Leading Professional Development: Perceptions of Ohio Principals

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This dissertation titled
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Abstract

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Leading Professional Development: Perceptions of Ohio Principals

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The purpose of this study was to evaluate the perceptions of Ohio public high school principals regarding their roles as leaders of professional development and to identify the strategies they have undertaken to lead professional growth among their teachers. This study provides insights regarding the manner that principals perceive professional development in terms of the ways that they prioritize and execute these roles. Seven research objectives drove this study. The focus of these research objectives was to describe Ohio public school principals based upon their demographic characteristics, to identify the manner in which the decision-making of the principals regarding professional development was influenced, to determine the types and levels of influence on the implementation of professional development that was experienced by the participating principals, to ascertain the frequency with which the characteristics of professional development have occurred at the schools of the principals, to determine the perceptions of the principals regarding the efficacy of the professional development activities at their schools, to identify the leadership strategies that the principals used to foster professional development, and to identify the existence of statistically significant differences among the selected demographics emerging from this study. The study informs current practitioners about effective strategies for leading professional development and offers recommendations for policy makers. In regards to future
research, the researcher offers recommendations for studies that would contribute to the relatively small existing body of research results regarding principals’ perceptions of their role as leaders of professional development.
Dedication

I dedicate this work to my wife, Kaoru, and my three children, Aliyah, Ciel, and Micah.

Thank you for all your encouragement, love, and support!

Proverbs 3:5-6
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I would like to acknowledge the people who have cared for and supported me throughout the dissertation process. Having the support of my family, my dissertation committee, and my dissertation advisor has made writing this dissertation an exceptional experience for me.

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Chapter One: Introduction

Principals, as cardinal leaders, are responsible for the successful operation of their schools. Principals are expected to build and maintain a positive school climate, create a vision for student success and growth, cultivate collaboration and shared leadership, engage the parents and community in the schooling process, manage students and staff members, and set educational goals that align with the school vision. Over the latter half of the twentieth century and the beginning of the twenty-first century, the public began to hold schools more accountable for student achievement and post-secondary success. For this reason, the responsibilities and roles expected of principals have grown (Hess & Meeks, 2010; Mace-Matluck, 1987; Nicholson, Harris-John, & Schimmel, 2005; O’Donnell & White, 2005; Vollmer, 2013; Wayson, 1988). The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) of 2015 mandates a strong focus on improving teacher quality and leading evidence-based programs intended to increase student achievement. Likewise, the state of Ohio, in 2015, issued updated standards for principal performance that include a charge to “establish and sustain collaborative learning and shared leadership to promote learning and achievement of all students” (Ohio Department of Education, 2015b, p. 3). Under this mandate for increased focus on student performance and teacher quality, principals are expected to be instructional leaders who evaluate teachers, guide them in data analysis and the related processes to nurture school improvement, and lead professional development. The research purpose of this study was to evaluate Ohio public high school principals’ perceptions regarding their role as leaders of professional development and to
identify the strategies they have undertaken to lead professional growth among their teachers.

**Background of the Study**

Politicians, educators, and educational theorists alike have identified twenty-first century American public elementary and secondary education as the “accountability era” (Hess & Meeks, 2010; Nicholson et al., 2005; O’Donnell & White, 2005). The term, accountability era, derives from the initiation of a policy-driven focus on testing, data collection, data analysis, and data reporting measures related to school improvement initiatives that were designed to hold schools and teachers accountable for student learning. To understand the reason that education policy has been focused on accountability, consideration might be given to the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) of 1965. The ESEA was passed in 1965 under President Lyndon B. Johnson as part of his “War on Poverty” (Jorgensen & Hoffmann, 2003). The ESEA delivered increased federal funding to school districts, which served students with low socioeconomic status and who demonstrated low student achievement (Jorgensen & Hoffmann, 2003; Standerfer, 2006). This increase in funding elicited a call for increased accountability, which led to the use of the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) to measure student learning and achievement (Standerfer, 2006).

The desire for accountability rose again following the 1983 publication of *A Nation at Risk*. This report, which was commissioned by President Reagan, captured the imagination and attention of American politicians and citizens. This reaction reflected the report’s finding that American children were lagging behind their international counterparts in academic achievement, due to failing schools (Gardner, 1983). The report
summarized the dire condition of American schools with, “If an unfriendly foreign power had attempted to impose on America the mediocre educational performance that exists today, we might well have viewed it as an act of war. As it stands, we have allowed this to happen to ourselves” (Gardner, 1983, p. 5). This shocking revelation spurred a national debate on the American educational system and brought teacher quality and school accountability to the forefront of the American consciousness (Zepeda, 2012). *A Nation at Risk* led to (a) calls for career ladders and differentiated pay for teachers, (b) an eleven month salary structure to encourage teacher professional development and curriculum building, (c) higher standards for teacher preparation programs, (d) an increased emphasis on standardized testing curriculum reform, and (e) mentoring and induction programs for novice teachers (Lieberman & Miller, 2014; Reutzel & Clark, 2014). Long (2014) argues, “It (*A Nation at Risk*) effectively moved the federal involvement in education from access and equity to access, equity, and quality” (p. 29). In response, the federal government enacted several laws geared toward “fixing” public education in America:

1. Dwight D. Eisenhower Mathematics and Science Education Act of 1985
3. Improving America’s Schools Act of 1994
The Dwight D. Eisenhower Mathematics and Science Education Act provided funding through the U.S. Department of Education to local school districts to increase the number of teachers of math and science, and to improve their teaching skills and the quality of instruction (Stedman, 1989). In 1989, the National Governors’ Association held a summit to discuss national education goals and to support the development of national standards for each core subject area (Standerfer, 2006). President Clinton reauthorized the ESEA in 1994 with the passage of the Improving America’s Schools Act (IASA), which mandated that states would create academic and performance standards in the core subject areas (Jorgensen & Hoffmann, 2003; Standerfer, 2006). The IASA represented a major step in the accountability movement, as it shifted the focus on achievement from low performing schools with students, who have a low socioeconomic status, to include all students (Jorgensen & Hoffmann, 2003). The IASA mandated that states would create assessments, in each core subject area, that could identify students at risk of failure (Jorgensen & Hoffmann, 2003).

The IASA was intended to work in concert with the Goals 2000: Educate America Act, which challenged states to raise the achievement levels of all students by creating challenging performance standards on which students would be assessed (Jorgensen & Hoffmann, 2003). These two laws placed pressure on states to assess students and to collect data that could be used for accountability purposes. Later, the Comprehensive School Reform Demonstration Act of 1997 provided federal funding in the form of grants to schools, which pledged to implement school-wide reform that is grounded in scientifically-based research and effective practices (Editorial Projects in Education
Research Center, 2004). President Clinton also created policy to address reading achievement with the Reading Excellence Act of 1998. This act aimed to expand the number of high-quality, family literacy programs, in order to improve students’ reading skills and teachers’ instructional skills through the use of research-based strategies. The objective was to reduce the number of children referred to special education services due to reading deficiencies, and to teach children to read early in their formative years (Edmondson, 2005).

