efficient principals who can maximize options and are adept at daily problem-solving.

It has been proven by repeated studies that principals influence the overall success and progress of schools, including the students and teachers (Leithwood & Jantzi, 1999). Therefore, it is imperative that selection of the principal be as meticulous as possible as principals affect student learning. Educational leadership is a quality that must be highly valued in a person that works with people shaping the future of young children. The

possession of characteristics such as having clear goals, sufficient knowledge, and a

willingness to seek new ideas and information while always maintaining consideration of

the welfare of others are top attributes inherent of an effective principal.

Chapter 3 – Research Design Methodology

Principals are a crucial component in the effective running of schools and overall school performance (Williamson, 2011). Furthermore, literature has consistently shown that a strong relationship prevails between principals' leadership characteristics, student engagement, teacher efficacy and parental involvement toward responding to the demands of school accountability (Maxwell et al., 2010). Because of new mandates and reforms, schools across America have struggled to meet the challenges of these vigorous accountability standards leading to the reality of a high rate of turnover of principals (Eaton, 2011). Superintendents across the country are reporting the increasing difficulty of getting adept administrators (Cruzeiro & Boone, 2009). Even though superintendents can be influenced by their own perceptions and personal standards (Hart, 1993), superintendents who are primarily the ones responsible for the hiring of principals must be able to identify and assess the principal applicants as to their suitability and effectiveness as an administrator to meet accountability and performance demands (Estes, 2011). This research study determined the personal and leadership qualities and characteristics of school principals that superintendents perceived to be of importance to be effective principals and competent leaders.

The purpose of this descriptive study was to examine the views of superintendents when it comes to perceptions of important personal and leadership characteristics for newly hired principals in New York schools. Qualitative research was used to better understand perceptions and thoughts from data that has detail and depth (Patton, 1989).

During the process of investigation, various tools were used to descriptively understand insights, attitudes, beliefs, perceptions, feelings, thoughts, and explanations (Patton, 1989). Qualitative data derived from this study was from observed behaviors that include, but are not limited to: situations, detailed descriptions, experiences from people that describe values, beliefs, thoughts, and attitudes (Patton, 1989). A qualitative research design was chosen for this study because the researcher wanted to gain an in-depth perspective regarding the perceptions of superintendents about the personal and professional characteristics of the newly hired principals that they have hired and/or supervised.

The formulated research questions were investigated within various contexts. Three essential questions were used to guide this study. They are as follows:

1. What are the personal characteristics that superintendents perceive to be important for newly hired principals in New York State?

2. What are the leadership characteristics that superintendents perceive to be important for newly hired principals in New York State?

3. Which personal and leadership characteristics increase the probability of a candidate being retained by a school district in New York State?

Because this study was interested in uncovering various leadership characteristics of newly hired principals, discussions with superintendents were needed to better understand how decisions were made in hiring principals through examples and scenarios that the superintendents have experienced or witnessed. The set of leadership characteristics may be perceived differently depending on the school demands and priorities and is not uniform and one size fits all (Stronge et al., 2008). The data were

derived from reactions, perceptions, and/or feelings about the successes and challenges that were experienced about newly hired principals through the lens of the superintendent.

Research Context

The New York State Department of Education (NYSED) represents 728 public school districts in New York State. These districts comprise an enrollment of over 2.5 million students. This study was conducted at 10 conveniently-selected NYSED identified school districts from the Hudson Valley region based on availability and eligibility of the participants. The Hudson Valley has suburban, urban and rural areas and is comprised of 74 public school districts. Several districts have been identified by NYSED as schools of excellence with many extracurricular and enrichment programs. The Hudson Valley is culturally diverse with a wide range of ethnicities and nationalities. In addition, there are supportive communities for learning with excellent resources, tools and technology. Of the 10 participants that participated in the study, eight oversaw districts with 2,000 or more students. At least two participants represented districts from city, suburban, town and communities. Six out of 10 participants represented schools with five or six schools. There were four participants that represented a town community. Six out of the 10 districts that were represented in the study qualified for 0-34% free/reduced lunches.

Research Participants

The research participants for this study were superintendents that are employed in New York State public school districts. Permission to conduct this study was obtained from the Internal Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects in Research (IRB)

of the doctoral program at St. John Fisher College. For this phase of the qualitative

process, a purposeful sampling of 10 superintendents from a pool of 74 superintendents

throughout the Hudson Valley was used. If the number of volunteers exceeded the

number in the desired sample, a random sampling would have selected the 10 participants

for the study. A letter of invitation and introduction outlining the scope and purpose of

the study was sent via email to all superintendents in this area (Appendices A and B).

As previously stated, based on availability, eligibility and distance from the

researcher, superintendents were contacted to coordinate logistics of the interview (time,

place, etc.) after the initial list of potential candidates responded to the invitation. In

order to determine their eligibility, each superintendent that was selected for the study

had a minimum of three years' administrative experience and took part in the hiring and

supervision of at least three principals. Sampling criteria determined essential

characteristics for eligibility to form part of the sample (Cresswell, 2007). The criteria

were determined as a result of the research problem and/or purpose of the research. All

participants met the minimal requirement of this study in the hiring of at least three

principals. There was a vast amount of experience in the number of years served as

superintendent. Three participants reported that two or three participants did not attain

tenure before leaving their district. For this research and to protect the identities of the

participants, the school districts and their superintendents were known as 1, 2, and 3, etc.

respectively.

Instruments Used in Data Collection

The primary method of data collection was one-on-one, semi-structured

interviews. According to Cottrell and McKenzie (2005), interviews are utilized to reveal

feelings about specific experiences. Semi-structured, one-on-one interviews employed

qualitative methodologies in order to gather data from 10 superintendents of various

school districts throughout the Hudson Valley region of NY.

Prior to commencing the one-on-one interviews, a script was used to inform the

participants of the purpose of the interview (Appendix C). Utilizing the procedures for

informed consent, every superintendent that was a potential candidate for this study was

well informed about the topic study (Appendix D). The participant was informed about

the purpose and the benefits of the study and was also informed that the structured

interview would be recorded for approximately 60-90 minutes. The participant was

informed that the study would take place at his/her place of employment and was

voluntary and confidential. The participant was advised, verbally and in writing, of his or

her right to confidentiality and the right to withdraw at any time from the study.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted using an instrument (Appendix C) for

guided questioning that contained 14 guiding questions. Each question was formulated

by the researcher and reflected the ideas that were posed in the research questions.

Additional guidelines for the development of the questions ensured descriptive answers

and used terms that were framed in an unbiased manner. To ensure validity of the

interview questions, the instrument was peer reviewed by two independent

superintendents that did not take part in the study. Interviews were conducted for 60-90

minutes, preferably on the campus in which the participants are employed to better

understand the depth regarding the school culture. If the participant did not want to be

interviewed on his/her campus, an alternate public venue would have been mutually

agreed upon. The entire interview was digitally recorded to ensure the accuracy of

transcription for future analysis. During each interview, the researcher took notes and summarized non-verbal cues of participants, as well as other observations. Probing questions were used as a follow-up to the prepared questions.

Data Collection and Analysis

The raw data from this study was in the form of detailed descriptions and gathered into undetermined categories to be analyzed (Patton, 1989). Specifically, all recorded conversations from the interviews were transcribed and hand-coded. The transcriptions from the interviews were organized through an open-coding process, and the data were sorted and coded for themes that recurred within the interview. Using the data from the interviews that were conducted, a variety of themes emerged and were properly analyzed and synthesized to gain a better understanding of any personal and professional characteristics of newly hired principals (Creswell, 2007).

Upon the conclusion of this study, all hard copy data were protected by being locked in a file cabinet that only the researcher can access. All electronic files were password protected. After 3 years, all files and research materials will be securely destroyed.

Action Plan and Timeline

The study covered a 2-month period. Once the proposal was approved by the committee and IRB, requests to be interviewed were sent electronically to all superintendents. Interviews were scheduled within 2 weeks after the requests were sent out. All interviews were completed within 3 weeks. More importantly, the researcher worked closely with committee members and respected the time and advice that the researcher was provided.

Summary

Newly hired principals face the challenge of successful assimilation within schools that they lead. Principals should possess leadership characteristics that will allow them to make a good first impression, set clear expectations, and create a positive climate and culture. The qualitative methods explained in this chapter explore the leadership qualities and characteristics of newly hired middle school principals that superintendents perceived to be of importance not only to be effective principals, but to become competent leaders. The descriptive approach using interviews allowed the researcher to identify specific themes were related to the perceptions of newly hired principals. These approaches also aided in identifying gaps between the training of school administrators and superintendents' desired skills for newly hired principals.

Chapter 4: Results

Research Questions

  This study examined the perceptions superintendents have of important personal and leadership characteristics for newly hired principals in the Hudson Valley Region schools of New York State. The study used a qualitative research design because the researcher wanted to gain an in-depth perspective regarding the perceptions of superintendents about the personal and leadership characteristics of the newly hired principals that they have hired and supervised. A descriptive approach was used to understand insights, attitudes, beliefs, perceptions, feelings, thoughts, and explanations. The qualitative research method, using semi-structured interviews, allowed the researcher to collect data in order to observe behaviors that include, but are not limited to: situations, detailed descriptions, and experiences from people that describe values, beliefs, thoughts, and attitudes. Chapter four is organized by the research questions and the findings that emerged from the interviews. The following research questions guided the study:

1. What are the personal characteristics that superintendents perceive to be important for newly hired principals in New York State?

2. What are the leadership characteristics that superintendents perceive to be important for newly hired principals in New York State?

3. Which personal and leadership characteristics increase the probability of a newly hired principal being retained by a school district in New York State?

The research participants for this study were superintendents who are employed in New York State public school districts. For this phase of the qualitative process, a purposeful sampling of 10 superintendents from a pool of 74 superintendents throughout the Hudson Valley was used. Ten superintendents from the Hudson Valley region of New York State were purposively selected and each consented to a semi-structured interview that lasted between 60 and 90 minutes. These semi-structured interviews were conducted using an instrument (Appendix D) for guided questioning that contained 14 guiding questions. Each question was formulated by the researcher and reflected the ideas that were posed in the research questions. Additional guidelines for the development of the questions ensured descriptive answers and used terms that were framed in an unbiased manner. To ensure validity of the interview questions, the instrument was peer reviewed by two independent superintendents that did not take part in the study. Probing questions were used as a follow-up to the prepared questions. These questions were meant to help guide the participant to elaborate upon unique responses, and/or to redirect the participant back to one of the aligned interview questions. Each interview was recorded using a digital recorder, and then transcribed by a transcription service.

Of the 14 semi-structured interview questions, 12 were posed to the participants in a chronological order in alignment with the research questions. The first three interview questions were provided in order to gather demographic information. in order to gather demographic information. While some questions may have seemed repetitive, they allowed participants to think critically of examples from past or existing experiences, and to provide extended responses with respect to their values, beliefs,

thoughts, and attitudes. The questions gradually focused from personal characteristics to

leadership characteristics, and culminated into both personal and leadership

characteristics in the context of hiring a new principal candidate. Table 4.1 presents the

interview questions as they were aligned to a research question.

Table 4.1

Interview Questions in Alignment to Research Questions

Interview Questions	Aligned Research Question
How would you describe a successful principal? Please explain.	1,2,3
How would you describe an unsuccessful principal? Please explain.	1,2,3
Once a principal is hired, what are the most important personal characteristics that newly hired principals should exhibit throughout the first four years of leading a school?	1
Once a principal is hired, what are the least important personal characteristics that newly hired principals should exhibit throughout the first four years of leading a school?	1
Once a principal is hired, what are the most important leadership characteristics that newly hired principals should exhibit throughout the first four years of leading a school?	2
Once a principal is hired, what are the least important leadership characteristics that newly hired principals should exhibit throughout the first four years of leading a school?	2
What are the most important qualifying characteristics that you seek when hiring a school principal?	2
What are the least important qualifying characteristics that you seek when hiring a school principal? Please explain	3
Can you describe/summarize the reason(s) of your most successful newly hired principal?	3
Can you describe/summarize the reason(s) of your least successful newly hired principal?	3
What other comments or illustrations would you like to share that have not been covered so far?	3

Research Participants

Table 4.2 presents information about the school districts where the participants worked. Eight out of the 10 participants oversaw school districts that had an overall enrollment of 2,000 or more students. Half of this sample (50%) represented school districts with an enrollment of 2,000-4,999 students. Only two participants represented districts with a smaller enrollment (less than 1,999). Out of the 10 participants who were interviewed, six (60%) represented districts with four or five schools. The community type of school was evenly represented by the sample; there were at least two participants from city, suburban, town, and rural communities. Four participants represented a town community. Of all the participants who were interviewed, six (60%) represented school districts that qualified as only 0-34% free and reduced lunches.

Tables 4.3 and 4.4 show the length of service as superintendent as well as their history in hiring principals and granting tenure. Of all the superintendents, there was a vast amount of experience in the number of years served in this administrative capacity. Two of the participants met the minimal requirements for this study by hiring at least three principals and the other eight hired more than three. Three of the participants also reported that of the principals that were hired, two or three principals did not attain tenure before leaving the district. To avoid misrepresentation of information, it is important to note that seven of the participants reported that all the principals that were hired either were given tenure or are still in the probationary period. The data shown in the table does not mean that all principals were given or denied tenure.

Table 4.2

Participants' School Characteristics

District K-12 Enrollment	Count	Percentage
Less than1,999 students	2	20
2,000-4,999 students	5	50
5,000-9,999 students	2	20
10,000 or more students	1	10

District Size by School	Count	Percentage
2-3 schools	1	10
4-5 schools	6	60
6-9 schools	2	20
10-19 schools	1	10
20 schools or more	0	0

Community Type	Count	Percentage
City	2	20
Suburban	2	20
Town	4	40
Rural	2	20

Free or reduced-price lunches	Count	Percentage
0-34	6	60
35-49	1	10
50-74	2	20
75 or more	1	10

Note. The above statistics were collected through the interviews, and checked against the New York State Department of Education site: https://data.nysed.gov.

Table 4.3

Superintendent Years of Service

Total Years as Superintendent	Count	Percentage
2 years	2	20
3 years	2	20
4-5 years	3	30
5-10 years	2	20
10 or more years	1	10

Table 4.4

Principals Hired Versus Tenured Attained

Number of Principals Hired	Count	Percentage
3 principals	2	20
4-5 principals	4	40
6-10 principals	3	30
11 or more principals	1	10
Number of Principals that Did Not Attain Tenure	Count	Percentage
None	7	70
1 principal	0	0
2-3 principals	3	30

Note. Seven of the superintendents reported that all the principals that were hired either were given tenure or are still in the probationary period.

Ten superintendents from the Hudson Valley region of NY consented to be interviewed for the study, and are abbreviated as "P" plus an assigned number. The following brief profiles of each participant provide a glimpse of their districts and background information as to their career in administrative positions.

Participant 1. P1 has been a superintendent for the past 2 years, and it is the first superintendency in a small district of 925 students divided into three buildings. The district was identified as a focus district with a focus school for underperformance in the grade 3-8 building by the New York State Department of Education. During the assistant superintendency in another district, four principals were hired. During this superintendency one principal was hired as an interim and another one is to begin in the

next school year. P1 has not yet granted tenure to any principal in the capacity of superintendent.