In addition to the aforementioned federal law and policy, *A Nation at Risk* also appears to have reinvigorated the “effective schools movement” (Wayson, 1988). The effective schools movement emerged in the late 1960s and early 1970s in response to findings in the Coleman Report of 1966 (The Equal Educational Opportunity Survey) that family background and socioeconomic status had an overwhelming influence on student achievement in comparison to the reportedly inconsequential impact schools were making on student achievement (D’Amico, 1982; Lezotte, 2001; Mace-Matluck, 1987). *A Nation at Risk* inspired and provoked educational researchers to develop “a body of research that supported the premise that all children can learn and that the school controls the factors necessary to assure student mastery of the core curriculum” (Lezotte, 2001, p. 1). Numerous studies originated from the effective schools movement, which identified effective schools and the characteristics of effective schools that in turn were used as a basis for federal legislation, policy, policy reform, and school improvement initiatives (D’Amico, 1982; Lezotte, 2001; Wayson, 1988). Beginning in 1984, the U.S. Department of Education began identifying and celebrating schools labeled as “excellent,” and
placing an enormous emphasis on the characteristics of effective schools, such as strong leadership by the principal and an effective, schoolwide staff training program, which led to the beginning of organized, directed professional development in the U.S. (Mace-Matluck, 1987; Wayson, 1988). Moreover, the research spurred by *A Nation at Risk* laid the foundation for new instructional and learning theoretical constructs and their applications, including professional development regarding the ways that principals could nurture the growth of teachers.

In the early 2000s, the call for accountability and improved teacher quality appears to have led to the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB), signed into law on January 8, 2002 by President George W. Bush. This law, which also reauthorized the ESEA, is rooted in accountability and strengthened the accountability movement significantly. Jorgensen and Hoffmann (2003) note, “With NCLB, a new era began where accountability, local control, parental involvement, and funding what works became the cornerstones of the nation’s (United States) education system” (p. 7). NCLB required public schools across America to show evidence that students and schools were making adequate yearly progress (AYP) in order to receive federal funding (Standerfer, 2006; Zepeda, 2012). NCLB forced states to practice accountability, such as providing the public with direct reports (Jorgensen & Hoffman, 2003; Standerfer, 2006). In response, states focused on standards-based curricula and created standardized tests in an attempt to measure student achievement and teacher quality and effectiveness (Lieberman & Miller, 2014). Zepeda (2012) adds, “(The) No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 became law that, in part, addressed ‘highly qualified’ teaching and also provided leverage for research-based
professional development” (p. 11). To wit, in Section 9101 Part A of NCLB (see Appendix A) the U.S. Department of Education (2002) advances a definition of professional development that is based on activities which include the following characteristics:

Advance teacher understanding of effective instructional strategies; aligned with and directly related to state academic content standards, student academic achievement standards, and assessments; and the curricula and programs tied to the standards; high quality, sustained, intensive, and classroom-focused; improve and increase teachers’ subject knowledge; improve classroom management; include instruction in the use of data and assessments to inform and instruct classroom practice; integrated in school- and district-wide improvement plans; regularly evaluated for their impact on increased teacher effectiveness and improved student academic achievement; support the recruiting, hiring, and training of highly qualified teachers. (p. 539)

Overall, NCLB mentioned professional development 197 times in its 630 pages (Long, 2014). The bill “advocated scientifically-based staff development approaches that focused on linking student achievement, teacher knowledge and skills, and standards and assessments” (Lieberman & Miller, 2014, p. 6). The bill specifically championed ongoing and intensive professional development, with the intent of increasing teachers’ subject area knowledge (that would make them “highly qualified” to teach their subject matter), including improved classroom management skills. The focus on improved classroom instructional practice was aligned with standards and offered programs that are consistent
with school district educational improvement plans (U.S. Department of Education, 2002). School districts were only allowed to receive and use federal dollars for professional development if the related activities met the standards established in the NCLB definition, and if schools conducted evaluations of the professional development activities (Zepeda, 2012). In short, NCLB was written to inspire policies and practices that – based on research and evaluation – would result in higher scores on achievement tests.

The 1965 Elementary and Secondary Education Act was reauthorized in 2015 by the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). This law updated the definition of professional development, as found in its predecessor, the No Child Left Behind Act, and through Title II broadened the scope of professional development to include all teachers, not just teachers in core academic subjects (ASCD, 2015; Pierce, 2016). The updated definition of professional development found in Section 8002 of the ESSA (see Appendix B) includes activities that are “sustained (not stand-alone, 1-day, or short term workshops), intensive, collaborative, job-embedded, data-driven, and classroom-focused” (ESSA, 2015, p. 296). Professional development, as defined in ESSA, also includes prescribed activities. They include all staff members including paraprofessionals, are part of broad schoolwide and districtwide improvement plans, allow for personalized plans for educators, are regularly evaluated for effectiveness, are developed collaboratively with school stakeholders, and provide follow-up training that includes the use of data for making instructional decisions in the classroom (ESSA, 2015). Building upon the precedent set by NCLB, ESSA has been grounded in accountability with a strong focus
on improving teacher quality and evidence-based programs that intend to lead to increased student achievement.

Ohio, like many other states, embraced the new era of accountability by introducing new professional standards for teachers, principals, and for professional development. The Governor’s Commission on Teaching Success and Senate Bill 2 addressed in 2004 the topic of teacher quality and school accountability by establishing the Educator Standards Board, which was charged with the creation of new standards for educators and professional development. The new educator and professional development standards, adopted in October 2005, were coupled with new academic standards, which were intended to lead Ohio to improved teaching practices and increased achievement test scores (Ohio Department of Education, 2007). The Educator Standards Board began, effective the 2013/14 school year to update the standards, which appears to have led to the creation of the current standards, which were published in April 2015.

The Educator Standards Board relied heavily on the Standards for Professional Learning developed by Learning Forward (formerly the National Staff Development Council) by “adapting and integrating Learning Forward’s standards into Ohio’s benchmarks” (Ohio Department of Education, 2015a, p. 2). Seven new standards emerged for professional development:

1. learning communities
2. leadership
3. resources
4. data
5. learning designs
6. implementation
7. outcomes

These standards were set in place to address teacher quality (learning designs) and accountability (data, outcomes). The standards also placed a premium on the responsibilities of administrators, namely implementation, leadership, outcomes, and resources. In fact, an indication is made in the supporting guidelines that a successful professional learning system is “advanced by leaders who prioritize professional learning and develop the capacity and structures to support it” (Ohio Department of Education, 2015a, p. 2).

The Ohio State Board of Education adopted, in 2008, the Ohio Principal Evaluation System (OPES) to supplement and complement the new standards. OPES was designed to assess Ohio principals’ performance regarding student achievement measures and school improvement. While OPES was adopted in 2008, it was implemented for the first time statewide in the 2013-2014 school year due to the desire to include it in Ohio’s Race to the Top (RTTT) phase two application (Mattson Almanzán, Sanders, & Kearney, 2011; Ohio Department of Education, 2010). As an accountability measure, OPES features a rubric that mirrors all the new state standards for principals including those pertaining to leading professional development.

The Ohio Standards for Principals (on which OPES is based) contain five standards:
Principals help create a shared vision and clear goals for their schools and ensure continuous progress toward achieving the goals; Principals support the implementation of high-quality standards based instruction that results in higher levels of achievement for all students; Principals allocate resources and manage school operations in order to ensure a safe and productive learning environment; Principals establish and sustain collaborative learning and shared leadership to promote learning and achievement of all students; Principals engage parents and community members in the educational process and create an environment where community resources support student learning, achievement and well-being.

(Ohio Department of Education, 2015b, p. 3)

Within these standards, principals are tasked with leading staff professional development (See Appendix C). For example, Standard 2 focuses on instruction, and 2.6 directly states, “Principals support staff in planning and implementing research-based professional development” (Ohio Department of Education, 2007, p. 49). Standard 2 dictates other methods by which principals are expected to lead their teachers in professional growth, such as encouraging and facilitating their staff members to use data effectively, ensuring effective instructional practices that meet the needs of all students, and sharing research that supports academic growth (Ohio Department of Education, 2007). Additionally, Standard 1 targets continuous improvement and charges principals with the responsibility of leading the change process for improvement by building a shared vision for school improvement, and leading the process of setting and achieving building-wide goals (Ohio Department of Education, 2007). Standard 3, which focuses on
school operations, resources, and the learning environment, sets expectations for principals to allocate resources to support professional development and to institute practices and policies that establish an effective learning environment that leads to improved student performance (Ohio Department of Education, 2007). Furthermore, Standard 4 challenges principals to establish practices and structures that will lead to a collaborative learning culture (Ohio Department of Education, 2007). Taken as a whole, four out of the five standards for Ohio’s principals directly or indirectly mandate leadership in professional development activities.

**Statement of the Problem**

When the Puritans established schools in Massachusetts in 1640, they tasked their school leaders with only two responsibilities: to teach basic reading, writing, and arithmetic; and to cultivate values that serve a democratic society (Vollmer, 2013). Since that time, public schools have seen their responsibilities and duties increase exponentially (Vollmer, 2013). School curricula have expanded to include numerous subjects in a variety of fields. Schools provide student lunches and sometimes breakfasts. Schools provide various services including nursing and library services. Schools conduct special education and adult education (Hanushek & Rivkin, 1997). Schools educate students on social issues such as character education, drug abuse, health and wellness education, multicultural education, and sexual education. Schools educate students about tolerance and enforce anti-harassment and anti-bullying policies. While this is not an exhaustive list of the myriad responsibilities mandated to public schools, the list illustrates the expansive scope of public education in the 21st century (Vollmer, 2013). In public
education today, responsibility for meeting these tasks appears to fall ultimately on the school administrator, particularly the building administrator.

In other words, school administrators, including principals, have numerous responsibilities and duties. Administrators take on various roles to meet the educational needs of their students and the professional needs of their colleagues. As time has passed, the responsibilities and roles expected of principals have grown. Historically, principals in the 20th century served as building managers (Lynch, 2012; Usdan, McCloud, & Podmostko, 2000). They were seen as disciplinarians, who managed personnel (teachers), maintained budgets, kept schools safe, and saw to the general operation of the school building (Lynch, 2012; Usdan et al., 2000). However, as American society has changed over the course of time and the need for school-centered education has grown, the role of the principal in the 21st century has expanded immensely. Copland (2001) offers:

Held accountable by superintendents, school board, staff members, parents, the media, and community members, today’s principals are charged with ‘big picture’ responsibilities to strike a vision, lead from the center, and build a community of learners. They must share decision making, link with external partners, and generally broaden the involvement of the community in shaping a vision for the school. In forging this shared vision, however, they remain centrally accountable for the ultimate success of any plans that are made. They are counted on to ensure learning for every pupil in an increasingly diverse student population, while at the same time they are charged with infusing new technologies throughout their schools and fostering the professional growth of faculty and staff members. (p. 3)
The roles of principals have grown to include instructional leadership, public relations and community leadership, and visionary leadership (Copland, 2001; Keith, 2008; Lynch, 2012; Shoho & Barnett, 2010; Usdan et al., 2000). As instructional leaders, principals are responsible for keeping their schools in good standing with accountability measures as measured by student academic performance, leading teacher growth through professional development focused upon the quality of teaching and learning, and using data to improve instruction and guide decision-making (Lynch, 2012; Usdan et al., 2000). As community leaders, principals are responsible for advocating for their schools in the community, eliciting resources from external sources, managing the schools’ image and public relations, and securing community support and partnerships for academic achievement and school improvement (Keith, 2008; Lynch, 2012; Usdan et al., 2000). As visionary leaders, principals are responsible for establishing a shared vision that encompasses the long-term future of the learning community and inspires school stakeholders to achieve common goals centered on student academic growth and learning (Keith, 2008; Lynch, 2012; Usdan et al., 2000).

In addition to expanded duties, roles, and expectations, principals in the 21st century are being held accountable for student growth as defined by various indicators of success including, but not limited to, achievement test scores and value added data. The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB) set accountability measures at the federal level that are focused upon holding principals responsible for student achievement. Moreover, Witziers, Bosker, and Kruger (2003) assert, “school principals increasingly are held accountable for educational quality in the belief that students’ success or failure is
determined by the way a school is run” (p. 3). However, research on the effectiveness of school leadership pertaining to student achievement is mixed at best. Studies on the effects of educational leadership have shown inconsistent results, leaving some to doubt whether educational leadership has any positive effect on student achievement (Witziers et al., 2003).

At the same time, there is a growing body of research that indicates educational leadership does have a positive effect on student achievement (Hallinger & Heck, 2004; Leithwood, Seashore Louis, Anderson, & Wahlstrom, 2004; Seashore Louis, Dretzke, & Wahlstrom, 2010; Waters, Marzano, & McNulty, 2003; Witziers et al., 2003). The most consistent findings in the research suggest a significant – albeit indirect – relationship between educational leadership and student achievement (Hallinger & Heck, 2004; Seashore Louis et al., 2010; Witziers et al., 2003). In fact, Leithwood et al. (2004) found that only classroom instruction ranked stronger than leadership as a school-related factor for student achievement, and that the direct and indirect factors of educational leadership account for approximately one quarter of the total school-related effects on student achievement. Upon closer examination, it is clear that principals can exert the strongest influence on student achievement indirectly through instructional leadership and leading staff professional development (Hallinger & Heck, 2004; Seashore Louis et al., 2010; Waters et al., 2003). Waters et al. (2003) identify a focus on identifying and improving classroom practices as a primary variable that positively affects student achievement. Additionally, Hallinger and Heck (2004) determined that, “Schools that make a difference in students' learning are led by principals who make a significant and
measurable contribution to the effectiveness of staff and in the learning of pupils in their charge” (p. 2). As such, research suggests principals, who want to find success in the accountability era, will benefit from engaging teachers in quality professional development that leads to improved classroom practice (DuFour, 1991; Zepeda, 2012).

The state of Ohio has included professional development in its new standards for Ohio principals. Standard 2.6 clearly states that Ohio principals will “…support staff in planning and implementing research-based professional development” (Ohio Department of Education, 2007, p. 51). Additionally, for the first time ever, Ohio has a clearly articulated evaluation system – the Ohio Principal Evaluation System (OPES) – that is charged with holding principals accountable to the new standards (Ohio Department of Education, 2015b). However, one question persists: how do Ohio principals perceive their role as leaders of professional development? It has been established that principals have enormous responsibilities, starting with the five standards established by the Ohio Department of Education that contain up to six elements per standard (Ohio Department of Education, 2007). In a 2001 study, Farkas, Johnson, Duffett, Foleno, and Foley shared this response from a participating principal: “The principal’s job is almost overwhelming. My desk is never clear of obligations. Constant interruptions from parents, teachers, etc., add to the stress of the day…Is it any wonder that we finally burn out?” (p. 27).

In such a pressure-packed, strenuous environment, how do principals prioritize their responsibilities, and where does professional development fall on that list? Do principals take time to lead professional development, or does it fall by the wayside? Leading professional development has been seen more and more as a principal
responsibility since the 1980s and through the 2000s with the passage of the No Child
Left Behind Act (Lynch, 2012; Usdan et al., 2000). Do principals take on this added
responsibility or do they leave professional development up to their teaching staff to do
on their own thing? While leading professional development is part of the OPES rubric
by which principals are scored, it is only one part of the scoring system and for this
reason principals may choose to forgo leading professional development in favor of other
leadership responsibilities. In conclusion, principals are inundated with a wide variety of
challenges, responsibilities and duties as educational leaders. Much of the accountability
for student success falls ultimately on their shoulders. Under these circumstances,
principals are challenged to decide the manner in which to address professional
development – if at all. Thus, the question remains: how do Ohio principals perceive their
role as leaders of professional development?