Participant 2. P2 has been a superintendent for the past 2 years, and has worked in the same district for 16 years where the positions of assistant principal and principal were also held. P2 worked for 5 years as an assistant superintendent for human resources in a much larger district. The current school district is located in a rural area of the Hudson Valley Region which P2 qualifies as "poor." The district serves approximately 4,700 students divided among five different buildings. Students come from various small towns and hamlets in the area. During the superintendency, P2 remembers hiring six principals, one of whom was not granted tenure.

Participant 3. P3 has been a superintendent for 30 years, 17 in the current district, and 13 in a previous district. P3 specified that both districts are small city school districts which are very different from one another. Yet, P3 stressed that one commonality between the districts is "poverty." P3's current district encompasses a total of about 7,159 students operating in seven schools, and employs more than 1,000 teachers, administrators, and staff. The population of students eligible for free and reduced meals has increased from 59% to 73% between the 2003-2004 and 2010-2011 school years. Over the course of the superintendency, P3 has hired approximately 12 principals and granted tenure to about three-quarters of them.

Participant 4. P4 has been a superintendent for the past 8 years, four of which have been in the current district. P4 was a superintendent in two distinct districts prior to the current position. P4 views the district currently supervised as a "homey-type community" where parents and the community value education, and are close to a lot of

traditions. It is a town district. P4's current district boasts a population of 3,184 students, and operates in five school buildings. As a superintendent, P4 hired three new principals, but did not recommend any for tenure because P4 did not stay in the district for the duration of their probationary periods. At the time of the interview, P4 has not yet granted tenure to any principal.

Participant 5. P5 has been a superintendent for the past 3 years in the present district, which is a K-8 district with a student population of 529. There are two school buildings in the district, one elementary school and one middle school. Prior to this position, P5 was an assistant superintendent for curriculum and instruction, and pupil personnel services for 4 years. P5's previous district was also a rural school district with a student population of over 1,000. P5 has hired six candidates during the superintendency but has not seen them go through their probationary period to tenure. At the time of the interview, P5 shared that one of the principals hired moved on to another principalship in a neighboring county.

Participant 6. P6 has been a superintendent in the present district for 3 years, and was assistant superintendent in this district for 3 years as well. P6 has been employed in the district for nearly 17 years. Prior to P6's employment in the present district, P6 occupied the position of dean of students in a nearby high school, and was also a teacher in an inner-city school for 10 years. P6's current district is one of the largest districts in the area with seven instructional buildings and student population of 6,829. P6's school district is considered to be a town district. P6 has hired a total of five principals, one of whom was granted tenure.

Participant 7. P7 has been a superintendent in the present district for the past four years. This is an urban school district with a student population of 10,831 in 12 different school buildings; 73% of students are eligible for free lunch or reduced-price lunch. This is a large school district with approximately 40 administrators, and 13 principals. Under P7's superintendency, eight principals have been hired, and only one principal has received tenure.

Participant 8. P8 has been a superintendent for 4 years, and employed in the current district for 17 years, one of which as an assistant superintendent. Prior to that, P8 was a secondary teacher for 13 years. P8's present district is a city district with 2,578 students in four different buildings. The district has an unusual situation as it encompasses students within the city and also from neighboring rural areas. P8 reports a declining number of enrolled students in the past few years. P8 hired a total of three principals, two of whom were granted tenure. The third principal is currently on probationary period.

Participant 9. P9 has been a superintendent for 7 years, six in a previous district, and one in the current district. The current district counts 4,057 students in five different buildings. P9 qualifies the district as "strictly blue collar" and that "schools are the center of their community and held in the highest regard." Of the total population, 21% of students are eligible for free or reduced-price lunch. P9 has hired seven principals as superintendent, four of whom have been granted tenure. P9 has never denied tenure to a principal. P9 was a high school principal for more than 20 years, and believes that a good principal must be a good teacher.

Participant 10. P10 has been superintendent for 5 years in this suburban district of 3,213 students. There are five instructional buildings, and 0% of the student population participate in the free lunch or price-reduced lunch program; however, P10 stated some qualifying families choose not to apply. The graduation rate for high school is 97%. Prior to becoming the district's superintendent, P10 was a middle school principal for 13 years in that same district. P10 worked as an assistant principal in two other school districts for 9 years. P10 has hired a total of four principals and one administrative intern. One principal was granted tenure and had become assistant superintendent the week prior to the interview.

Data Analysis and Findings

At the conclusion of all interviews, each recording was professionally transcribed. The researcher interpreted the data using open or line-by-line coding. Through the transcripts, several categories and themes emerged from the coded data. Comments for each of the research questions were collected and transcribed. As the data were considered in detail, preliminary characteristics were developed and identified. The coding scheme was developed by using open coding, focused or selective coding, and axial coding. Selective codes were then created by connecting and consolidating axial codes and abstracting them from the evidence contained in the data. Categories and themes became apparent from the analysis of the interviews and were continually refined until a generalized pattern of the participants' views were established. Because the interviewees gave so many ideas, the most prominent categories were selected for discussion. It is also important to note that there were some overlaps in categories for each of the research questions. Specifically, some participants identified certain

characteristics as personal, while other participants identified the same characteristics as leadership. These overlaps will be highlighted in the discussion section of this study.

In order to strengthen intra-coder reliability, in addition to the researcher's coding, a peer assisted in validating the coding of the same data. The researcher's peer is a Senior Researcher Associate at a major state university and has master's degrees in education and social work and a PhD from the University of Chicago. The codes that were established as well as the accompanying transcripts, were reviewed for suitability, consistency, and/or agreement.

In consideration of the important personal characteristics for newly hired principals, two themes revolved around leaders that utilize intra and interpersonal skills. The themes that emerged from the research question relating to leadership characteristics for newly hired principals revolved around leaders that are participative, influential, and managerial. The themes that emerged in consideration of the personal and leadership characteristics that increase the likelihood of a candidate being retained revolved around leaders that are inclusive, trust, and transformational.

Research question 1. Data were collected to answer research question 1: What are the personal characteristics that superintendents perceive to be important for newly hired principals in New York State? As opposed to leadership skills, which are learned with the objective to carry out tasks, personal characteristics display habitual patterns of behavior, temperament, and emotion, which may be perceived by superintendents as necessary or unnecessary characteristics of principals. As a result, throughout the interviews, two themes emerged from the codes and categories that the participants perceived to be important for newly hired principals. These themes are labeled

interpersonal and intrapersonal. Table 4.5 displays codes, categories and themes that

emerged for research question 1. Table 4.6 displays 14 categories that emerged

throughout the data as well as the participants that contributed to these categories.

Table 4.5

Codes/Categories/Themes – Personal Characteristics

Codes	Category	Theme
listening skills, verbal skills, written skills, talk frequently, be responsive	Communication	Interpersonal
work with stakeholders, team players, generate culture, establish goals collectively, work with colleagues, collaborative	Collaboration	
be out in the hallway, consistent presence, be visible, cover all activities, walk through hallways, be in classrooms, coverage at events, engage with all stakeholders, open door policy	Visibility	
adept at teaching, experience, instructional leader	Experience	
clear expectations, consistency, firm and fair, application of rules, firmness, share expectations	Clear Expectations	
dress professionally, role model, modeling, demonstrate responsible behavior	Modeling	
caring, empathy, understanding, goodness, love, empathetic, supporter, cheerleader	Compassion	
able to adjust, find alternatives, different solutions, flexible, be open to ideas, be open to learning,	Flexibility	
learning on the job, learn at the feet of people, open to ideas, open to learning, desire for continuous growth	Willingness to Learn	Intrapersonal
humble, quiet leadership, not arrogant	Humility	
set an agenda, short-term goals, long-term goals direction, rationale	Vision	
internal drive, work ethic, eagerness to work	Drive	
cultural awareness, acknowledge multiple languages, honor traditions, welcome all cultures, cognizant of cultures, good social skills	Cultural Competence	
trust, honest, honesty, truth	Honesty	

Table 4.6

Personal Characteristics and Frequency of Participant Responses

Categories	Participants										Total
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
Collaboration	X		X							X	3
Communication	X			X		X		X		X	5
Visibility		X				X		X		X	4
Vision	X		X							X	3
Flexibility			X								1
Modeling						X	X			X	3
Drive			X				X				2
Clear Expectations					X					X	2
Willingness to Learn	X		X					X			3
Cultural Competence							X				1
Experience			X						X		2
Humility		X	X		X						3
Compassion	X			X	X	X		X			5
Honesty				X							1

Note. The figure illustrates 14 categories that emerged during the interviews
of all participants for research question 1.

    Interpersonal. Despite the differences between school district sizes, student
populations, and academic and professional backgrounds of participants, superintendents
identified various personal characteristics that all relate to the theme of interpersonal. As
illustrated in Table 4.7, communication, collaboration, visibility, experience, clear
expectations, modeling, compassion, and flexibility were seen by the researcher as
essential characteristics of being interpersonal.

Table 4.7

Categories and Identified Participants for Interpersonal

Interpersonal
Communication (P1, P4, P6, P8, P10)
Collaboration (P1, P3, P10)
Visibility (P2, P6, P8, P10)
Experience (P3, P9)
Clear Expectations (P5, P10)
Modeling (P6, P7, P10)
Compassion (P1, P4, P5, P6, P9)
Flexibility (P3)

Communication. In alignment with the first research question, five out of 10 participants identified communication as being a necessary personal characteristic for newly hired principals. P1 identified communication as an essential skill to develop in terms of leadership opportunities:

Again, somebody, especially from the outside of a system does not know the

system, does not know the community, does not know the structures, does not

have a sense of history, whether that history is positive or negative - doesn't have

it. Without approaching things from a perspective of collaboration – listening - he

or she is going to miss vital opportunities to engage and communicate with the

staff.

Several participants mentioned the importance of communication, for it entails both verbal and written skills which are to be impeccably displayed with all stakeholders in the school community. P10 stated, "I think, number one, communication; very, very important. I would want that new principal to communicate frequently with parents, and

also with the parent community." P8 agreed: "With parents, I would always say, I still say that all communication is good communication. You have to tell the parents that." Furthermore, P1 stated, "Communication skills, verbal and written, I think are highly important. The ability to communicate with parents in a precise and caring method."

However, for all 10 participants, communication did not primarily involve the ability to express oneself verbally or in writing. According to two of the participants, principals should display the personal characteristic of communication through listening, and knowing how to listen to others. P4 stated the following about listening to parents: "The biggest thing with working with parents is you have to listen. You have to listen to what they want you to hear, and then it has to be a genuine response." P6 emphasized the following, "Ask good questions and listen. Get to know your teachers. Talk to them."

Collaboration. Collaboration in "working with all stakeholders, and not only by him or herself" (P1) was an essential personal characteristic of principals. Three out of 10 participants responded about the idea of collaboration, and P1 articulated a clear definition of who is involved in that collaborative process:

> The principal who is successful has clear results in mind, clear objectives in mind, works not only his or herself, but collaboratively with all stakeholders including faculty, staff, parents, community, district administration, colleagues in other buildings, to achieve these results.

Furthermore, collaboration was portrayed as a personal effort reflecting a capability to reach out and believe in working as and with a team of stakeholders. P10 stressed, "In terms of a new principal, there must be the willingness to work with your

colleagues in the district. Do not be an island unto yourself, to then seek the ideas and thoughts and advice of your colleagues."

The three participants viewed collaboration as an essential personal characteristic because it not only generates and contributes to the existing dynamics of a school culture, but also responds to the future demands of the leadership vision set by the newly hired principal. P3 discussed views on collaboration as a more complex set of personal characteristics:

I guess, I keep going back to the vision piece, establishing goals but doing it collectively. You also have to be smart enough to know when your time of talking is done and it is time for action. 'We have done enough talking, let's move' . . . It has to also happen collectively . . . They are also called team players with the rest of the organization. So, they're part of the bigger picture and there's always that 'what are we doing inside the building, what are we doing outside throughout the district' so that they're playing well with the rest of the administration. If you're into the goals and objectives of the larger organization at the same time, you are developing individual sets of goals and objectives that match but also grow into the future. You have to generate that culture. Once that culture gets generated, it is good for how long as you want it to be. The next person who comes in is going to have a tough time really if they don't buy into that.

Visibility. In order for the newly hired principal to be effective, four out of 10 participants highlighted that as an inclusive principal, a principal has to be physically visible. P6 expressed: "Be visible. Engage with the students, the parents, and the

faculty." Being visible was seen as an important characteristic of being a well-rounded

principal as it helps establish a connection with all its stakeholders. P10 advocated for

consistency in the visibility of principal:

> Visibility is consistent presence in the building, walking through the halls
>
> frequently, hopping in and out of classrooms for a minute or two. Just getting a
>
> real sense of the lay of the land. I think it's very, very important to build
>
> credibility, you know, for a principal.

> Visibility is a personal characteristic in that it reflects a personal desire and choice

to be seen by all stakeholders. P2 discussed this visibility as a tone to be set and an

expected personal characteristic:

> I am highly visible in this district. But that's a tone I set. And that's the
>
> expectation I have for my principals, and my principals are great. My principals
>
> have coverage in every one of the things that take place in this district, there is
>
> always an administrator or two if not three at every event.

To further emphasize this point, P8 expressed the importance to be visible to students

where it is not done often: "You have to be out in the hallway. I know of times in school,

not this one, where the kids don't even see the principal. They couldn't tell you what the

principal looks like. That's not good."

> *Experience.* Upon review of all of the interviews, two of the participants

mentioned that newly hired principals with the personal characteristic of having

experience breeds success. Newly hired principals need to have the prior knowledge of

not only how to effectively run a school, but they need to have experience in the field of

education. Newly hired principals need to evaluate best practices and effective teaching

in the classroom; having previous teaching experience enhances his/her credibility in this field. P3 stated:

> I want to see them as a person, as an educator, but I also want to see them as understanding the constructs of the education world, so that they can get in and have a conversation with the teacher . . . You have to be equally adept at teaching well, so that you can talk about it and describe it, and evaluate it.

P9 summarized the importance of experience with the following quote: "That is a critical thing, that you're seen as that instructional leader who has done all this out there before."

Clear expectations. Setting clear expectations was reported to be another personal characteristic that was necessary for the success of newly hired principals. Participants P5 and P10 explained that there are principals with a certain uncanny ability to lead others, even those that disagreed, because expectations were made clear. P5 gave an example of his leadership style: "I was clear about what my expectations were, that I was fair, and consistent in my approach to all aspects of my position personally." P10 added his own example:

> I think, also, a person who is able to be very consistent in the application of rules and who understands that discipline is about learning, it's not about punishment, it's about learning. Yet, one must be very firm and fair in their dealings with students; this is so important to people.