**Purpose and Significance of the Study**

The research purpose of this study was to evaluate Ohio public high school
principals’ perceptions regarding their roles as leaders of professional development and
to identify the strategies they have undertaken to lead professional growth among their
teachers. This study provides insight regarding the manner that principals perceive
teacher professional development, both in terms of the ways that they prioritize and
execute these roles. This study also informs current practitioners about effective elements
and strategies for leading professional development. Additionally, careful consideration
by current practitioners of the results of this study could lead to possible improvement on
teacher performance and increased student achievement. As previously noted, a
significant relationship reportedly exists between principals, who positively influence
staff effectiveness, and increased student learning (Hallinger & Heck, 2004). Moreover, principals in Ohio could enjoy stronger evaluation results under the Ohio Principal Evaluation System by evaluating their own practices. This objective could be approached through the implementation of relevant results of the literature and the findings of this study. The results of this study purport to add to the relatively small body of research results regarding the perceptions of principals regarding their roles as leaders of professional development and for that matter leadership in general.

**Research Objectives**

1. To describe Ohio public school principals based on the following demographic characteristics. They include (a) gender, (b) number of years in which the principals have served as an administrator, (c) the typology of the school district in which they serve, (d) the type (classification) of the school in which they serve, (e) the size of the school in which they serve based on student enrollment, (f) the grade levels found in their school buildings, (g) the geographic location of the schools in which they serve, and (h) their perceptions of the responsibilities for the professional development of the teachers in their schools.

2. To identify the manner in which the decision-making of the principals regarding professional development was influenced,

3. To determine the types and levels of influence on the implementation of professional development that was experienced by the participating principals,
4. To ascertain the frequency with which the characteristics of professional development have occurred at the schools of the principals,

5. To determine the perceptions of the principals regarding the efficacy of the professional development activities at their schools,

6. To identify the leadership strategies that the principals used to foster professional development, and

7. To identify the existence of statistically significant differences among the selected demographics emerging from this study.

The research objectives were designed to discover the leadership strategies that principals exercise to motivate teachers to engage in professional development. The survey method was used to discover the elements of leadership that the principals employed as they lead professional development, the methods that the principals evaluated the effects of staff development on teacher skills and student achievement, as well as the levels of engagement and activity of the principals with professional development activities in their buildings and district. Levene’s Test was used to examine the homogeneity of variance. A one-way Analysis of Variance was applied to the four survey items in order to investigate the existence of statistically significant relationships between the related independent variables (gender, experience level, school typology, school classification, school size, grade levels served, and geographic location of the school) and the principals’ perceptions of leading professional development and the leadership strategies (if any) that the principals reported using to lead staff professional development. Responses were also measured using an ordinal scale and were summarized
by means and standard deviations. In addition, responses to the survey items were summarized using frequencies and percentages. The open-ended response questions were coded by the researcher based on “analytically similar” responses and sorted into categories based on the patterns that emerged (Fowler, Jr., 2014, p. 240). These patterns were analyzed to formulate an interpretation of the manner in which the principals reported perceiving their roles as leaders of professional development.

**Research Design and Methodology**

The research purpose of this study was to identify the role of Ohio public high school principals as leaders of professional development and their perceptions of that role. The desired outcome of the research was to ascertain and report on effective practices. This study was grounded in theory and professional research regarding effective professional development practices and transformational leadership practices as have been reported in Chapter Two. A survey instrument was used to conduct a quantitative study to collect data via quantitative and open-ended items. For that matter, surveys are used to generate statistical data regarding the participants’ views, as being representative of a population. In addition, surveys represent an efficient, cost-effective method to collect quality data from a relatively large population (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007; Fowler, Jr., 2014). The research design was also considered a quantitative dominant research method or a quantitatively driven design due to the abundance of quantitative research items as compared to the open-ended (qualitative) factors (Johnson & Christensen, 2014; Johnson, Onwuegbuzie, & Turner, 2007).

The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences version 24.0 (SPSS v 24.0) was used to analyze the quantitative survey items, thus generating descriptive statistics that
were used to determine an interpretation of the perceptions of Ohio public high school principals regarding the provision of leadership for professional development (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007). The open-ended items were included in the survey and used to gather responses qualitatively to create a forum in which participants could share their individual stories and perceptions. To analyze these responses, the researcher used a coding process to identify often repeated categories and themes by which the data was then organized (Fowler Jr., 2014; Huberman & Miles, 1994; Taskakkori & Teddlie, 1998). As categories emerged, similar strands of data were grouped and analyzed to identify common patterns which were used for analytic induction (Huberman & Miles, 1994). These patterns were analyzed to formulate an interpretation of the manner that the participating principals reported perceiving their roles as leaders of professional development.

Limitations

This study was delimited by the population chosen by the researcher. Only public, high school principals in Ohio were be invited to participate, thus excluding private school administrators and middle school and elementary school principals. The findings of the study may not be applicable to principals in other states, private schools, or elementary and middle school settings. Additionally, the study could be considered limited by the research design. The designed survey heavily favored quantitative items, and for this reason the data collected from the open-ended items is potentially not as rich as it could have been if a more in-depth qualitative method had been chosen. The foundation of the study was limited by the lack of existing research results and literature
regarding the perceptions of principals regarding their roles as leaders of professional
development. In addition, a lack of literature related to the methods principals utilized by
principals to lead teacher growth hindered the intent of the study. In summary, the
researcher has strived to add to this limited body of research results and literature through
the implementation of this study.

Definitions of Terms

- **Community School**: The Ohio Department of Education defines community
  schools thusly: “Community schools, which are often called charter schools
  nationally and in other states, are public schools created in Ohio law; are
  independent of any school district; and are part of the state’s education
  program. Community schools are public schools of choice and are state and
  federally funded. There are two types of community schools in Ohio: start-up
  community schools and conversion community schools” (Ohio Department of
  Education, n.d.)

- **Learning Forward Standards for Professional Learning**: Learning Forward
  (formerly known as the National Staff Development Council) has developed
  three iterations of standards for professional learning that focus on improving
  student achievement outcomes, effective teaching practices, and effective
  leadership practices (Learning Forward, 2001). The standards promote
  characteristics of professional learning that reportedly can be used to increase
  student learning outcomes through a focus on educator professional learning
  activities and conditions that lead to improved teaching knowledge and skills.
Ohio Principal Evaluation System (OPES): The Ohio Principal Evaluation System (OPES) was adopted by the Ohio State Board of Education in December 2008. According to the Ohio Department of Education, OPES is “a standards-based integrated model that is designed to foster the professional growth of principals in knowledge, skills, and practice” (Ohio Department of Education, 2015b, p. 5).

Ohio Standards for Principals: The Ohio Standards for Principals were established in October 2005 by the Educator Standards Board. This set of five standards is intended to help foster professional growth and effective leadership skills (Ohio Department of Education, 2007). The standards focus on communication and collaboration, goals and achievement, and school conditions.

Professional development: Research outcomes regarding professional development offer several perspectives regarding a definition that would appear to encompass adequately its many uses and dimensions. Guskey (2000) defines professional development as “those processes and activities designed to enhance the professional knowledge, skills, and attitudes of educators so that they might, in turn, improve the learning of students” (p. 16).

Public school: A public school is one that is publicly funded and operates to educate children in a community or school district. All school-aged children in the state of Ohio are entitled to a free and appropriate public education at the
school serving their residential district or at a school that accepts transfer (open enrollment) students.

- **Transformational leadership**: Transformational leadership is characterized by a leadership style that incites change in an organization, a group, or an individual. Hallinger (2003) notes that transformational leadership focuses on empowerment, organizational learning, and shared leadership. As such, transformational leaders look to build a shared vision and goals for the organization, and work to align work, time, resources, and efforts to meet those goals.

**Organization of Study**

The researcher has presented in this chapter the background of the study, the problem statement, research objectives, the purpose and significance of the study, a brief overview of the methodology, the limitations of the study, and a definition of terms. In the next chapter, Chapter Two, the researcher synthesizes the research and literature on principal-based professional development and its significance, the perceptions of principals regarding their role as leaders of professional development, effective practices for leading professional development, and transformational leadership for professional development. Chapter Three highlights the research methodology used to address the research objectives. Chapter Four presents the findings of the study, and in Chapter Five the researcher summarizes the findings, discusses implications of the study, and offers recommendations for practice and further research pertaining to effective leadership for professional development and principals’ perceptions of their roles as leaders of professional development.
Chapter Two: Literature Review

What is Professional Development, and Why Does it Matter?

Professional development for teachers could be defined simply as the methods teachers use to improve their craft. However, professional development both in practice and in theory is not that simple. Teachers have a plethora of options to consider for their professional development. Similarly, school leaders have a variety of methods and models to consider when choosing the manner in which to lead professional development for teachers. To complicate matters further, professional development, in all its various aspects and variations, tends to be shaped largely by the intended outcomes for professional learning.

Numerous educational leaders, researchers, and theorists have tried over time to define professional development. Yet, very few define professional development in a way that does it justice, encompassing all the aspects and characteristics of professional learning. Any definition of professional development must certainly include reference to learning skills and gaining knowledge to improve classroom teaching. However, more complete definitions include features such as targeted growth, collaboration and leadership, and focus on outcomes, such as improved student learning (Bredeson, 2000; Guskey, 2000; Joyce & Calhoun, 2010; Loucks-Horsley et al., 1987). For this study, two definitions emerged from the literature that, when taken in concert, appear to offer a comprehensive definition for professional development. First, Dagen and Bean (2014) describe professional development as, “experiences that take place within a collaborative culture of shared leadership, that increase educators’ knowledge about content and pedagogy and enable them to use that knowledge to improve classroom and school
practices that improve student learning” (p. 44). In 1985, Fielding and Schalock defined professional development as, “the deliberate effort to alter the professional practices, beliefs and understanding of school personnel toward an articulated end” (as cited in DuFour, 1991, p. 10). This definition adds an emphasis on a targeted learning goal that is an important element to professional development. These two descriptions of professional development represent a comprehensive definition of professional development that addresses improved educator knowledge and skills, increased student learning, relevant classroom practice, school culture, school practices, shared leadership, and targeted goal setting.

Professional development can also be defined by its intended purposes. It is evident that professional development is intended to improve teacher practice (Bredeson, 2000). Improved teacher practice theoretically leads to higher student achievement and learning, and professional development can be designed to target student learning and growth. Additionally, professional development can be used as a venue to encourage shared leadership and to provide leadership opportunities for teaching staff members (Dagen & Bean, 2014). Professional development can be used to nurture potential leaders among the staff and to give staff members a voice regarding the ways in which their schools operate. Moreover, Joyce and Calhoun (2010) illustrate other purposes for professional development such as “enhancing the school as an organization…that creates a high quality of life for students and staff,” encouraging collaboration among staff members, reducing teacher isolation, working together to meet student learning goals, and making the school “a laboratory for teachers and administrators” (p. 9).
**Value of professional development.** Professional development is valuable because it can lead to improved student achievement, and it can lead to teacher growth and quality practice. Public schools have vision and mission statements that often develop around educational themes such as student successes, creating life-long learners, creating responsible citizens, creating leaders, and preparing students for the 21st century. However, the core value at the center of most school missions is a focus on student learning. Schools exist to teach students so that they learn and grow in knowledge and skills. As such, teachers represent the critical element within a school district when it comes to teaching and learning. They are the ones in the classrooms each and every day working with students on the proverbial “front-lines.” Students, for this reason, typically learn more from highly qualified teachers who have the requisite skills to provide quality teaching and who are up-to-date on current, well-grounded educational trends and research.

Several factors affect student learning and achievement both positively and negatively. factors such as the students’ gender, the parents’ commitment to their children’s academic growth, and the parents’ levels of education, race, and socioeconomic status contribute heavily to student success or lack thereof (Danielson, 2009; Murray, 2013). In fact, the Equality of Educational Opportunity Report, which is the “Coleman Report” submitted by James Coleman and others in the 1960s, suggests that factors such as poverty, community attitudes, and parents’ low educational levels play a hugely profound role in student learning. For that matter, the report indicates “schools have not overcome” these factors that make learning challenging for students.
(Coleman, 1966, p. 21). Yet, Coleman and his colleagues also found that, “the quality of teachers shows a stronger relationship to student achievement” that is especially influential on students who can be considered minority (Coleman, 1966, p. 22). Many studies have found that the most significant factor impacting student achievement, which schools can control, is teacher quality (Danielson, 2009; Haycock, 1998a). Thus, effective professional development may not always have a direct impact on student achievement, but it is a vital component to school improvement efforts. Guskey (2000) purports that the influence of professional development “on student [achievement] is accomplished primarily through its direct effect on teacher and administrator knowledge and practices” (p. 75). School leaders who want to raise student achievement and boost student learning must make professional development a major priority because research shows that effective development precipitates teacher growth and quality teaching practices (Zepeda, 2012). Or, as DuFour (1991) says, “it should be self-evident that the quality of personnel is of central importance to a school, and that enabling individuals to improve their effectiveness is the key to any meaningful school improvement effort” (p. 7).

Moreover, the standards-based movement and the accountability movement that comprise the heart of education reform in the U.S. “requires most teachers to rethink their own practice, to construct new classroom roles and expectations about student outcomes, and to teach in ways that they’ve never taught before” (Darling-Hammond & McLaughlin, 1995, p. 81). In fact, much of the standards-based reform legislation – such as the Race to the Top Fund – require school districts to target professional development
and improved teacher quality because they are considered to be a best practice for increasing student achievement (Birman, Desimone, Porter, & Garet, 2000; Guskey, 2000). Teachers are challenged to grow continually and to improve instruction because knowledge of teaching pedagogies and methodologies is growing rapidly in the information age, and academic standards in each subject are becoming more robust and rigorous (Guskey, 2000). Teachers need new skills and expertise to keep up with these changes, which demands a renewed focus on teaching and learning strategies. Bransford and Brown (2002) found that “research over the past 20 years has led to multiple discoveries about learners and the accompanying ‘best practice’ teaching strategies that are too compelling to ignore” (p. 5, as cited in Murray, 2013). Educators know more about learning styles, learning preferences, and multiple intelligences than ever before. Moreover, students are changing with the times. Students in the 21st century are more than technologically savvy – they are technology-dependent. These students are growing up in a culture where technology is fully integrated in their daily lives and the job market they will graduate into is more globally competitive than ever before. Friendman (2007) and Wagner (2008) declare that the United States has shifted from an industrial economy to a knowledge economy that requires educators to reevaluate the manner in which students are taught, the skills that are the most important to teach, and the knowledge that is most vital for students to know (p. 6, as cited in Murray, 2013). Onorato (2012) asserts:

Presently our students need different and more advanced skills, such as the ability to solve problems, think critically and possess the ability to work, both in teams and independently. How do we make this transformation from educating students
to meet standards of a prescribed level to a student who maintains a skill set of intellectually thinking, problem solving and obtaining the ability to continually pursue knowledge on their own? (p. 125)