Modeling. Three out of 10 participants throughout the interviews stressed the importance of a principal showing a commitment to finding their voice and setting clear expectations of how people should act, look, and communicate through their own personal examples. Throughout the interview process, P6 was keen on reiterating the

importance of the principal as a person, someone who "models for students, faculty, and staff what is to be seen in all children." In the most basic example provided, P6 stated the following: "Dress professionally. Come to work on time or early. Greet your staff." P7 made clear the importance of principals modeling leadership skills with the following statements:

I'm going to say professional, and what I mean by that is they look professionally. They're modeling themselves professionally in their behavior. They're both emotionally and physically. Someone who students and families can identify with, "Oh, that's the principal. We see him or her all the time. They're in the hallway" . . . I would say another new area that's really emerging fast is personal behavior on social media. When you make a decision to become a leader, to become an educator, you have to protect your personal thoughts, feelings and beliefs. Right? What you do online, while it may be personal, will impact your professional life. Religiously, politically, all of those things, they do surface.

P6 made a very important statement toward the end of the above-mentioned comments. Newly hired principals must always be exemplary models of good leadership because the wrong decisions can have an adverse effect on their success. P10 discussed more specific ways to demonstrate this characteristic:

I think it's important for the staff to feel the principal is a role model for them. I would say that you mentioned some of the basic skills, you know, punctuality, attire, availability, attending school events, spending time in the cafeteria.

Compassion. Throughout the course of the interviews, five participants expressed the need for newly hired principals to show compassion. Principals connect with others

by incorporating compassion and caring into everyday aspects of the job. Faculty and staff will respect and follow a leader that demonstrates compassion. It was also reported that newly hired principals that show empathy toward others, understanding and goodness will win over staff. P4 stated the following:

> I think empathy and caring to show that they're there for more than just to get a paycheck that they actually care about the staff and that goes also towards the students and, also, the parents, but for staff, yeah. You got to show that you care.

In addition, P5 shared an example about his style of leadership that he feels would be beneficial for the newly hired principal, "I cared about them as people, I cared about not only the faculty, but the kids and the parents as well because I was empathetic." P9 claimed that compassion is a necessary attribute that validates the role of an educational leader; "That is a critical thing, that you're seen as that instructional leader out there and also as a supporter and a cheerleader." P1 and P6 also shared that empathy was an important personal characteristic for newly hired principals.

Flexibility. In addition to communication, collaboration, visibility and vision being seen as important personal characteristics, P3 viewed flexibility as another essential characteristic. In terms of a leader utilizing interpersonal skills, principals cannot just be content with routine and must always seek opportunities for growth and improvement. Flexibility facilitates inclusion of others, while inflexibility leads to exclusion of others. As P3 stated: "We always have to look at ways that is moving our school building and our programs forward." P3 further added:

> They have to be able to adjust to that and then, find alternatives for these kids to be successful. Where folks think themselves to be experts and have all the

answers and, or be the best at what they do, often times they don't have that

flexibility or drive to delve deeper to find different types of solutions because the

solutions they have they think are the best.

Intrapersonal. Despite the differences between school district sizes, student

populations, and academic and professional backgrounds of participants, superintendents

identified various personal characteristics that all relate to the theme of intrapersonal. As

illustrated in Table 4.8, willingness to learn, humility, vision, drive, cultural competence,

and honesty, were seen by the researcher as essential characteristics of being

intrapersonal.

Table 4.8

Categories and Identified Participants for Intrapersonal

Intrapersonal
Willingness to Learn (P1, P3, P8)
Humility (P2, P3, P8)
Vision (P1, P3, P10)
Drive (P3, P7)
Cultural Competence (P7)
Honesty (P4)

Willingness to learn. Throughout the interviews, three out of 10 participants

described that newly hired principals who are successful always show a desire for

continuous growth and learning on the job. P1 stated, "One of the most important places

to learn is at the feet of people." P8 also stated the following about newly hired

principals: "The door should never be closed. Literally, the door should be open. They

need to be open to ideas. They need to be open to learning." P3 talked about the reason

why showing a willingness to learn is so important: "Because you come in, if you get dropped in our district, our district has so many different nuances, instructionally and many other ways, you can't just come in and run it the way the books tell you."

Humility. Three participants highly regarded the importance of humility. One associated this characteristic to servant leadership. Newly hired principals attract people when they are centered on others. The three participants described personal humility as one of the most successful traits that a newly hired principal can have. P5 stated, "It's not about egos. Gosh, arrogance is the worst. It's a killer. The administrative killer is someone who's arrogant." In fact, P3 suggested that successful newly hired principals are those that present themselves as a quiet leader: "Leadership is not dogmatic; it is quiet." When it comes to seeking ways to connect with people, P2 described:

> If you are a humble person, I think it goes a long way in working with students, with faculty and staff, and with parents, and it can help you become an incredibly successful principal. To get to the principalship, to become superintendent, to become a director, you're not a weak-minded individual, you are not a weak individual. We got these positions because we have very strong convictions, personalities, those are very important things. That's great. But when you are a leader, you don't need to pump your chest.

Vision. Three out of 10 participants expressed that demonstrating a vision is an essential personal characteristic for newly hired principals. In addition, developing a vision with others necessitates the interaction with more than one person. As P10 stated: "I think another thing that we look for early on is the ability to set an agenda, both a

short-term and a long-term agenda for the school, and then to build on that, sort of scaffold on that." P3 added:

Developing a vision collectively, moving into that vision's direction and making sure that they are still flexible inside the organization so that they are not turning people off, and turning down ideas . . . Not only do you have to be able to show that you have a vision, you have to show that you can execute a vision. There has to be a rationale for the vision, and I think that is probably at the head of the game.

P1, P3, and P10 agreed that having the ability to set a clear picture for what needs to be accomplished and to be able to confidently and consistently exude this vision with others is a characteristic that is necessary for newly hired principals. The three participants all agreed that maintaining a vision sets a good tone and image for the school.

Drive. During the interviews, P3 and P7 identified the personal characteristic of being driven for newly hired principals. They discussed the importance of having an intrinsic commitment to the organization. Having an exceptional work ethic can demonstrate this drive. P3 provided several perspectives about newly hired principals that are driven:

Those are the people that I love to recommend and hire because they have an internal drive that benefits our community while they are here. And I am not talking about two, or three years; I am talking about when they are typically here for five to ten years . . . It's your work ethic. Again, are you present? Are you attending the evening events and the weekend events? Do you welcome people in

to speak with them when folks have a differing perspective and opinion than you

do? Are you still eager to listen to them? Not that you have to agree, but are you

willing to listen to them?

Cultural competence. Another leadership characteristic that was revealed during

the course of the interviews was the idea of having a good understanding of people across

different cultures and a desire for their betterment. P7 shared: "Are you cognizant of

their cultures and their traditions, and how you make that student feel welcomed in the

school? Are things in multiple languages? Do you provide opportunities outside of

formal activities to engage with families?" In addition, P7 emphasized that newly hired

principals should be adept at managing employees of varying cultural backgrounds.

Honesty. P4 described honesty as a great characteristic for newly hired principals

in the following way:

> This characteristic is one of the most obvious for newly hired principals or anyone
>
> for that matter. I think that honesty is number one. I think that's a personal
>
> characteristic that will serve you better than almost any of them so honesty is
>
> certainly an important, especially the staff. That's what builds the trust.

Research question 2. Data were collected to answer research question 2: What

are the leadership characteristics that superintendents perceive to be important for newly

hired principals in New York State? As a result, throughout the interviews, three themes

emerged from the codes and categories that the participants perceive to be important for

newly hired principals. These themes are labeled: participative, influential, and

managerial. Table 4.9 displays codes, categories and themes that emerged for research

question 2. Table 4.10 displays 11 categories that emerged throughout the data as well as

all the participants that contributed to these categories.

Table 4.9

Codes/Categories/Themes – Leadership Characteristics

Codes	Category	Theme
listening to others, share ideas, talking, weave commonalities, articulation, communicating to different audiences, gain understanding by listening, verbal in person, in writing, social media, tell a story about the organization, being available to talk to, responsive	Communication	Participative
make decisions stick, make good decisions, captain of the ship mentality, responsibility of the crew under your command, make decisions under pressure, make thoughtful decisions, think through answer before you give it, being assertive with issues	Decisiveness	
distributive leadership, shared authority, support, inclusion of all stakeholders, work with parents and students, collaborate, work together	Collaboration	
leading away from the desk, getting into classrooms, being in the halls, interacting with students and staff in the cafeteria, being at events, riding the school bus, out and about	Visibility	Influential
knowledge of curriculum, teaching experience, understand what's happening in the classroom, having knowledge about education, having experience about administration, knowing how to provide direction and support,	Experience	
develop a set of goals, where we need to be and where we need to go, common goals, bring groups to consensus, vision piece, establish goals collectively, articulation of goals, clear goals, planning	Vision	
lead by example, set the tone for all, talk the talk and walk the walk, dress professionally, act professionally, look like a principal, consistency	Modeling	Managerial
executing code of conduct, consistent management, daily operations of the building, working closely with custodians, trying to improve physical attributes of building, scheduling, establish routines, safety procedures	Managing the Building	
instructional observations, keeping track of culture, oversee benchmarks and targets, being a good diagnostician, able to see things, able to scratch beneath the surface, looking for the root cause, digging a little deeper, understanding and dealing with issues regularly	Monitoring	
articulation of standards, mentorship, staff development and support, guidance through effective observations and evaluations, identify expectations	Strong Instructional Leadership	

Table 4.10

Leadership Characteristics and Frequency of Participant Responses

Leadership Characteristics	Participants										Total
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
Communication			X	X		X	X				4
Decisiveness	X					X		X	X		4
Collaboration	X		X		X						3
Visibility				X		X					2
Experience				X	X			X			3
Vision			X			X				X	3
Modeling		X						X	X		3
Manage the Building					X					X	2
Monitoring							X			X	2
Strong Instructional Leadership	X		X	X	X					X	5

Note. The table illustrates 10 categories that emerged during the interviews of all participants for research question 2.

 ***Participative*.** Despite the differences between school district sizes, student populations, and academic and professional backgrounds of participants, superintendents identified various personal characteristics that all relate to the theme of participative. As illustrated in Table 4.11, communication, decisiveness, and collaboration, were seen by the researcher as essential characteristics of being participative.

Table 4.11

Categories and Identified Participants for Participative

Participative
Communication (P3, P4, P6, P7)
Decisiveness (P1, P6, P8, P9)
Collaboration (P1, P3, P5)

Communication. Four out of 10 participants viewed communication as an essential leadership characteristic among newly hired principals. The findings allow communication to view past a process of conveying a verbal or written message. As a leadership skill, communication has several facets. For instance, P3 described the process of knowing how to communicate with and maneuver among different stakeholders as a testament to leadership:

> I bring the constituents together in, separately, and then, I listen to them. I talk to them about importance, and also, share with them my ideas. And then, I listen to them over a period of time, and then, we start weaving some commonalities, especially when they prioritize what's really important for getting kids to be successful.

> Newly hired principals also need to establish solid connections with the people that they lead. In order to build a strong foundation with all constituents, it is important for them to utilize many creative strategies for the effective dissemination of information. P6 emphasized, "The articulation side is leadership . . . their ability to find ways of communicating to different audiences I think is leadership."

Communication is not seen just as a tool for verbal and written communication, and to effectively manage contact with the school community, but it was expressed by the majority of participants as a vehicle to establishing oneself in the school culture. Communication as part of a leadership skill has a pre-requisite of being able to listen to others. As P4 explained:

> I really think that the best leaders are those who listen and especially if you're new to the building. You try to gain an understanding of the building and the culture

and traditions, and the things that are important to the people, the faculty, and staff in that building.

The results of these interviews indicate that communication allows the newly hired principal's to be visible and accessible. In other words, principals who are communicative bring visibility to their ideas, thoughts, vision, values, and priorities. This can be done via different platforms, including social media. P7 expressed this need for continued communication:

One, the ability to effectively communicate in multiple mediums is very important. In this day and age, you have to. You have to communicate verbally in person. You have to communicate in writing. You have to be on social media and communicate and tell the story of the district.

Decisiveness. Alongside communication, decisiveness was identified by four participants as an important leadership characteristic of principals as a participative leader. For instance, according to P1, superintendents have to be able to make decisions even in the face of uncertainty and following the steps of leaders who may have made wrong choices. P1 stated the following:

Depending on the system prior to that principal arriving, sometimes decisiveness is one of the most important things. There are systems with dysfunctions where people have not been asked to make decisions because every time they made a decision, it was underdone or not effectively done. One of the most important things for a new principal, again it is a principal thing, is to be decisive; make a decision stick.

Leaders must have the image of being in charge or being, as P8 explained, "the captain of the ship mentally whether you are a principal or superintendent, or assistant, which means you are responsible for the conduct of the crew under your command." This requires not only the mere rendering of a decision but also to fully execute that decision. Even if decisiveness entails ability or drive to stick to a decision, the findings revealed that principals should also take into consideration all parameters prior to making the decision. Being decisive also includes taking into account the rationale around that decision whether it involves a culture, people, or particular events. P6 stated, "Someone who makes good decisions based on the particular incident. So, if someone's making a decision on something, they make a decision, but prior to making the decision, they take into account everything that's going on." P9 also suggested: "Calmness under pressure allows good decisions to be made under pressure. A newly hired principal must be able to make thoughtful decisions, not rash judgmental decisions, and fully think through an answer before it is given."

Collaboration. Successful collaboration that is distributed between faculty, staff, and administration sets a positive tone and has been recommended as a highly effective leadership characteristic for newly hired principals. Three participants believe that having strong, collaborative leadership creates a strong, successful learning environment. From P3's interview, there is a clear collaborative approach to principalship where legitimacy with staff, building a vision, being open minded, and being a team player seem to prevail and contribute to the efficacy of the principalship. P1 described:

Again, the concept of distributed leadership, where authority is shared, determines whether there is support there. It does not matter again whether we are talking

about the principal and his or her students, the principal and his or her faculty and

staff, the principal and his or her parent group. That is probably the most

important thing for a successful principal, the whole concept of communication

and collaboration which tie into that kind of leadership. It is vital to them being

successful. What's the phrase? You can't expect something that you don't

provide.

P5 also emphasized the following about decision-making and collaboration:

Faculty and staff, I think they need to be absolutely collaborative, but also

assertive and be able to stand behind their decisions. With students and parents, I think

it's almost the same concepts, right? You need to be able to collaborate and work with

your parents and your students, but when necessary, you need to be assertive about

certain issues.

Influential. Despite the differences between school district sizes, student

populations, and academic and professional backgrounds of participants, superintendents

identified various personal characteristics that all relate to the theme of influential. As

illustrated in Table 4.12, visibility, experience, and vision were seen by the participants

as essential characteristics of being influential.

Table 4.12

Categories and Identified Participants for Influential

Influential
Visibility (P4, P6)
Experience (P4, P5, P8)
Vision (P3, P6, P10)

Visibility. In order to be an influential principal, newly hired principals need to be able to stand up and be visible to students. As P6 stated, "Principals advocate. Good leaders advocate for their students and their staff. Great building principals do that." As part of this effort, participants expressed that in order to be influential, newly hired principals need to be physically visible. P4 pressed upon this theme about being visible throughout the building:

> You can't lead behind a desk. Sometimes you have to be behind a desk, but that was probably my main professional goal every year. Get out into classrooms more . . . I think a principal needs to show that kind of leadership, a strong leadership by being out there and seeing what's going on, and if there's anything that he or she sees that's not quite right . . . I think a newly hired principal should be seen everywhere where students are.

Experience. Experience was highlighted by three participants as an important leadership characteristic that is beneficial to all newly hired principals. P4 emphasized the need for newly hired principals to have teaching experience and an excellent knowledge of curriculum:

> I think it's how you work with people that shows your leadership strengths, but I put knowledge of the curriculum in there and teaching experience because I do think that that's an aspect that you just can't have somebody who doesn't know. I hear sometimes people say, "Yeah, we should just bring somebody in from a corporation to be a principal." It's like you could be the best leader in the world, but if you don't have some idea of education and curriculum and what happens in the classroom, I just don't think you're going to be as effective.

P8 felt that in order to achieve credibility amongst teachers, "You do have to have knowledge. Newly hired principals need to have knowledge of the curriculum, or you're not going to get buy-in from the faculty."

According to P5, effective leadership attributes evolve and are refined through the years on the job: "those attributes become established and they have to be established in a way that are respected. It's an evolution." P5 also expressed that effective leadership is achieved when the "system is functioning correctly for everybody within the building."

Vision. From the participants' responses, vision seems to intertwine with the characteristic of decisiveness. Vision involves the clear thought process behind goals that are shared among stakeholders. This gives credence to decisions that are made in order to effectively provide the best resources and people that are needed. For example, P6 stated, "I think great leaders with students identify their expectations, right? They let their students know what I expect of you. Same thing with your staff. They also let their staff know what the expectations are." As P10 expressed: "Vision, in terms of leadership, includes the articulation of goals for the school, and, clear goals, understandable goals, and planning." P3 also shared views about the importance of vision:

> I will go back to developing a vision, which is a set of goals. This is where we
> need to be, and where we need to go, and how we need to get there. We are going
> to do that collectively. So that they have to be able to work on common goals in
> groups, they have to be able to bring their groups together in some type of
> consensus. I think that's the biggest piece . . . Once everybody understands what
> the vision is, buys into it, and there is a commonality that has been brought

together so that everybody feels that they have been heard, then you can start to

move forward . . .. I keep going back to the vision piece, establishing goals but

doing it collectively. You have to be smart enough to know when your time of

talking is done and it is time for action. We have done enough talking, let's move.

Managerial. Despite the differences between school district sizes, student

populations, and academic and professional backgrounds of participants, superintendents

identified various personal characteristics that all relate to the theme of managerial. As

illustrated in Table 4.13, modeling, managing the building, monitoring, and providing

strong instructional leadership were seen by the participants as essential characteristics of

being managerial.

Table 4.13

Categories and Identified Participants for Managerial

Managerial
Modeling (P2, P8, P9)
Managing the building (P5, P10)
Monitoring (P7, P10)
Strong Instructional Leadership (P1, P3, P4, P5, P10)

Modeling. Three participants communicated that successful newly hired

principals demonstrate their best leadership when they lead by example. P2 stated the

following about what it means to be a good model as a newly hired principal:

I truly believe a good leader is someone who leads by example. I think that it is

so key to being a successful leader, whether you are an assistant principal, a

principal, a director, an assistant superintendent or a superintendent. You lead by

example. You set the tone for everyone else in that building . . . I think leading by example is the number one leadership characteristic I look for. You talk the talk, that's wonderful. You walk the walk and you set that example for everybody else.

Physical appearance also plays an important role in the success of a newly hired principal. In order to set expectations for how people should dress, for example, principals should model appropriate ways of dressing. It was reported that newly hired principals will have better success if they set a professional tone by modeling a professional appearance. It was reported that it was also important for the principal to model the differences between professional and casual dress. In essence, staff will act the way their principal acts. P8 stated, "So they have to lead by example. Like I said, it goes back to being there early, staying late, dressing professionally, acting professionally in the school and out and about on the town." P9 also reinforced the idea of modeling physical appearance when he stated, "I think you have to dress appropriately. I think you have to look like a principal. You don't have to have a jacket on everyday but you have to be neat. This model of expectations will instill proper behavior in others."

Managing the building. P5 and P10 expressed that a successful newly hired principal is a leader that possesses the leadership characteristic of effectively managing a building. Management comes in all forms and there are hundreds, if not, thousands of decisions that need to be made on a daily basis. An effective leader manages a building by adhering to local, state, and federal guidelines. P5 gave an example of an effective way to manage a building: "A good manager of a building is able to execute such items as the code of conduct in a way that's inclusive but consistent, and be able to manage the daily operations of the building." P10 reported that a good manager of a building is one

that understands the physical plant and makes an effort to continuously improve the school environment. He stated:

> I also look for a person who takes pride in their school building, who works closely with the custodial staff and with the district and trying to improve the physical attributes of the building; to take pride of that. You know, we all have aging buildings, but what are we doing?

Monitoring. P7 and P10 highlighted that successful leadership requires a principal that is able to effectively monitor what goes on in the school and its program. P7 stated:

> I think an area that I would love to see more of, but I think it's very critical, is how do you monitor? I think this is a missed area . . . When I say monitoring, I'm talking about instructional monitoring, financial monitoring, monitoring your culture, being very clear about your benchmarks and targets.

Participants felt that many administrators fail to oversee the inner workings of each department throughout the school. It is important for newly hired principals to gain an accurate sense of how programs and systems are operating and to be able to troubleshoot solutions when problems arise. P10 stated:

> I think you have to be a good diagnostician. For example, if you are trying to assess problems that arise in a classroom, you have to be able to see things, and then be able to scratch beneath the surface and then be able to say this is the habit or this is the behavior or this is the mindset that I'm seeing in school with the teacher. Principals should be looking for the root cause; they're not just seeing the root cause, they are also seeing the effects of it.

Strong instructional leadership. Five participants shared that successful newly hired principals are people that promote success for all. P3 stated, "Success in the job would be that students perform well." P4 shared, "A principal has to have a real desire to move his students higher in achievement and I would see that as a measurement of success."

When it comes to facilitating instructional leadership with teachers, newly hired principals communicate high expectations, evaluate programs, set goals and objectives, evaluate teachers, share data, and provide opportunities for staff development. P5 shared a specific example of how a principal shows strong instructional leadership:

Instructional leaders understand multiple subject areas and articulate how a Danielson Rubric applies in every classroom. Instructional leadership is not just only English or math classrooms. In addition, an effective principal understands that instructional leadership must be enforced outside of the classroom as well as inside.

When hiring new principals, P10 looks for success in teaching because "instructional leadership is really the key." P1 summed it up as follows, "But I think that at the end of the day, a focus on continual instructional improvement, continual academic improvement and achievement, will define a successful newly hired principal."

Research question 3. Data were collected to answer research question 3: Which personal and leadership characteristics increase the probability of a newly hired principal being retained by a school district in New York State? The study allowed the researcher to gather some important findings as to what characteristics increase the

probability of a newly hired principal being retained by a school district in the Hudson Valley region of New York State.

Throughout the interviews, three themes emerged from the codes and categories that the participants perceived increase the probability of a newly hired principal being retained. These themes are labeled as: inclusive, trust, and transformational. Table 4.14 displays codes, categories, and themes that emerged for research question 3. Table 4.15 displays 11 categories that emerged throughout the data as well as all the participants that contributed to these categories.

Inclusive. Despite the differences between school district sizes, student populations, and academic and professional backgrounds of participants, superintendents identified various personal characteristics that all relate to the theme of inclusive. As illustrated in Table 4.16, communication, visibility, vision, and flexibility were seen by the participants as essential characteristics of being inclusive.

Table 4.14

Codes, Categories, Themes – Qualifying Characteristics

Codes	Category	Theme
listening, hear the point and counterpoint, open communication, sit down and talk, listen to parents, listen to kids, verbal or written, communicate positively and professionally, pay attention, don't talk over people, listen to teachers and support staff, articulate, communicate with all stakeholders, understand the heartbeat of the building, sharing of information in a timely manner	Communication	Inclusive
alignment with district, seen throughout district, getting to know everyone, being out there, show regular support and cheerlead	Visibility	
establish common core beliefs and ideas, communicate ideas clearly and imaginatively, articulate what is wanted and needed, understand educational process and establish goals and timeframes, visionary outlook, inspire and bring hope, take risks, expand ideas, not be wed to old ceremonies, "Where can we take that?"	Vision	
willingness to adapt, be able to dance, maneuver, navigate through the craziness, see other perspectives and change your mind	Flexibility	
empathetic, shares stories about oneself, reflects about the impact of education, understands the importance of self and others, celebrate others, support others, be kind and caring, be thoughtful, be open	Compassion	Trust
engendering humility, understands that one is not infallible, swallow ego, not arrogant, approachable, humble	Humility	
understand funny situations, be funny, don't be too serious, have fun, take joy in work and with people, sense of humor, positive sense in the world, personable	Humor	
exhibit trust, confidentiality, keep promises	Loyalty	
love of working with children, believe in kids, cheerleader of kids, love of kids, teach kids, protect kids, advocacy, kid-centered, caring, "These are my kids", every child is their child	Child-Centered	Transformational
decision-maker, decision-making process, decisions are inclusive, fast on feet, level-headed, confident, anticipate and react, make really good decisions	Decisiveness	
classroom experience, instructional leaders, understand various levels, successful administration experience, background in curriculum, understand teachers, teaching experience, understand the job, knowledgeable, skills, experience with handling situations, education, certification, progress, certifications, academic preparation, know pedagogy, curricular expertise	Experience	

Table 4.15

Retention Characteristics and Frequency of Participant Responses

Characteristics	Participants										Total
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
Communication	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	9
Visibility		X				X		X	X		4
Vision			X		X		X			X	4
Flexibility	X							X			2
Compassion						X			X	X	3
Humility		X			X		X				3
Humor	X				X						2
Child-Centered		X				X					2
Loyalty	X						X				2
Decisiveness	X			X		X			X		4
Experience	X		X	X	X	X			X	X	7

Note. The table illustrates 11 categories that emerged during the interviews of all participants for research question 3.

Table 4.16

Categories and Identified Participants for Inclusive

Inclusive
Communication (P1, P2, P3, P4, P5, P6, P7, P9, P10)
Visibility (P2, P6, P8, P9)
Vision (P3, P5, P7, P10)
Flexibility (P1, P8)

Communication. Nine out of 10 participants saw communication not only as an essential personal skill or leadership skill, but also as a pre-requisite to being hired. P3 simply described a newly hired principal with effective communication as one that can "articulate." P4 stated, "I'm looking for someone who knows how to communicate and can communicate positively and professionally." These skills are not only essential but

they need to be part of an open communication process. This process of open communication entails a sheer ability to listen to others. P2, stressed several points on the importance of knowing how to communicate openly:

And again, that comes down to communication for me, with my cabinet, and with the individuals that are going to be running the interview process. Things I want to see: Number one, I want to see somebody who has good communication skills . . . A willingness to listen and an openness to hear the point and counterpoint to what the decision may be . . . Open communication, the ability to listen, those are the things I want to see in a principal because those are the things that are going to help a newly hired principal be successful . . . Having their door open, and willing to let people come in and sit down and talk with them. I think you know as a principal, one of your number one jobs is a therapist . . .. Just that simple ability to listen to people. An ability to listen to parents. An ability to listen to kids . . .

The majority of the participants agreed that open communication in various forms is essential for the newly hired principal. As P5 explained, a principal needs to know "how to communicate." That ability to openly communicate by first listening to others involves a similar process with all stakeholders, and something that should transpire in the principal candidate at the time of interview, and is "critical to being successful in this role." As P9 stated:

We have to learn to listen. All too often principals have made a decision before they've listened because of the time constraints under which they find themselves. You have to listen; you have to listen to kids, you have to listen to your teachers,

you have to listen to your support staff, and then you have to make the appropriate

decision.

In addition, P1 described that the ideal principal exhibits the following when facilitating

committees: "I would want them to have exemplary communication skills whether it is

verbal or written . . . I would make sure that everyone has an input, and will be able to

offer everyone to see how that person communicates with the faculty and staff."

In evaluating the communication skills, participants discussed interview strategies

allowing them to assess their openness and decisiveness in these communication skills.

As P7 stated:

> We start off in a group interview, and part of the reason we do that is we're trying
>
> to pay attention to those soft skills. As a leader, specifically a principal, you need
>
> to know how to communicate. You need to know how to lead. You need to
>
> know how to take a step back so other people can lead. Part of those soft skills is
>
> your facial expression when you talk. Do you talk over people? Are you really
>
> attentive in your listening?

P2 believed that listening and hearing people is a valuable skill in the long term:

> I think communication is another credible aspect of being a successful principal.
>
> If you don't have the ability to communicate with your faculty and staff,
>
> communicate to your students, communicate to, you know, central office, to your
>
> parents, you are not going to be a successful principal. And I can tell you that's
>
> probably one of the areas in one of the principals that was not granted tenure was
>
> probably one of the key aspects of them not receiving tenure and being dismissed
>
> early… I think another key aspect is the ability to listen . . .. But I think if you

can listen and hear what better, you know, what people understand what the heartbeat of the building is, you will be very successful.

In creating an environment where a principal knows how to listen and hear the stakeholders, or "be a good listener" as P10 put, that creates an environment and culture of comfort and approachability, leading to a culture of trust. As P10 expressed:

A successful principal to me is a person who is a good listener. A person who, teachers and parents and students feel comfortable approaching. There's a lot more trust that those conversations will be held in confidence. That's important to me.

This idea of effective communication leading to a culture of trust was present in P6's interview when the following was stated:

The other thing is they have to be a really good communicator. You have to be able to communicate to all your stakeholders in a timely matter, right? You have to be able to get support from everybody. You build that by being kind and being trusted and building really good relationships with people. That's key as well.

P2 summarized the effectiveness of principals around the common theme of communication:

Communication is an incredible aspect of being a successful principal. If you don't have the ability to communicate with your faculty and staff, communicate to your students, communicate to central office, to your parents, you are not going to be a successful principal.

Visibility. Visibility was noted as an essential leadership and personal

characteristic by four out of the 10 participants interviewed. P2 discussed a physical

visibility with all stakeholders in the community: "Number one is visibility with the

community, and with faculty and staff is extremely important." However, that visibility

also referred to being visible in the sharing of the core mission and beliefs of the district.

As P2 expressed: "I want to see that someone is talking about the same core beliefs and

ideas that I have and that the district has. And that's visibility within the district." P8

even qualified that visibility as a commitment to the building and the community: "The

commitment is to the job. So, like I've said before, put in the time, go to things, get to

know the kids." The notion of visibility was expressed not only as being physically seen,

but also, how that visibility may be perceived by other stakeholders. P9 underscored the

importance to be seen in various parts of the building, but also being seen as an expert or

instructional leader for faculty and staff: "It is a critical thing that you're seen as that

instructional leader out there and also as a supporter and a cheerleader."

All participants even expressed a similarity in their roles when it comes to

visibility of principals, and what they are looking for in terms of visibility in the

candidates. The visibility that they perceived was a general notion, encompassing

physical visibility, but also being visibly present (whether it is perceived or real) that can

demonstrate to others a commitment to the profession. P6 particularly summed up these

points:

> They are visible. They run their building like a mini-superintendent. They run
>
> their building. I don't have to deal with anything that goes on in their building
>
> because they handle it from the beginning of the day to the end of the day.