Additionally, the United States is changing demographically in ways that will make an enormous impact on education. Increases in the number of English as second language learners, non-traditional families, students with learning disabilities, and an increasing wealth gap that is contributing to more students living in poverty all demand a need for teachers to have the skills and knowledge to teach students with different learning styles and needs (Murray, 2013). Like professionals in other disciplines, teachers must stay informed of current research and best practice, while implementing new strategies and practices (Guskey, 2000). If educators, school leaders, and policy makers want to close the achievement gap internationally, to meet the needs of a diverse group of learners, and to prepare students for a knowledge-based global economy, a focus on professional development is needed to achieve that end (Darling-Hammond, 1995; Haycock, 1998a; Zepeda, 2012). The success of national agendas like Race to the Top or No Child Left Behind relies upon teachers’ ability to grow and to take on new roles and responsibilities (Darling-Hammond & McLaughlin, 2005; Guskey, 2000). Because teachers have so many duties and responsibilities in and out of the classroom, professional development is necessary to spur on professional growth practices so that teachers are supported and are not left to struggle on their own to address the needs of their students. Guskey (2000) writes, “One constant finding in the research literature is that notable improvement in education almost never takes place in the absence of
professional development” (p. 3). Furthermore, professional development is vital to the
growth of education as a professional field (Guskey, 2000). Professional development
leads to better teaching, improved learning, and a better quality of life for teachers and
administrators when they feel supported and part of a learning culture in their schools.
Loucks-Horsley et al. (1987) claim that, “supporting the continual development of
teachers is critical to attracting and keeping the best and brightest people in the
profession” (p. 1). When teachers are supported, they can grow as practitioners who can
directly affect and improve student learning and achievement. In short, “the relationship
between student achievement, teacher quality, and professional development is
interdependent” (Zepeda, 2012, p. 10).

**Principal Perceptions of Professional Development**

Educating students is a huge responsibility placed upon American schools and
school leadership. Schools are responsible not only for teaching academics but also for
caring for students’ mental and emotional welfare, establishing cultural norms and
values, and providing nutritional meals. Vollmer (2013) notes that in 1640 Massachusetts
Puritans established schools to “teach basic reading, some writing and arithmetic skills,
and cultivate values that serve a democratic society (some history and civics implied)” (p.
1). But since that time, the curriculum has swollen to include many core subject areas
including the arts, health, more reading and mathematics, physical education, sciences,
and more. Vollmer also notes that the burden placed on schools has expanded to include
many more curricular and social welfare responsibilities including: adult education, after-
school programs, business education, career education, driver’s education, drug and
alcohol abuse education, English as a second language instruction, foreign language
instruction, home economics, immunizations, kindergarten and pre-school education, mandated school transportation, multicultural studies, school lunch and breakfast programs, sex education, special education, women’s studies, and so on (Vollmer, 2013). Therefore, as school leaders, school principals have many responsibilities and take on several roles in order to meet these mandated educational programs and policies. Perhaps the most prominent role that principals take is that of instructional leaders of their schools. As instructional leaders, principals can evaluate teachers, help build and mold school curricula, lead assessment and data collection and analysis, promote a culture of continuous learning, and set learning and student achievement goals and targets by promoting professional development.

However, instructional leadership is only one aspect of a principal’s job. Based on work with Turkish school administrators, Balyer (2014) defines five main roles of a principal: (a) focusing on the individual, (b) leading the school, (c) managing the school-community relationships, (d) shaping the school’s future, and (e) providing staff leadership and teacher professional development. As it relates to staff leadership and teacher professional development, Balyer’s (2014) Turkish administrators indicated five key practices that fall upon the school principal: (a) creating a climate of continuous learning for the teachers, (b) developing teachers professionally so that student learning can be improved, (c) linking teaching with student learning, (d) managing the teaching staff, and (e) planning and leading professional development that is consistent with teachers’ needs. One apparent potential pitfall administrators may face is having so many duties and roles that they cannot find time to plan professional development that is
adequate for teachers. Research results would indicate principals are central to quality professional development, but with so many other managerial duties, it is easy to see that professional development may not emerge as a priority (Blase & Blase, 1999b; Bredeson, 2000; Cranton, 2009; DuFour, 1991; Firestone & Mangin, 2014). For that matter, leading professional development becomes less of a priority because principals become inundated with managerial roles such as student discipline, budget management, and other leadership roles like evaluating and mentoring teachers (Balyer, 2014).

In a study of three public schools in Nebraska, Trehearn (2010) found that administrators shared four main perceptions of their role in professional development. First, school administrators felt that professional development responsibilities need to be shared with teachers. The administrators indicated that collaboration was of paramount importance to effective professional development (p. 63). Collaborative professional development had a positive influence on the staff members of the administrators, and they emphasized a need for teachers to take on leadership roles and to conduct action research in their classrooms (p. 64). Second, the roles, which administrators and teachers assume with professional development, will influence its effectiveness. The Nebraska administrators said it is important for administrators to be involved in professional development because the association will contribute to their capacity to recognize teachers’ needs for growth and in turn can promote dialogue with staff members as to the identification of the needs and the best ways to meet them (pp. 79-80). Yet, the Nebraska administrators also said they think teachers should have input in their own professional development (p. 119). While much of the professional development appeared to be driven
by the administrators, they reported sharing work in leadership teams and on school improvement teams (p. 80). Third, administrators conveyed that they believe it is their role to prepare and plan for professional development activities in order for them to be successful. The administrators said they participate in building teams that plan training that is ongoing and is responsive to teachers’ yearlong goals (pp. 90-92). Lastly, the administrators in Trehearn’s study shared a belief that the effectiveness of professional development is not strictly dependent upon the school budget. These principals reported leading their schools by using local teachers as resources. The principals indicated professional development was created and presented by people in the school building (p. 93). In addition, the administrators said they value professional development and are willing to spend money to make it worthwhile for teachers, including budgeting money for travel to workshops on occasion (p. 119). In short, these Nebraska administrators indicated they want professional development to be meaningful for all parties.

In a similar study, Brown (2013) surveyed principals in North Carolina to determine the manner that they perceived effective professional development. Three groups emerged regarding the professional development activities they felt were most important. One group indicated a belief that above all else, professional development must be sustained over time. These administrators placed value also in providing professional development that allows teachers to practice new concepts rather than esoterically learning about them, and they argued for learning that focuses on curriculum and instruction (p. 96). They wanted professional development that corresponded to daily teaching activities. This group also placed lower value on professional learning
communities. The second group, which emerged, named collaboration and follow-up as the key components to effective professional development. They also voiced a desire for professional development that maintains a consistent focus over the course of time and allows for teachers to engage in personal focused reflection (p. 107). Professional learning communities, which used outside sources and grade level and department level professional learning communities, were ranked of low value to this group. The third group perceived collaboration to be the most integral component to an effective professional development plan. This group thought establishing a collaborative, collegial culture was highly valuable, as was visiting other schools. This group viewed all-day and multiple-session learning opportunities over an extended period of time as being the least important, and university courses were also considered less valuable (p. 116). The North Carolina principals that Brown (2013) studied also identified five main roles for principals who lead professional development: (a) ensure buy-in is present, (b) ensure professional development opportunities are relevant to teachers, (c) meet the teachers’ needs, (d) provide feedback to teachers about instructional practices, and (e) serve as instructional leaders.

Effective Professional Development

The research results regarding effective professional development practices are extensive. Four main ideas seem to reflect the practices: (a) characteristics of effective professional development, (b) the argument against professional development, (c) models and implementation, and (d) the role of the principal.