Vision. As a well-rounded person and as an inclusive principal candidate, four out of the 10 participants highlighted the importance of the candidates to have a vision. That vision was seen by the participants as a sign of respect for the culture of the school, understanding where the school is at, but also to which new heights it can be taken. P10 particularly highlighted the importance of having a vision:

> You know, a person who says "Here's what I'd like to pursue in the area of technology, these are things I'd like to do in terms of helping positives with behavior, with citizenship education" is a person of vision. I think, also, a person who respects the culture of the school, but, who also is looking to expand that, and not be wed to the past, not be wed to old ceremonies and all of the aspects of it, is a person of vision. This person would be willing to start with that and say "Where can we take that?"

The vision does not need to be fully articulated, as P3 qualified it; it can be a "semi-vision." When talking about successful principal candidates, P3 further explained that:

> They had a vision and you could sit them down in the interview process, and say "tell me now what you really want, what your school is like." They could articulate. So, they really had a semi-vision, they knew the kind of school they really wanted to create.

However, P5 pointed out that having a vision is not a distinct trait, and that it must be accompanied with a strong knowledge of the instructional content:

> Then I think that the level of curricular expertise is extremely important in order to push the program forward. Not only in terms of the day-to-day instruction that

happens in classroom, but the visionary outlook as to what can we continue to do

to evolve and improve our academic institution for our children.

P7 further explained the importance of being a visionary leader and saw the candidate

having a vision as a form of ambition and hope and as risk taking. P7 specifically

stressed the importance of taking risk as an asset, showing that the principal candidate is

willing and vulnerable enough to take risks:

First, that's a big deal. Someone who has an ambitious vision, someone who can

inspire, bring about hope, sets a course for the future, puts in place, establishes a

culture where people can take risk, someone who themselves is vulnerable and

asks the community for feedback on his or her practice.

Flexibility. The findings also revealed that in addition to the ability to

communicate, be visionary, and visible, newly hired principals should also display an

essential characteristic of being flexible. P1 expressed, "What made my principals

successful is their willingness to adapt." There is an importance to adapt and maneuver

the roles and responsibilities that the position entails in order to execute the desired

vision. P8 shared:

As one of my mentors used to say, "You've got to be able to dance." You've got

to be able to move. You've got to be able to maneuver. You've got to be flexible,

because it can be like most districts, a great place, and sometimes a crazy place.

Trust. Despite the differences between school district sizes, student populations,

and academic and professional backgrounds of participants, superintendents identified

various personal characteristics that all relate to the theme of trust. As illustrated in Table

4.17, compassion, humility, humor, and loyalty were seen by the participants as essential

characteristics of trust.

Table 4.17

Categories and Identified Participants for Trust

Trust
Compassion (P6, P9, P10)
Humility (P2, P5, P7)
Humor (P1, P5)
Loyalty (P1, P7)

Compassion. Three out of the 10 participants interviewed described that

compassion was considered as an essential characteristic for newly hired principals, and

inevitably required for the job. As P9 stated, "You also need a lot of compassion as a

principal." Compassion was not seen just as being understanding and caring of others,

but also involved to be able to put oneself upfront, and not be afraid to be open about the

person that he or she may be. This seemed to be an important criterion for the

participants, and particularly for P6:

> I look for somebody who's empathetic, someone who will share a story about
>
> themselves and how was that impactful? How did education impact you? Why is
>
> education so important to you? You've chosen a career that's all about education.
>
> Why is that important to you?

These elements of compassion were believed to make a great deal of difference in seeing

the principal candidate's potential to be part of a school culture. P10 expressed:

> Ultimately, what makes a successful principal is not the resume, it's not the
>
> experience, it's not necessarily the capacity, it's that compassionate person who

can fit within a culture that we have and then having fit in to that culture can move it, rather than a person who where the fit just doesn't seem right at all.

Humility. In addition to compassion, the findings revealed that three out of 10 participants revealed humility as an important characteristic for principal candidates. Humility about oneself was seen as an important priority. P2 mentioned that principals should realize that they are not infallible, "Somebody who engenders humility. I think somebody who can understand that they are not infallible, and that they look at, you know, if I make a decision that I'm open to listen to people making decisions . . ."

The lack of humility can reveal itself as a handicap. P5 expressed that a lack of humility could be seen as a sign of arrogance:

Sometimes administrators can present themselves as very arrogant, and that's extremely problematic in the education world, and I think that administrators who can present themselves as approachable and collaborative are people who I look to work with, because I don't want to work with anyone who thinks they're better than anybody else.

The findings revealed that humility, as perceived by all participants, involved an ability to question oneself, and put oneself into another stakeholder's position. P2 exemplified this through an experience as a summer school principal:

You know as a new principal I think swallowing your ego is probably the best thing you can do. And to have the ability to talk to people, tell me what I am doing well, and what I need to improve. I was a new summer school principal, I sat down with the staff after we were done, and I said to them okay, I said, "so, tell me what I did well, and tell me where I need to improve. And where we can

make this program better." One veteran teacher, almost stunned, told me "let me tell you something, I've never been asked what we did well, and where we can improve."

This notion of humility by being able to remove one's position and opinion and putting oneself in another stakeholder's position was summarized by P7: "Are you humble? Can you say, 'Yeah, I'm not really good at this, but I'm working on it'?" The findings revealed that humility is seen as an important characteristic among the interviewed participants and the lack of humility as a red flag for principal candidates. As P7 stated: "It just comes down to being humble. If you come in and you're very opinionated, I would have a red flag."

Humor. Alongside humility, P1 and P5 expressed humor as an essential characteristic of principal candidates. P1 explained that: "The principal's role is more entrenched, with more boots on the ground than sitting in a chair. They can't take themselves too seriously. There are too many things going on that you need to take joy in." P1 explained that working with children involves some degree of flexibility and that:

> You have to scratch your head with some of the funny things that they do and if you take yourself too seriously or take everything too seriously then, we're going to miss off a lot of fun that happens in school but even more so the whole students and children standards that they can remember and retain.

The sense of humor is not just seen as being a funny person, but participants believed it to be an essential personal or leadership characteristic as a principal, and that it impacts students directly. In other words, P5 expressed that candidates can have a

great sense of humor and is seen as a crucial component of working with children while being serious about the role and responsibilities at stake:

> This is probably a departure from what most people think . . . I always look for someone who doesn't take themselves so seriously . . . Have a sense of humor, and I also think it's important, when I'm talking with people, that they have a sense of where the world is headed and what kids need to be successful as they enter into the workforce and into society.

Loyalty. In addition to newly hired principals expressing humor, the findings revealed that engendering loyalty from faculty and staff was also essential. As P1 expressed, faculty and staff need to understand and believe that principals are there to work for them. This is a level of trust that all participants noted of importance in the principal candidates:

> I think a principal who is willing to jump in front of their faculty and staff is a good thing. I think engendering loyalty from your faculty, loyalty in the fact that they are willing to work for you because they know you are willing to work for them. That you are an advocate for them. You know, I think that's highly important when you build that level of trust between faculty and staff, and you go that level of trust between the students and you. When students come to you with an issue, and then you can help work with them to solve that issue.

Some participants even expressed that loyalty was a topic of discussion during the interview process. The findings revealed that superintendents need to perceive a sense of loyalty and advocacy for children and all stakeholders through the interview process. P7

explained: "So I have that conversation with them about loyalty, and the importance of loyalty."

Transformational. Despite the differences between school district sizes, student populations, and academic and professional backgrounds of participants, superintendents identified various personal characteristics that all relate to the theme of transformational. As illustrated in Table 4.18, child-centered, decisiveness, and experience were seen as essential characteristics of being transformational.

Table 4.18

Categories and Identified Participants for Transformational

Transformational
Child-Centered (P2, P6)
Decisiveness (P2, P6, P8, P9)
Experience (P3, P5, P7, P10)

Child-centered. Among the personal or leadership characteristics that principal candidates should display, child-centered was another characteristic that emerged in four out of 10 participants. P2 expressed child-centered as a love of working with children:

And they believe in education, they believe in the kids. And they truly are cheerleaders of the kids. They really subscribe to my three things: love of our kids, teach our kids, and protect our kids. I learned that from my previous superintendent. Those are three great goals to set for them. Those are the things that you need to be doing for our kids. And every one of our principals do those things.

Being child-centered and showing a love of working with children also was expressed as a role of advocacy. P6 particularly stressed the importance to work very hard and to stand up and advocate for one's students:

I look for someone who is kid centered and cares about kids and gets it . . . It's one of the top ones, because great principals do that. Great principals will be advocating for the child that everyone says, "No, we can't do this" . . .. A great principal would really work very hard to advocate. A great principal says, "These are my kids." Every child is their child.

P6 further expressed that this sense of advocacy for children is an important element to be sought after during the interview process: "I look for someone who is kid centered and cares about kids and gets it."

Decisiveness. In terms of decisiveness, three out of 10 participants discussed a general spirit that candidates should display. These participants suggested that, as a newly hired principal, it is important to be able to exude confidence and assuredness when making decisions. P1, first and foremost, hires principals that are able run a building independently. He stated, "Their decisiveness is crucial, anybody who works for me knows that I hire people to make decisions, not to just refer to me even if they are bad decisions." In addition, since principals can make scores of decisions daily, it is necessary for them to be able to foresee potential problems, think about them and make quick decisions. P6 described the good decision-maker: "Every change that occurs they think through it. They anticipate issues that may arise before they arise, so in their decision making, that's critical for them."

Decisive newly hired principals have the ability to empower others. Participants look for this trait when hiring principals. P4 emphasized:

> You have to have somebody that will engender confidence in others and I look for a principal who is confident him or herself, and can just in looking at that person you can feel confident in him or her.

This spirit also underlines a degree of decisiveness. The findings revealed that the participants should be able to hire candidates who can make decisions, be inclusive and assertive. P4 expressed:

> I want a school principal who knows how to make decisions and can be decisive. When I say that, I really believe that a decision maker has to be someone who is inclusive and includes those most affected. The most affected by the decision should be part of the decision-making process. I think I want somebody whose decision skills are inclusive.

In addition to being decisive, the findings revealed that principals should know how to work under pressure. Participants want to be able to see that principal candidates can handle the pressure of the job while maintaining their decisiveness. As P9 put:

> You have to work under pressure, you have to be able to work when people are yelling at you, you have to work under time constraints, you have to work when confusion, you have to be able to think when there's confusion all around you.

Experience. The findings revealed it was important for a principal candidate to have experience. P3 stated: "They were great teachers to begin with. Their pedagogy was sound, they could articulate that pedagogy like there is no tomorrow . . . They have experience of expertise of instruction." All participants declared that they want to know

if principal candidates have "a fair amount of classroom experience, because they are instructional leaders first and foremost, relevant to the level that they are going to be leading." P1 even quantified the amount of experience needed was between 3-5 years:

> As a principal, I would expect them to have three to five years of successful experience as an assistant principal. Although I have hired principals with only one year as assistant principal and that's because the other traits trumped what the experience, where the experience is lacking, the other traits that the person was bringing to the table was over weighing that lack of experience.

Experience as an instructional leader was highlighted by P6: "We look for someone who is knowledgeable of the curriculum, whether it be elementary or secondary. That's very important, because you're a curriculum leader of your building. You need to know the curriculum." All participants viewed the role of a principal as an instructional leader, and as such the findings revealed that superintendents valued and prioritized the need to have candidates with strong instructional leadership and knowledge. As P4 exemplified, the experience has a direct association with students' learning experiences and achievement in the classroom:

> I want somebody who I personally think are the best principals with a strong background in curriculum. I want them to understand curriculum and understand what teachers need because among everything in education the most important things happen in the classroom. That's where the students are learning the most and it's the administrator's job to provide those teachers and the support staff with the things that they need to educate those children.

Based on the findings, experience is not defined solely as knowledge, but also as practical experience and particular skills. P10 underscored the following:

> I look for a person who's had skills, obviously in supervision of teachers, and, in particular, if it was a candidate who did not have experience as a principal, at least to be able to explain how they dealt with a situation where a teacher was ineffective, and what that process was and was there an opportunity to counsel that person out of the profession, or how did they handle the situation like that with a tenured teacher.

This experience in knowledge and skills is seen to be of importance to tackle the responsibilities of the job, but also to set a vision for the school as expressed by P5:

> Then I think that the level of curricular expertise is extremely important in order to push the program forward. Not only in terms of the day-to-day instruction that happens in classroom, but the visionary outlook as to what can we continue to do to evolve and improve our academic institution for our children.

The findings also presented that all participants would rather hire a principal with experience in instruction as opposed to little experience. As P9 put:

> You have to be an instructional leader of the kids and the big kids . . . One of the things that I tell my administrators is they have to learn their craft. There is a big difference from being a teacher with 15 years' experience when you move into becoming a principal. I will also rarely hire a principal who has not been a successful teacher.

> In terms of experience, the findings also outlined that certain participants look at the level of academic experience. P3 specified:

I look at their educational progress and I do look at their transcripts . . . I am

always looking for a certain threshold in grades and performance during their

undergraduate education because it speaks volume, more so than necessarily the

graduate level.

P6 underscored the importance of certification: "First and foremost, obviously,

you need to have your certifications and have all of the educational pieces that qualify

you to be a principal." From the findings, the academic preparation seemed to play a

great role in principal candidacy. P1 shared: "Principal candidates must have strong

academic perspectives. To go back to what's most important. Teachers will look at a

principal who doesn't have a strong academic preparation differently than one that does."

Furthermore, the findings revealed that experience did not limit itself to

credentials and academic transcripts, but also involved continuing education as a teacher

or administrator. P10 expressed the importance of evaluating candidates' professional

development as an important characteristic:

Again, a successful principal is one who attends conferences, who becomes aware

of instructional trends and supervision trends and leadership. I'm always

interested in a person who wants to learn more, a person who is involved in their

local affiliate organizations, who participates in them, consults with colleagues

and other districts. Very often, we recreate the wheel, we reinvent the wheel,

when what we need to do is call three or four colleagues or set up a meeting with

people down the street who said, "We went through that four or five years ago."

Summary of Findings

This study used a qualitative research design with the goal to gain an in-depth perspective regarding the perceptions of superintendents about the personal and leadership characteristics of the newly hired principals that they have hired and supervised. As a result, a descriptive approach was used to understand insights, attitudes, beliefs, perceptions, feelings, thoughts, and explanations. The qualitative research methods, using semi-structured interviews, allowed the researcher to collect data in order to observe behaviors that include, but are not limited to: situations, detailed descriptions, and experiences from people that describe values, beliefs, thoughts, and attitudes. The open coding process resulted in a large amount of information outlining various coded characteristics which were supported by perceptions and personal or professional experiences by the interviewed participants. The categories which emerged from this coding process were identified in alignment with the three research questions. The findings that emerged from the interviews corresponded to both personal and/or leadership characteristics that newly hired principals should exhibit, according to participants' perceptions. Even though some of the codes characteristics may have seemed redundant, they offered a clear classification and intertwined between personal and professional characteristics, both for newly hired candidates (research questions 1 and 2) and for principal retention (research question 3).

In terms of personal characteristics, the findings revealed that the newly hired principal candidate should exhibit inter and intrapersonal skills. Within the theme of interpersonal, communication, collaboration, visibility, experience, clear expectations, modeling, compassion, and flexibility, in no particular order of preference, were found to

be the most essential categories. Within the theme of intrapersonal, six categories emerged: a willingness to learn, humility, vision, drive, cultural competence, and honesty.

In terms of leadership characteristics, the findings revealed that the principal as a leader should be participative, influential, and at the same time, managerial. The categories did not emerge in any chronological order or by order of importance. In terms of the principal as a participative leader, three major coded leadership characteristics emerged: communication, decisiveness, and collaboration. As an influential leader, three major coded characteristics were identified: visibility, experience, and vision. The findings revealed that participants viewed being a managerial principal as an important category. This included modeling good behavior for the building, managing the logistics of the building, monitoring, and setting strong instructional leadership.

Both personal and leadership categories emerged in alignment with research question three with respect to which characteristics, either personal or leadership, participants perceived to be of importance for principal retention. The findings revealed that participants referred to 10 major categories among which communication, visibility, vision, and flexibility under the axis of an inclusive principal candidate or what many participants referred to as a "well rounded" principal. The findings also underscored the importance of the newly hired principal who builds trust. This category housed the four categories of compassion, humility, humor, and loyalty. Lastly, the findings pointed out the three important categories of child-centered, decisiveness and experience as components of a transformational principal.

Chapter 5: Discussion

In the ever-changing and complex world of education, effective school principals require an array of leadership, management, and visionary skills (Bredeson, 2016). Principals are a crucial component in the effective running of schools and overall school performance (Williamson, 2011). Darling-Hammond et al. (2009) related effectiveness to the necessary personal and leadership characteristics demonstrated by principals. Furthermore, Maxwell, Huggins, & Scheurich (2010) has consistently shown that a strong relationship prevails between principals' leadership characteristics, student engagement, teacher efficacy, and parental involvement toward responding to the demands of school accountability. Because of new mandates and reforms, schools across America have struggled to meet the challenges of vigorous accountability standards leading to the reality of a high rate of turnover of principals (Eaton, 2011). Additional research showed a decline in the number of qualified applicants for school principal positions (Harris et al., 2010; Roza & Swartz, 2003; Sava and Koerner, 1998). Superintendents across the country are reporting the increasing difficulty of finding adept administrators who possess the essential personal and leadership characteristics in the face of these new school realities (Eaton, 2011).

This study sought to identify superintendents' perceptions of the important personal and leadership characteristics that newly hired principals exhibit which support their effectiveness in leading schools, and increase their possibility of being retained by a superintendent in New York State. The findings allowed the researcher to generate a list

of essential personal and leadership characteristics, as perceived by superintendents, that principals should exhibit in order to be effective leaders in their school. Through the recurring themes that emerged, the study specifically identified a set of five essential personal and leadership skills that all principals should possess. These findings, furthermore, suggest a strong alignment with existing leadership standards (National Policy Board for Educational Administration, 2015). These characteristics are not only valued on the job, but are also evident at the time of hire; thus, the findings provided information regarding the personal and leadership characteristics of newly hired principals that are also valued by the superintendents for job retention. In addition to identifying essential personal and leadership characteristics, this study made clear the value-judgements that superintendents have of what constitutes an adept principal.

The significance of this study was threefold. First, this study intended to help public school organizations become more effective by developing criteria models for the assessment, hiring, training, retention, and development of the newly hired principals. Second, this study aimed to inform existing practices by schools of education in the training and preparation of candidates for principalship. Lastly, hiring an effective principal is a challenging task because a candidate's personal and leadership qualifications and abilities as defined by mandated standards can significantly differ from a superintendent's perception of those qualifications and abilities (Goldring, et al., 2014). This study helped to form a comparison of the personal and leadership characteristics, valued by superintendents, to the newly established leadership standards of 2015 (National Policy Board for Educational Administration, 2015). Examining the perceptions of superintendents with regard to the important leadership characteristics

newly hired principals should exhibit, required assessing superintendents' views of

leadership characteristics in comparison to newly established leadership standards.

This study answered the following research questions:

1. What are the personal characteristics that superintendents perceive to be
   important for newly hired principals in New York State?

2. What are the leadership characteristics that superintendents perceive to be
   important for newly hired principals in New York State?

3. Which personal and leadership characteristics increase the probability of a
   newly hired principal being retained by a school district in New York State?

The research participants for this study were superintendents that are employed in

New York State public school districts. A purposeful sampling of 10 superintendents

from a pool of 74 superintendents throughout the Hudson Valley was used. All

responding participants met the criteria of the study and fully participated in the

research. The results of this study are based on their responses.

The qualitative research method, using semi-structured interviews, allowed the

researcher to collect data about behaviors that include, but are not limited to: situations,

detailed descriptions, and experiences from people that describe values, beliefs, thoughts,

and attitudes. Twelve out of the fourteen semi-structured interview questions were posed

to the participants in the same sequence and in alignment with the research

questions. The first three interview questions were provided in order to gather

demographic information. Initially, interview participants were asked to share general

ideas, thoughts or reflections regarding their perceptions of newly hired principals. Each

participant was then given the opportunity to answer two questions specific to the first

two research questions. Four questions were then posed for the third research question. The questions gradually focused from personal characteristics to leadership characteristics, and culminated into both personal and leadership characteristics in the context of retaining a new principal.

Following the transcription of the semi-structured interviews, an in-depth analysis of the interview data was conducted. The researcher began interpreting the data using open or line-by-line coding. Through the transcripts, several categories and themes emerged from the coded data. Comments for each of the research questions were collected and transcribed. As the data were considered in detail, preliminary characteristics were developed and identified. The coding scheme was developed by using open coding, focused or selective coding, and axial coding. Selective codes were then created by connecting and consolidating axial codes and abstracting them from the evidence contained in the data. Categories and themes became apparent from the analysis of the interviews and were continually refined until a generalized pattern of the participants' view were established. Because the interviewees gave so many ideas, the most prominent categories were selected for discussion.

Summary of Findings

Research question number 1. Research question number 1 focused on the personal characteristics that superintendents perceive to be important for newly hired principals in New York State. There were two major findings that emerged from the data.

First major finding for research question 1. The first finding suggests that interpersonal skills play an important role in the success of newly hired principals. The

categories that emerged were: communication, collaboration, visibility, experience, clear expectations, modeling, compassion, and flexibility. These were qualities and characteristics that involved working with others and establishing relationships. This finding suggests that newly hired principals are most successful when they are utilizing skills that help them make connections with their constituents, students, and the community served. The finding also suggests that interpersonal skills are multi-faceted. For example, superintendents discussed the idea of effective communication. Communication takes on various forms such as an ability to speak, listen, and respond to various situations. The ways in which newly hired principals communicate allow for people to better understand one another, build trust, and establish connections. This idea of building relationships through interpersonal skills supports Baron's (1990) research on superintendents' perceptions of principal candidates when he outlined a list of candidate characteristics that included effective listening skills, an ability to motivate others, effective communication, an ability to work with people, and interpersonal skills.

Second major finding for research question number 1. The second finding suggests that intrapersonal skills play an important role in the success of newly hired principals. The categories that emerged, a willingness to learn, humility, vision, drive, cultural competence, and honesty, are qualities and characteristics that relate to being reflective. In other words, newly hired principals utilizing these characteristics have the ability to stand alone and do not need other people with whom to interact. These characteristics are considered to be not only prerequisites to the principalship, but are also necessary in establishing a good start to this position, and through the career as an

effective building principal. This finding suggests that newly hired principals are most successful when they utilize skills that allow them to understand and manage their own emotions. Intrapersonal is synonymous to self-awareness and introspection. The findings also suggest that newly hired principals that demonstrate high intrapersonal skills are aware of their emotions, their beliefs, and their goals. Newly hired principals with intrapersonal skills also understand and reflect upon their motivations. It has been suggested by the participants in this study that newly hired principals who maintain a keen sense of themselves and who are well-grounded in their emotions, are more likely to be successful in their roles and the schools that they lead.

The finding of the intrapersonal principal support much of the literature that was presented. Howard Gardner (1999) identified seven multiple intelligences, one of them being intrapersonal. Craig (2008) delved into an in-depth analysis of emotional intelligence and its competencies such as self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and relationship management. Craig also stated that effective principals with high EQ (emotional intelligence) also have well-developed optimism, self-awareness, empathy, and remarkable achievement orientation. There is enough research to suggest that leaders high in emotional intelligence may be more skillful or develop better skills in influencing, inspiring, intellectually stimulating, and growing their staff (George, 2000; Goleman, 2000; Goleman et al., 2002).

As evidenced by these findings, when it comes to the personal characteristics that newly hired principals exhibit, there is a clear distinction between understanding other people (interpersonal) and understanding oneself (intrapersonal). The ability to work with and understand other people and understand oneself, breeds success to the newly

hired principal. The findings also suggest that these two themes are not separate entities; they go hand-in-hand toward the success of the principals.

Research Question Number 2. Research question number 2 focused on the leadership characteristics that superintendents perceive to be important for newly hired principals in New York State. There were three major findings that emerged from the data.

First major finding for research question 2. The first finding suggests that participative skills play an important role in the success of newly hired principals. The categories that emerged, communication, decisiveness, and collaboration, were qualities and characteristics that, in contrast to research question number one, involved working with others in order to effectively make decisions. The analysis and findings suggest that being participative plays an important role in the success of newly hired principals. Superintendents feel that in order for newly hired principals to establish solid foundations and strong connections, they must be able to communicate in many creative ways that bring people together, weave commonalities, and establish a clear sense of authority. It is evident that the position of principal in educational institutions is demanding and requires exceptional leadership skills (Stronge et al., 2008). The leadership role of an effective school principal is based upon the ability to inspire and demonstrate a deep and thorough understanding of the real need for a school that will lead to meaningful organizational change (The Wallace Foundation, 2013). Björk et al. (2005) noted that effective organizational leadership also requires one who communicates strongly, builds relationships, and demonstrates political acumen.

Second major finding for research question 2. The second finding suggests that

the ability to be influential plays an important role in the success of newly hired

principals. The categories that emerged, visibility, experience, and vision, were qualities

and characteristics that help to create followers who want to follow in contrast to

followers that are convinced that they have to follow. The findings suggest that newly

hired principals establish their influence when they maintain a clear presence throughout

the buildings they serve. The findings suggest that newly hired principals must always be

in the hallways, in the classrooms, and in the cafeteria. In addition, the findings suggest

that participating in community events at large, as well as sporting competitions for

students, allows newly hired principals to maintain a good level of visibility. When

newly hired principals maintain this type of visibility, they are developing an image of

themselves that shows that they care and advocate for everything that is going on around

them. Newly hired principals that demonstrate this level of visibility convince others of

their commitment to the school. Furthermore, the findings show that when people see the

principal around and involved, they are more likely to respond proactively to the

decisions that are being made by the principal.

The findings also suggest that the more experience that newly hired principals

gain and model, the more likely they are able to better establish their influence that will

lead to effective decision-making. Moody (2007) supports this idea with the study that

was conducted in various K-12 districts throughout the state of Arizona. Districts with

experienced principals were compared to districts with newly hired principals. The study

concluded that experience in a previous administrative role holds the most significant key

factor in increasing competency and success. Newly hired principals looking to establish

themselves should demonstrate an excellent understanding of the best practices that are in the classroom, as well as build experiences that will allow the newly hired principal to have enough credibility to effectively make decisions when leading a school.

Third major finding for research question 2. The third finding suggests that being managerial plays an important role in the success of newly hired principals. The categories that emerged, modeling, managing the building, monitoring, and strong instructional leadership were qualities and characteristics that involve organizing, directing, and controlling various activities in order to make effective decisions. In addition to being influential and participative, they also need to be effective managers of the organizations they lead. As such, the findings reveal certain important managerial skills such as being able to oversee many activities, routines, and functions of a school. It is important for newly hired principals to get deeply involved in all of the managerial aspects of running a school. Managing a building can be interpreted in many ways, but essentially, principals must be able to effectively tend to daily routines, adhere to local, state, and federal guidelines, as well as to react appropriately and respond to situations that arise. Newly hired principals have to maintain a good working knowledge of the entire building. The analogy of an orchestra conductor is synonymous to leaders of schools (Domenech, 2009); they are the conductors of administrative performances and facilitate the performance of all personnel.

The findings also show that an effective newly hired principal is a manager who is able to demonstrate the expectations that are required of constituents. For example, an effective principal models the way in which students and teachers should respond to and practice emergency procedures. In addition, effective principals will always be seen

managing routines with students. Finally, effective managers have a strong understanding of curriculum and instruction and spend a great deal of time ensuring that teachers deliver the correct material to be taught. Principals can take advantage of these kinds of managerial responsibilities in order to provide examples of how things should get done. The findings also show that an effective newly hired principal is one that provides appropriate monitoring throughout the building. The leader, in short, personifies the aspirations and responsibilities of the entire building (DiPaola & Stronge, 2003).

Research question number 3. Research question number 3 focused on the personal and leadership characteristics that newly hired principals need to increase the probability of being retained in the school district. There were three major findings that emerged.

First major finding for research question 3. The first finding suggests that being inclusive is important for the newly hired principal. The categories that emerged, communication, visibility, vision, and flexibility, were qualities and characteristics that involve all stakeholders in the school. The findings clearly outline that a principal candidate must be visible and known to all stakeholders, and able to fit into the culture of the school district by ensuring they comply with common core beliefs and ideas, which is evidence of a shared vision and an ability to take risks. Communication in the sense of having an ability to listen to others, but also having a voice, was a prime characteristic. Despite the differences between school district sizes, student populations, and academic and professional backgrounds of participants, superintendents identified these various characteristics as working together toward what superintendents perceive to be a well-

rounded candidate. The literature offers scarce information regarding particular

characteristics that constitute a successful principal candidate. Baron (1990) pointed out

that there is a considerable lack of uniformity among superintendents regarding principal

recruitment and selection, and most likely expectations of the principal candidates. This

study, however, reveals a uniformity of characteristics on what constitutes a well-rounded

principal candidate, which mirrors Baron's further research on superintendents'

perceptions of principal candidates by reporting a prioritized list of candidate

characteristics (Baron, 1990). The findings of this study echo that prioritized list in that

an inclusive candidate must exhibit an ability to listen effectively, to motivate others, to

communicate effectively, to work with other people, and to exhibit human

relation/interpersonal skills.

Second major finding for research question 3. The second finding suggests that

developing trust increases the likelihood of a newly hired principal being retained in a

school district. The categories that emerged, compassion, humility, humor, and loyalty,

were qualities and characteristics that enable others to rely on their leader. The findings

suggest that these characteristics play an important role in helping teachers, students, and

parents become more trusting of their principal. The trust that is established within a

principal gives a springboard for principals to execute their vision and understand the

needs to move the building forward. Research shows that a principal who is trusted is

more likely to enhance the culture of a school to the point where good results are

noticeable.