**Characteristics of effective professional development.** High quality professional development, as described in the literature, has numerous characteristics. To
begin, professional development should be planned to focus on improving teachers’ skill and knowledge of their academic content areas (Birman, et al. 2000; Diaz-Maggioli, 2004; DuFour, 1991; Lieberman & Miller, 2014; Loucks-Horsley et al., 1987; Murray, 2013; Tallerico, 2005). Research-based strategies for delivering professional development should allow teachers to grow in content knowledge skill and teaching pedagogy (DuFour, 1991). Murray (2013) notes, “professional development is most effective when it addresses the daily challenges of teaching and learning specific subject matter, rather than emphasizing abstract educational maxims or teaching methods disconnected from context” (p. 13). Indeed, professional development is most effective when it is connected to teachers’ daily practices (Birman et al., 2000; Corcoran, 1995; Darling-Hammond & McLaughlin, 1995; DuFour, 1991; Murray, 2013; Zepeda, 2012). Teachers can find more success and a better sense of efficacy when they put theories and concepts into practice in their classrooms with concrete activities and applications (Zepeda, 2012).

Professional development becomes more meaningful when teachers tackle relevant concerns or concepts in the classroom setting, such as problem-based learning or standards-based instruction (Raphael, Vasquez, Fortune, Gavelek, & Au, 2014). Smart professional development encourages experimentation and a willingness to risk failure (Loucks-Horsley et al., 1987). Teachers can learn from their failures and adapt suggested practices to their individual classrooms. Corcoran (1995) notes that professional development, which does not make a connection to daily practice, is too “top-down and too isolated from classroom realities to have an impact on teachers” in their daily practice
Professional development should be planned with careful consideration of the teachers and their practice, not on pre-packaged programs that do not take into account teachers’ unique needs (Reeves, 2012).

Additionally, effective professional development should be implemented purposefully with a vision for school improvement (Birman et al., 2000; Diaz-Magglioli, 2004; DuFour, 1991; Guskey, 2000; Loucks-Horsley et al., 1987; Murray, 2013; Tallerico, 2005). It should be planned with the local school context – including organizational culture, history, and people – in mind. Each school building is different, and each teaching staff will encounter its own unique set of opportunities and challenges. As such, administrators should take a systemic view for planning professional development (Raphael et al., 2014). Every teacher, administrator, and staff member should glean from professional development identical and related goals and outcomes. Professional development should deliver a consistent message and philosophy to all participants (Raphael et al., 2014). It is important that professional development aligns to the vision, mission, goals, philosophy, and organizational structure of a school or school district (DuFour, 1991; Loucks-Horsely et al., 1987; Murray, 2013).

Senge (2000) purported that schools trying to become learning organizations must engage in “systems thinking” by recognizing that organizations and their people are intertwined, and that effective change can be accomplished through strengthening those connections and making a conscious effort to integrate individual teacher goals and priorities with school goals and priorities (Loucks-Horsely et al., 1987; Murray, 2013; Senge, 2000). For that matter, systems-thinking necessitates that school leadership look at
problems comprehensively, develop a rational process to analyze the problems, and use a developmental process that will create a new perspective by which leaders and followers grow naturally, and that shared understandings and strategies emerge and maturate (Senge, 1996; Senge & Sterman, 1992). By engaging in systems thinking, professional development will lead to shared understandings among the staff and a stronger school culture that promotes a focus on learning skills and achieving goals. In short, professional development is most effective when learning is centered on a consistent vision and expected outcome for all participants.

The vision for effective professional development should be goal-oriented with a focus on student learning (DuFour, 1994; Guskey, 2000; Reeves, 2012). Professional development should be aligned with the school vision, which would include clear goals and objectives and well-defined strategies for improvement (DuFour, 1991; Guskey, 2000). The teaching staff should understand the significance of the goals and the manner in which they relate to the objectives. Guskey (2000) argues that professional development goals should be measurable and easily assessed, plainly stated and obvious to participants, and worthwhile (p. 17). Establishing goals and purposes allows administrators to then plan a coherent program for professional learning. With goals in mind, administrators can create the infrastructure and policies, which are needed to shape professional learning and improvement experiences in order to increase effectively teacher knowledge and skill, improve practice, and encourage teacher reflection and metacognition (Birman et al., 2000; Guskey, 2000).
In addition, effective professional development should engage teachers in active learning and employ adult learning maxims (Birman et al., 2000; Diaz-Magglioli, 2004; Loucks-Horsley et al., 1987; Murray, 2013; Tallerico, 2005). To begin, research shows that effective professional development for adult learning is both collaborative and encourages active participation (Diaz-Magglioli, 2004; Lieberman & Miller, 2014; Tallerico, 2005). Barth (1981) notes schools and teachers who want to improve their practices would benefit by moving from a “loosely coupled” organizational structure to a “tightly coupled” organizational structure that would offer more support for teachers and encourage more interdependence and stronger collegial relationships (pp. 160-1). In many schools, teachers work in isolation, concentrating on the work inside their own classrooms. They might even take a strong, proprietary stance of the teaching and learning in their rooms, and could possibly begrudge or resent interference or probing by outside sources such as their colleagues or a supervisor. However, by building a professional development culture and program with a spirit of collaboration and cooperation, teachers can connect with one another and engage in learning activities and classroom-level experimentation. Teachers can learn from one another, share theories and ideas, and get advice and coaching from their peers (Loucks-Horsley et al., 1987).

On the other hand, professional learning opportunities should vary according to differences in learning styles. Most people have a combination of learning styles or multiple intelligences, so effective professional development offers differentiated learning activities to meet adult learners’ needs. Smart leaders will learn about their teaching staff members and their styles so that professional learning can be tailored to
individuals or groups of teachers. One negative to the “tightly coupled” organizational structure is that it can suffocate the initiative and skill sets of individual learners. Therefore, some elements of a “loosely coupled” organizational structure should be maintained so that teachers can take ownership over their classrooms and practices and feel a sense of self-determination in the work they do (Shaavlik & Shaavlik, 2010; Weick, 1976). Teachers may be motivated to learn intrinsically and may enjoy a greater sense of self-efficacy if they have a voice in determining their own professional growth and learning (Weick, 1976). As such, effective professional development leaders will serve as facilitators of teacher learning, giving teachers a voice in what they learn and how they learn it.

When working with adult learners, it is also important to set conditions for effective learning. Knowles’ theories on andragogy support five characteristics for effective adult learning. They are (a) adults are self-directed human beings who want to have a strong hand in self-diagnosing their own needs and planning their own education; (b) adults have life experiences that can be used as resources for learning; (c) adult learners are interested in learning what they need to know for their social and vocational roles; (d) adults are focused on problems and applications rather than academic subjects; and (e) adults are typically motivated to learn by internal factors (Knowles, 1980; Smith, 2012). In practical applications, adults thrive in learning environments where they feel respected, accepted, and supported (Knowles, 1980). Therefore, teachers, as adults, need opportunities to try new practices and to reflect and discuss collegially those practices, and time, in order to be able to implement changes effectively (Loucks-Horsley et al.,
Effective leaders support teachers as learners by giving critical feedback and constructive criticism, modelling best practices and expected behaviors, being patient with teachers throughout the processes, reiterating goals and rationale for change, and generally coaching teachers in their classrooms (Loucks-Horsley et al., 1987; Sparks, 1983).