Quality leadership plays a crucial role in school improvement (Davidovich, et al.,

2009). Educational leaders are important people tasked to set the direction and vision for

school improvement while ensuring student learning (Habegger, 2008). Even though the literature establishes a connection between student achievement and effective principalship, it does not precisely underscore the value of trust as an essential personal and leadership characteristic for effective principal candidates. Even if these personal characteristics are not evident in the research, this raises the question of whether these personal characteristics are to be found in the existing leadership standards, and part of best practices in the preparation programs for principal candidates.

Third major finding for research question number 3. The third finding suggests that a transformational leader increases the likelihood of a newly hired principal being retained in a school district. The categories that emerged, child-centered, decisiveness, and experience, all create valuable and positive changes in people. The inclusive and trusting candidate must also exhibit transformational skills. The findings reveal that no matter the issue, topic, or decision, a principal's number one priority must be centered on children and their best interest. Even though there is a managerial component to the principalship that goes beyond the classroom, students should always be the primary focus. The findings reveal that superintendents do not systematically require principal candidates to have experience in an administrative position. Experience as a classroom teacher as well as a good understanding of best practices and student achievement and development, are areas of prime importance. With the experience and increased responsibility of this leadership role, the findings reveal that, as a newly hired principal, it is important to be able to exude confidence and assuredness when making decisions. Since the study identified a great deal of leadership characteristics that gravitate around

the theme of making decisions, the idea of decisiveness is particularly relevant to the case of principal candidates.

Throughout the chapter, it has been shown that the responses to research questions one and two demonstrated that quality leadership plays a crucial role in school improvement (Davidovich et al., 2009). Educational leaders are important people tasked to set the direction and vision for school improvement while ensuring student learning (Habegger, 2008). These characteristics are complex and interwoven. However, this is not any different for principal candidates, and the responses to the research questions in this study are reflected in the literature. Indeed, the literature highlights that the actions needed from a principal candidate underscore the importance of having a shared vision, empowering others to initiate action, and providing an environment suitable for change, which are vital practices that successful principals provide when leading a school (Kouzes & Posner, 2002). The findings of this study clearly mirror factors delineated by Stronge et al. (2008), which revealed methods of how principals can effectively accommodate the demands and greatest priorities of their school while continuously developing and redefining their leadership skills. The following indicators, supported by this research, were identified as: instructional leadership with vision (decisiveness), positive school climate and supportive work culture and standards (child centeredness), superior skills in human resource management (experience), superior skills in organization management (experience), transparent and effective communication across all organizational levels (decisiveness), and professional role modeling for others and high ethical standards (decisiveness). Even if these characteristics are found in the research, this raises the question of whether these personal characteristics are to be found

in the existing leadership standards, as well as part of best practices in the preparation programs for principal candidates.

This study identified essential personal and leadership characteristics from superintendents' perceptions that newly hired, and to-be-hired principals should possess in order to be effective on the job. The three research questions were clearly answered through major themes that emerged from the data. The personal skills overlapped with the leadership skills, but the leadership skills did not overlap with the personal skills. When it comes to leadership skills, the findings show that the superintendents are better versed and trained about leadership and professional skills. The findings indicate that superintendents value each theme equally.

The findings show that more discussion took place in terms of collaboration and communication as leadership skills under the axes of influential and participative. These findings were supported by existing research and literature. Even though there is an abundance of research supporting educational leadership as a complex process (McCann, 2011; Stronge et al., 2008; Wagner, 2010), the literature about educational leadership shows a strong correlation between the quality of principal leadership and the achievement of said school buildings (Waters et al., 2006). The answers to these research questions did not provide additional information as to which personal and leadership characteristics a newly hired principal should possess. What the findings underscore is that these characteristics are not separate from one another. This study particularly adds to existing research by demonstrating that these identified personal and leadership characteristics seemingly go hand-in-hand, and sync together in a type of symbiosis of

what is perceived to be a set of essential personal and leadership characteristics for principals to be effective leaders.

Implications for Practice

The results of the study are discussed according to the eight findings that arose from the data: interpersonal and intrapersonal skills are personal characteristics that superintendents perceive to be important for newly hired principals in New York State; participative, influential, and managerial skills are leadership characteristics that superintendents perceive to be important for newly hired principals; inclusive, trust, and transformational skills are personal and leadership characteristics that increase the probability of a newly hired principal being retained by a school district in New York State. These characteristics should be considered in the criteria models that are developed by public schools for the assessment, hiring, training, retention, and development of the newly hired effective principals. In addition, this study aimed to inform existing practices by schools of education in the training and preparation of the future generation of principals who will fill the numerous future vacant positions. Colleges and universities must be prepared to examine and deliver to students these necessary personal and leadership characteristics that will allow for newly hired principals to be successful.

Even though multiple references have been made through this study to existing research and literature regarding personal and leadership characteristics, the findings raise the question of whether these identified personal and leadership characteristics are to be found in the existing leadership standards, and part of best practices in the preparation programs for principal candidates or newly hired principals.

Leadership standards. In 2015, the Council of Chief State School Officers and the National Policy Board for Educational Administration released the new 2015 leadership standards (Appendix E), an update from the 2008 ISLLC standards, to better reflect the evolving roles of education leaders as well as new research about education leadership (National Policy Board for Educational Administration, 2015). The findings of this study offered a clear classification of personal and professional characteristics, both for newly hired candidates (research questions 1 and 2) and for principal candidates (research question 3). As such, and through this classification, the findings of this study also reveal a clear nexus with the existing 2015 leadership standards. Even though participants did not stress upon or make reference to the importance of standards during the interview process in the hiring or retention of effective principals, the findings reveal a strong correlation with these leadership standards, as explained herein.

In terms of personal characteristics, the findings revealed that the newly hired principal candidate should exhibit inter-, and intrapersonal skills. The following categories were considered to be the most essential for a principal that exhibits interpersonal skills: communication, collaboration, visibility, experience, clear expectations, modeling, compassion, and flexibility. The interpersonal skills of collaboration, clear expectations, and modeling are in direct alignment with "having the capacity building within professional communities, staff and teachers, which assist in promoting the performance of students" (Standard 5) and "having the skills of developing professional capacity of all school personnel to ameliorate the performance and welfare of students" (Standard 6). Through the interpersonal skills of communication, visibility, clear expectations, and flexibility, a direct correlation can be made with Standard 7 in

"having the capacity building within professional communities, staff, and teachers which assist in promoting the performance of students", and Standard 8 in "the ability to engage families and community meaningfully."   The intrapersonal skills that a newly hired principal should have emerged through the following six categories: a willingness to learn, humility, vision, drive, cultural competence, and honesty. The intrapersonal skills of humility and honesty are in direct alignment with "acting ethically as a leader per professional norms and the ability to strive for equal chances in education and promoting culturally responsive practices, which enhances students' performance" (Standard 2). Certain intrapersonal skills which emerged through the coding process evidently help foster work ethics in "having the ability to manage operations and resources in a school" (Standard 9). This standard mirrored the reflections from participants in terms of principals' vision, drive, and cultural competence.

In terms of leadership characteristics, the findings revealed that the principal as a leader should be participative, influential, and at the same time, managerial. The categories did not emerge in any chronological order or in order of importance. However, the findings revealed a distinct alignment with the majority of the 2015 Leadership Standards. In terms of the principal as a participative leader, four major coded leadership characteristics emerged: communication, decisiveness, humility, and vision. In "acting ethically as a leader per professional norms and the ability to strive for equal chances in education and promoting culturally responsive practices, which enhances students' performance" (Standard 2), principals show decisiveness and humility. These identified characteristics along with decisiveness are further reinforced in "having the ability to develop, enact and advocate visions, missions and core value of a

quality education, which facilitates the well-being, and success of learners" (Standard 1) and in "having the capacity to develop and support coherent systems of curriculum, assessment, and instructions to improve the academic performance of learner" (Standard 4). Communication was found to be an important trait through the study, and this finding was of particular relevance in having principals "engage families and community meaningfully" (Standard 8), and "cultivate an inclusive supportive and caring school community that enhances education performance as well as the well-being of learners" (Standard 5).

As an influential leader, three major coded characteristics were identified: visibility, experience, and collaboration. The findings revealed that superintendents value the visibility of principals, and their ability to "act as agents of continuous improvement in a school" (Standard 10), which expands to "having the capacity building within professional communities, staff and teachers, which assist in promoting the performance of students" (Standard 7). As an influential leader, the findings revealed that principals should collaborate to "strive for equity of educational opportunity and culturally responsive practices that promotes academic success and well-being" (Standard 3).

Even though some of the identified leadership characteristics intertwine with some of the identified personal characteristics, the findings keep supporting the newly established leadership standards. In terms of leadership characteristics, the findings revealed that participants viewed being a managerial principal as an important category. This included modeling good behavior for the building, managing the logistics of the building, monitoring, and setting strong instructional leadership, all of which are central

elements to the new leadership standards. This is particularly noticeable in the capacity

of principals to "develop and support coherent systems of curriculum, assessment, and

instructions to improve the academic performance of learners" (Standard 4), and in

"having the capacity building within professional communities, staff and teachers, which

assist in promoting the performance of students" (Standard 7) as well as "having the

ability to manage operations and resources in a school" (Standard 9).

Both personal and leadership categories emerged in alignment with research

question 3 with respect to which characteristics, either personal or leadership, participants

perceived to be of importance for principal retention. The findings revealed that

participants referred to 10 major categories which are in alignment with all 10 national

leadership standards. Among these categories communication, visibility, vision, and

flexibility were classified under the axis of an inclusive principal candidate or what many

participants referred to as a "well-rounded" candidate, which refer to Standards 1, 2, and

3. The findings also underscored the importance of the principal candidate that builds

trust which is prevalent under Standards 4 and 5. This finding housed the four categories

of compassion, humility, humor, and loyalty. Lastly, the findings pointed out the three

important categories of child-centered, decisiveness, and experience as components of a

transformational principal candidate which is at the core of the leadership standards and

present through Standards 6, 7, 8, 9, and 10.

Even though some of the coded characteristics may have seemed redundant, they

offered a clear classification and intertwined between personal and professional

characteristics. This redundancy of codes is also mirrored in the repetitive alignment

with certain standards throughout the study.

This association between the findings of this study and their alignment to the leadership standards is clearly supported by the literature. The standards are designed to ensure that educational leaders are ready to effectively meet the challenges and opportunities of the job today and in the future as education, schools, and society continue to transform (National Policy Board for Educational Administration, 2015). This study focused on the perceived leadership and personal characteristics to newly hired principals to effectively lead their building, and to become leaders that can meet the challenges and opportunities of the job.

The literature clearly supports the need for standards, and the importance in "getting the right people to become school leaders . . . and in providing these people with the right set of skills (and standards) to be effective leaders" (Christie, Thompson, & Whitely, 2009, p. 4). These 10 standards clearly identify the functions and the scope of a school principal who encompasses delivering instruction, ensuring student learning, building a positive and supportive school environment, and involving parents and stakeholders in the school's expansion. Through the findings of this study, the themes that emerged are all in alignment with existing standards, and thus are essential requirements for the hiring and sustaining of new principals, which superintendents can use throughout the hiring process and in their evaluation of principals. The findings of this study are in clear alignment with the 2015 Leadership Standards. However, it can be noticed that the findings of this study add a new dimension through the personal characteristics. Even though Standards 1 and 2 identify ethics and core values, and all other standards allude to personal characteristics, there are no clear standards that identify intrapersonal skills or interpersonal skills as clear reference to these standards. The

findings shed light on specific areas of these intrapersonal and interpersonal skills, and how they relate to or complement necessary personal and leadership characteristics for newly hired principals or principal candidates.

Limitations of the Study

      Measure used to collect the data. While there were clear categories and themes that emerged from the coded data, the frequency of certain responses for most of the categories were not strong. This could be attributed to the open-ended interview questions which allowed for all types of answers to be shared.

      Lack of generalizability. The study focused on a small sample size, and as such, cannot be generalized to the entire state of New York, nor can it be paralleled with national trends. It seems logical that there could be some similarity in other regions of New York State or in other states regarding leadership and personal characteristics of newly hired principals. Despite efforts to reach superintendents evenly throughout two counties, 90% responded from one county. Only one participant from another county responded to this study.

      Bias. Because the researcher is a public school principal with more than 20 years' experience in public school education, there is a possibility that research bias could have affected the results of the study. More specifically, because the researcher had strong positive and negative experiences as a newly hired principal, there is a possibility that he may have unintentionally inserted his own prejudices and biases into the study and the results. In addition, interviews were limited to the perceptions of the participants. Their perceptions of what personal and leadership characteristics constitutes an effective newly hired principal may have been influenced by their own biases and experiences.

Recommendations for Future Research

1. The literature review and the study shed the light on essential leadership and personal characteristics, and the benefits of these to be implemented as a core methodology of characteristics to be put into practice. More research should be conducted as far as what constitute the practical characteristics, and if these recommendations are applicable on a larger scale. For instance, case studies can be recommended, but the effectiveness of this approach should be researched in further detail, not just from the perspective of a small sample of superintendents.

2. The study offered much discussion on the hiring process of newly hired principals, but more research need to be conducted on the feasibility of the recommendations made in this study. Are the recommendations practical, and if so, how and if not why? The research should determine whether a mainstreamed training process is the ideal method to achieve the stated goal of preparing an individual for the position.

3. Research should be conducted on the effect of the gap between when an individual is initially certified to be a building level principal and when he or she actually assumes the first principalship, and the effect that it has on an individual's readiness to be a principal.

4. Additional research should also be conducted to determine whether district size is a factor that influences the leadership and personal characteristics required by superintendents. The skill sets required of a principal of a larger school district (county-wide system) are significantly different from those of a

superintendent in a smaller school district (rural); therefore, consideration should be given to restructuring administrator preparation programs to take this into account. This study does not focus on the nature and validity of preparation programs. A study needs to be conducted on the relevance of these preparation programs.

5. A subsequent study should be conducted on a larger scale in order to focus on a larger sample size to encompass other regions of the state of New York. Similarly, because five common categories emerged from all of the research questions, a quantitative study is recommended in order to validate these findings.

Conclusion

Research has shown that a strong relationship prevails between principals' leadership characteristics, student engagement, teacher efficacy and parental involvement toward responding to the demands of school accountability (Maxwell et al., 2010). Superintendents across the country are reporting the increasing difficulty of getting adept administrators (Cruzeiro & Boone, 2009). Superintendents who are primarily the ones responsible for the hiring of principals must be able to identify and assess the principal applicants as to their suitability and effectiveness as an administrator to meet the accountability and performance demands (Estes, 2011). The role of principals is much of a complex one, and superintendents do not perceive the required personal and leadership skills required for the job in a uniform way.

This study sought to identify superintendents' perceptions of the important personal and leadership characteristics that newly hired principals exhibit which support

their effectiveness in leading schools, and increase their possibility of being hired by a superintendent in New York State. The findings allowed the researcher to generate a list of essential personal and leadership characteristics, as perceived by superintendents, that principals should exhibit in order to be effective leaders in their school. Through the recurring themes that emerged, the study specifically identified a set of four essential personal and leadership categories that all principals should possess. These findings, furthermore, suggest a strong alignment with existing leadership standards (National Policy Board for Educational Administration, 2015).

This study examined what constitutes effective leadership, in particular, what the expected personal and professional characteristics of principals should be within the context of educational leadership and standards. However, there is a clear limitation of current research outlining the perspectives and perceptions of superintendents whose leadership skills are at the center of theses educational institutions. In addition, study focused on the significance of the superintendents as organizational leaders. It analyzed superintendents' characteristics of their own effective leadership, and identified their expectations of other administrators' leadership, the newly hired principals (Pijanowski, et al., 2009). This study also focused on the principals and the theory of emotional intelligence and leadership efficiency (Hull, 2012).

The context of this study was 10 conveniently-selected NYSED identified school districts from the Hudson Valley region based on availability and eligibility of the participants. The research participants were a purposeful sampling of 10 superintendents from a pool of 74 superintendents throughout the Hudson Valley. The data collection instruments consisted of a letter of introduction from the researcher to the potential

participants, an informed consent document, and a list of 14 semi-structured interview questions. Out of the 14 interview questions, 12 were designed to address three research questions. The first three interview questions were provided in order to gather demographic information. Interviews with participants were recorded and transcribed, and then the researcher performed four cycles of coding which ultimately grouped the data into eight major themes and 35 categories from an original set of 249 codes.

This author used a descriptive qualitative research design approach to explore the perceptions of superintendents about the personal and professional characteristics of the newly hired principals that they have hired and/or supervised. Specifically, the study involved the use of semi-structured interviews with superintendents at 10 conveniently selected New York State Education Department (NYSED) identified school districts from the Hudson Valley region in New York State. The results of this study were used to aide in identifying gaps between the training of school administrators and superintendents' desired skills for newly hired principals.

This study answered the following research questions:

1. What are the personal characteristics that superintendents perceive to be important for newly hired principals in New York State?

2. What are the leadership characteristics that superintendents perceive to be important for newly hired principals in New York State?

3. Which personal and leadership characteristics increase the probability of a newly hired principal being retained by a school district in New York State?

The results of the study are discussed according to the eight findings that arose from the data: interpersonal and intrapersonal skills are personal characteristics that

superintendents perceive to be important for newly hired principals in New York State; participative, influential, and managerial skills are leadership characteristics that superintendents perceive to be important for newly hired principals; inclusive, trust, and transformational skills are personal and leadership characteristics that increase the probability of a newly hired principal being retained by a school district in New York State.

Interpersonal. The first finding suggests that interpersonal skills play an important role in the success of newly hired principals. The categories that emerged were: communication, collaboration, visibility, experience, clear expectations, modeling, compassion, and flexibility. These were qualities and characteristics that involved working with others and establishing relationships.

Intrapersonal. The second finding suggests that intrapersonal skills play an important role in the success of newly hired principals. The categories that emerged, a willingness to learn, humility, vision, drive, cultural competence, and honesty, are qualities and characteristics that relate to being reflective.

Participative. The third finding suggests that participative skills play an important role in the success of newly hired principals. The categories that emerged, communication, decisiveness, and collaboration, were qualities and characteristics that, in contrast to research question number one, involved working with others in order to effectively make decisions.

Influential. The fourth finding suggests that the ability to be influential plays an important role in the success of newly hired principals. The categories that emerged, visibility, experience, and vision, were qualities and characteristics that help to create

followers who want to follow in contrast to followers that are convinced that they have to follow. The findings suggest that newly hired principals establish their influence when they maintain a clear presence throughout the buildings they serve.

Managerial. The fifth finding suggests that being managerial plays an important role in the success of newly hired principals. The categories that emerged, modeling, managing the building, monitoring, and strong instructional leadership were qualities and characteristics that involve organizing, directing, and controlling various activities in order to make effective decisions. In addition to being influential and participative, they also need to be effective managers of the organizations they lead.

Inclusive. The sixth finding suggests that being inclusive is important for the newly hired principal. The categories that emerged, communication, visibility, vision, and flexibility, were qualities and characteristics that involve all stakeholders in the school. The findings clearly outline that a principal candidate must be visible and known to all stakeholders, and able to fit into the culture of the school district by ensuring they comply with common core beliefs and ideas, which is evidence of a shared vision and an ability to take risks.

Trust. The seventh finding suggests that developing trust increases the likelihood of a newly hired principal being retained in a school district. The categories that emerged, compassion, humility, humor, and loyalty, were qualities and characteristics that enable others to rely on their leader. The findings suggest that these characteristics play an important role in helping teachers, students, and parents become more trusting of their principal. The trust that is established within a principal gives a springboard for principals to execute their vision and understand the needs to move the building forward.

Transformational. The eighth finding suggests that a transformational leader increases the likelihood of a newly hired principal being retained in a school district. The categories that emerged, child-centered, decisiveness, and experience, all create valuable and positive changes in people. The inclusive and trusting candidate must also exhibit transformational skills. The findings reveal that no matter the issue, topic, or decision, a principal's number one priority must be centered around children and their best interest.

The study shows an array of essential personal and leadership characteristics that principals should exhibit in order to be effective leaders in their school. However, the study identified a set of four essential personal and leadership categories that all principals should possess. This study also identified areas for further research in a larger scale study at the state level to identify trends and patterns in these required personal and leadership characteristics. Also, additional research should be conducted to determine whether district size is a factor that influences the leadership and personal characteristics required in newly hired principals by superintendents. A recommendation for further research was made in terms of the practicality of these identified characteristics within the framework of certification programs and initially certified building principals, depending on district size.

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Appendix A

Recruitment Email

Greetings.

Hello, my name is William C. Rolón. I am a doctoral student at St. John Fisher College. I am conducting research on superintendent perceptions of important personal and leadership characteristics for newly hired principals to be successful school leaders in the Hudson Valley Area, and I am inviting you to participate because of your position as Superintendent of a public school district within the Hudson Valley region of NY.

This voluntary research will be conducted in the form of a 60-90-minute interview, preferably on the campus in which you are employed to better understand the depth of the school culture. Another venue can also be mutually agreed upon. I want to also assure you that confidentiality will be upheld throughout this study, with only the primary researcher having access to the data. District anonymity will be strictly maintained. There is never any obligation to complete this interview and you may withdraw at any time.

If you have any questions or would like to participate in the research, I can be reached at (845)321-1092 or wcr07698@sjfc.edu.

I thank you very much for your consideration and contribution to this important educational research.

William C. Rolón
Doctoral Student
St. John Fisher College

Appendix B

Letter of Introduction

Dear Superintendent:

You have been chosen to participate in a research study of superintendent perceptions of important personal and leadership characteristics for newly hired principals to be successful school leaders. This study will help public-school organizations become more effective by developing criteria models for the assessment, hiring, training, retention, and development of the newly hired effective principals. This study also aims to inform existing practices by schools of education in the training and preparation of candidates for the important role of principalship.

You have been selected as a participant because of your position as Superintendent of a public-school district within the Hudson Valley Region of NY. In addition, each superintendent that is selected for the study must have a minimum of three years combined administrative experience and must have taken part in the hiring and supervision of no less than three principals.

This study is being conducted by: William C. Rolón, Doctoral student at St. John Fisher College. The purpose of this study is to identify superintendents' perceptions of the important personal and leadership characteristics that newly hired principals exhibit which support their effectiveness in leading schools in New York State. A newly hired principal is defined as one holding the present position for three years or less.

This voluntary research will be conducted in the form of a 60-90-minute interview, preferably on the campus in which you are employed to better understand the depth of the school culture. Another venue can also be mutually agreed upon. I want to also assure you that confidentiality will be upheld throughout this study, with only the primary researcher having access to the data. District anonymity will be strictly maintained. There is never any obligation to complete this interview and you may withdraw at any time.

If you are interested in participating or have any questions, simply contact me, William C. Rolón, no later than _____ (845) 321-1092 or at wcr07698@sjfc.edu.

I thank you very much for your consideration and contribution to this important educational research.

Sincerely,
William C. Rolón
Doctoral Student
St. John Fisher College

Appendix C

Personal Interview Questionnaire

Following introductions and thanking the interviewee for participating in the study, the interviewer will repeat the following script: "The purpose of this study is to identify superintendents' perceptions of the important personal and leadership characteristics that newly hired principals exhibit which support their effectiveness in leading schools in New York State. This study will also provide information regarding the personal and leadership characteristics of principals that are valued by the superintendents when hiring them. Lastly, this study will make clear the value-judgements that superintendents have of what constitutes an adept principal."

Questions

1. How long have you been a superintendent?
   a. Please describe the districts that you have worked in?
2. How many principals have you hired?
3. How many principals have you granted tenure?
4. How would you describe a successful principal? Please explain. (RQ 1, 2, 3)
5. How would you describe an unsuccessful principal? Please explain. (RQ 1,2,3)

Aligned Research Question #1 - What are the personal characteristics that superintendents perceive to be important for newly hired principals in New York State? (For Questions 6, 7)

6. Once a principal is hired, what are the **most important personal** characteristics that newly hired principals should exhibit throughout the first three years of leading a school? Please explain.
   a. Important personal characteristics exhibited with faculty and staff?
   b. Important personal characteristics exhibited with students?
   c. Important personal characteristics exhibited with parents?
7. Once a principal is hired, what are the **least important personal** characteristics that newly hired principals exhibit throughout the first three years of leading a school? Please explain.
   a. Least important personal characteristics exhibited with faculty and staff?
   b. Least important personal characteristics exhibited with students?
   c. Least important personal characteristics exhibited with parents?

Aligned Research Question #2 - What are the leadership characteristics that superintendents perceive to be important for newly hired principals in New York State? (For Questions 8, 9)

8. Once a principal is hired, what are the **most important leadership** characteristics that newly hired principals should exhibit throughout the first three years of leading a school? Please explain.
   a. Important leadership characteristics exhibited with faculty and staff?
   b. Important leadership characteristics exhibited with students?
   c. Important leadership characteristics exhibited with parents?
9. Once a principal is hired, what are the **least important leadership** characteristics that newly hired principals exhibit throughout the first three years of leading a school? Please explain.
   a. Least important leadership characteristics exhibited with faculty and staff?
   b. Least important leadership characteristics exhibited with students?
   c. Least important leadership characteristics exhibited with parents?

Aligned Research Question #3 - Which personal and leadership characteristics increase the probability of a newly hired principal being retained by a school district in New York State? (For Questions 10, 11)

10. What are the **most important qualifying** characteristics that you seek when hiring a school principal? Please explain.
11. What are the **least important qualifying** characteristics that you seek when hiring a school principal? Please explain
12. Can you describe/summarize the reasons of your **most successful** newly hired principal?
13. Can you describe/summarize the reason of your **least successful** newly hired principal?
14. What other comments or illustrations would you like to share that have not been covered so far?

"Thank you very much for your time today. Your participation and input is greatly appreciated."

Informed Consent Form

TITLE OF STUDY
Perceptions of Important Personal and Leadership Characteristics for Newly Hired Principals to
Be Successful School Leaders: Views of School Superintendents

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PURPOSE OF STUDY
This study seeks to identify superintendents' perceptions of the important personal and leadership
characteristics that newly hired principals exhibit which support their effectiveness in leading
schools in New York State. This study will provide information regarding the personal and
leadership characteristics of principals that are valued by the superintendents when hiring them.
Lastly, this study will make clear the value-judgements that superintendents have of what
constitutes an adept principal.

PLACE OF STUDY
This study will take place on participant's campus of employment or mutually agreed upon
venue.

LENGTH OF PARTICIPATION
60-90 minutes

RISKS
The risk of identifying the source of the research/study will be nullified through the protection
and confidentiality of the participants (see below).

BENEFITS

1. This study will help public school organizations become more effective by developing
   criteria models for the assessment, hiring, training, retention, and development of the
   newly hired effective principals.
2. This study aims to inform existing practices by schools of education in the training and
   preparation of candidates for the position of principalship.

3. This study will help to form a comparison of the personal and leadership characteristics, valued by superintendents, to the newly established leadership standards of 2015.

METHOD FOR PROTECTING CONFIDENTIALITY/PRIVACY
The following steps will be taken to keep information about you confidential, and to protect it from unauthorized disclosure, tampering, or damage:
1. For this research and to protect the identities of the participants, the school districts and their superintendents will be known as A, B, and C, etc. respectively.
2. In order to develop accurate results and data, the interview will be audio-recorded.
3. A professional transcriptionist will organize all data and will not have access to any participants' names or locations of the study.
4. Upon the conclusion of this study, all hard copy data, including all audio-recordings, will be protected by being locked in a file cabinet that only the researcher can access. All electronic files will be password protected. After three years, all files and research materials will be securely destroyed.

YOUR RIGHTS
As a research participant, you have the right to:
1. Have the purpose of the study, and the expected risks and benefits fully explained to you before you choose to participate.
2. Withdraw from participation at any time without penalty.
3. Refuse to answer a particular question without penalty.
4. Be informed of appropriate alternative procedures or courses of treatment, if any, that might be advantageous to you.
5. Be informed of the results of the study.

I have read the above, received a copy of this form, and I agree to participate in the above-named study.

_____   _____
Print Name (Participant)   Signature
Date

William C. Rolón_____   _____
Print Name (Investigator)   Signature
Date

If you have any further questions regarding this study, please contact the researcher listed above. If you experience emotional or physical discomfort due to participation in this study, please contact the Health and Wellness Center at (585)385-8280 for appropriate referrals.

The Institutional Review Board (IRB) of St. John Fisher College has reviewed this project. For any concerns regarding this study and/or if you experience any physical or emotional discomfort, you can contact Jill Rathburn by phone at (585)385-8012 or by email at irb@sjfc.edu.

Professional Standards for Educational Leaders 2015

Standard 1. Mission, Vision, and Core Values
Effective educational leaders develop, advocate, and enact a shared mission, vision, and core values of high-quality education and academic success and well-being of *each* student.

Standard 2. Ethics and Professional Norms
Effective educational leaders act ethically and according to professional norms to promote *each* student's academic success and well-being.

Standard 3. Equity and Cultural Responsiveness
Effective educational leaders strive for equity of educational opportunity and culturally responsive practices to promote *each* student's academic success and well-being.

Standard 4. Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment
Effective educational leaders develop and support intellectually rigorous and coherent systems of curriculum, instruction, and assessment to promote *each* student's academic success and well-being.

Standard 5. Community of Care and Support for Students
Effective educational leaders cultivate an inclusive, caring, and supportive school community that promotes the academic success and well-being of *each* student.

Standard 6. Professional Capacity of School Personnel Effective educational leaders develop the professional capacity and practice of school personnel to promote *each* student's academic success and well-being.

Standard 7. Professional Community for Teachers and Staff Effective educational leaders foster a professional community of teachers and other professional staff to promote *each* student's academic success and well-being.

Standard 8. Meaningful Engagement of Families and Community Effective educational leaders engage families and the community in meaningful, reciprocal, and mutually beneficial ways to promote *each* student's academic success and well-being.

Standard 9. Operations and Management
Effective educational leaders manage school operations and resources to promote *each* student's academic success and well-being.

Standard 10. School Improvement
Effective educational leaders act as agents of continuous improvement to promote *each* student's academic success and well-being.