An equally important and vital characteristic of effective professional development is that it is ongoing and continuous in its implementation (Diaz-Magglioli, 2004; DuFour, 1991; Guskey, 2000; Zepeda, 2012). Effective professional development is not implemented in a one-shot deal. Successful programs maintain an intensive focus over a realistic timeframe. Rather than shifting from topic to topic, skill to skill, effective professional development is planned with continuity in mind. Corcoran (1995) argues that professional development programs typically have weak effects on practice because they lack focus, intensity, follow-up, and continuity (p. 4). An ongoing approach is needed to implement change, and effective programs are sustained over time and connected to teacher practices (Corcoran, 1995; Guskey, 2000; Murray, 2013; Raphael et al., 2014; Reeves, 2012; Tallerico, 2005). For that matter, teachers need well-utilized periods of time to develop content-area knowledge and teaching methods, to apply new skills and technologies, to work collaboratively with one another, to reflect on their practice, and to receive feedback and coaching (Diaz-Magglioli, 2004; Loucks-Horsley et al., 1987; Raphael et al., 2014; Reeves, 2012; Zepeda, 2012). Consequently, professional development should be approached as a growth process, both in terms of teacher learning and the developmental process itself (Diaz-Magglioli, 2004). Guskey (2000) argues that
successful teachers and administrators “constantly analyze the effectiveness of what they do, reflect on their current practices, make adaptations when things are not going well, and continually explore new alternatives and opportunities for improvement” (p. 19). Therefore, administrators can and should collect ongoing feedback regarding the professional development program itself (Murray, 2013). Administrators should systematically evaluate programs not only regarding each teacher’s development, feelings, and perceptions, but also upon organizational goals and intended outcomes (DuFour, 1991; Guskey, 2000). Guskey (2000) writes that effective professional development is systemic in that it “considers change over an extended period of time and takes into account all levels of the organization” (p. 19).

Effective professional development engenders teacher commitment and buy-in. In order to achieve teacher commitment and buy-in, teachers should be involved in decision-making, program implementation, the establishment of learning goals and school and district priorities, and program evaluation (DuFour, 1991; Loucks-Horsley et al., 1987; Raphael et al., 2014). Rather than having professional development being something done to them, effective professional development prompts teacher leadership, giving them a voice and a sense of agency in the work (Raphael et al., 2014). Teachers typically will take ownership over their learning when they are given some measure of autonomy and choice in what they are learning. When they understand the reasons for professional development and the benefits of the intended outcomes, teachers are more likely to engage in the learning process (Raphael et al., 2014). Effective professional development also has structured time and opportunity for teachers to engage in
meaningful collegial dialogue and conversations that are relevant to their practice (DuFour, 1991; Raphael et al., 2014). Structuring time for professional dialogue gives teachers a venue where they can discuss and reflect upon new ideas and the manner in which to implement them in their classrooms. As such, teachers will take ownership and responsibility for the implementation of new teaching practices, independently of their administrators and in concordance with their professional learning (Raphael et al., 2014).

The argument against professional development. The education reform agenda sounds the bell for effective professional development for American teachers. From the No Child Left Behind Act to the Race to the Top initiative, effective professional development has been declared vital to improving teaching pedagogy and focusing instruction on new content standards. Professional development is being lauded as an essential tool to raise student achievement nationwide, and to ensure American students will be competitive in a global marketplace. However, professional development is not a new concept in American education. American teachers have been engaging in professional growth activities for decades and yet American schools are reportedly failing, which begs the question regarding the reason that professional development is touted as one of the pillars to improve student learning in American public schools.

The literature suggests there are numerous problems with professional development in most public schools. To begin, ineffective professional development fails to focus on teachers’ needs and is not relevant to practice in the classroom (Guskey, 2000; Murray, 2013). Teachers, in some schools, perceive professional development to be a waste of their time because it rarely offers practical applications to their classrooms
Professional development activities are sometimes presented to teachers universally, without consideration of the local context (such as local student needs or school needs) or without considering individual teachers’ experience, background, and learning needs (Diaz-Magglioli, 2004; Murray, 2013). Ineffective professional development lacks structure for teachers to integrate new strategies into the classroom and to develop mastery over new concepts (Murray, 2013). Teachers typically need feedback and coaching, along with time to practice, to experiment, and to transfer professional learning to the classroom (Joyce & Showers, 1982; Diaz-Magglioli, 2004). Teachers cannot practice and learn new methodologies - even if they are effective - in isolation from their classrooms and without structural support (Guskey, 2000). Murray (2013) states the dimension well with, “[Professional development is ineffective] because there are few mechanisms by which new knowledge about teaching and learning can enter schools; few structures and processes in place to help teachers adapt, practice, and polish new practices; and few sources of assistance for teachers struggling to make improvements” (p. 2).

Professional development programs are frequently implemented without purpose, and the related developmental offerings often lack a coherent, unifying vision. Professional development activities are too often planned without being systemically focused on achieving one or two main goals or objectives over an extended period of time. Guskey (2000) claims that professional development initiatives usually consist of a “series of unrelated, short-term workshops and presentations with little follow-up or guidance for implementation” (p. 15). These workshops and presentations have been
found to be ineffective in producing improvement in teacher quality or raising student achievement. Whether being due to ease of implementation or ignorance, they are sadly representative of typical professional development offerings (Murray, 2013). Many teachers attend these activities out of contractual obligation and job duty, rather than out of an expectation or anticipation of learning knowledge and skills of value (Guskey, 2000). Teachers attend trainings to accrue continuing education credits in order to maintain their professional certification and then they go back to their classrooms with no intention of addressing the insights gained at the developmental sessions (Guskey, 2000). Ineffective professional development activities are typically not planned around effective adult learning maxims. Professional development planners often do not consider their teachers’ individual learning styles, nor do they plan activities that engage teachers in active learning (Diaz-Magglioli, 2004; Murray, 2013). Teachers often passively receive knowledge through lecture, video, or other medium without actively participating or engaging in the learning process (Murray, 2013). Typical training sessions offer little information regarding such valuable matters as differentiation of instruction and variety in learning activities. As a result, teachers rarely collaborate or dialogue about the intended learning for more than a few minutes (Diaz-Magglioli, 2004; Murray, 2013).

Moreover, traditional professional development often lacks teacher voice and agency in the planning process (Diaz-Magglioli, 2004; Guskey, 2000). In many circumstances, professional development is something that is done to teachers. They are not included in the planning process, nor are they given a voice on the goals and intended outcomes for learning (Guskey, 2000). Top-down decision-making leads to teachers
feeling a lack of ownership over their own learning, over the professional development process itself, and over the results of the training (Díaz-Magglioli, 2004). Thus, teachers may fail to see the potential value of a given activity or session, and for this reason they may not feel inclined to engage in the learning process.

To conclude, traditional top-down professional development typically is ineffective. Teachers do not benefit, students do not benefit, and school districts waste time, money and resources. Darling-Hammond and McLaughlin (1995) purport that needed school reforms “cannot be done by traditional top-down ‘teacher training’ strategies” (p. 81). However, when professional development is done correctly, it can lead to improved teaching and student learning and can foster a collaborative culture grounded in learning and growth. Students will benefit from professional development by working with higher quality teachers who are aware of current trends in education, connected to their teaching colleagues, and who are growing and refining their skills in the classroom (Guskey, 2000).

Professional development designs and implementation, models, and evaluation. The utilization of the results of research regarding professional development reveals insights regarding effective practice and ineffective practices. To begin, professional development practices should typically focus on core teaching and learning practices (Corcoran, 1995; Darling-Hammond & McLaughlin, 1995; Lieberman & Miller, 2014). In addition, teachers need to be provided with opportunities to integrate new theories and strategies into their daily teaching practice. Lieberman and Miller (2014) advocate for professional development that is grounded in “pedagogical content
knowledge” (pp. 8-9). Specifically, content and pedagogy are mutually inclusive, not exclusive. Effective professional development for classroom teachers must link content to teaching pedagogy and teaching pedagogy to student learning goals. Professional development should be structured in order that teachers can focus on students and student learning, collaborate with one another, engage in relevant experiences sustained over time that are grounded in content knowledge and pedagogical skill-building, and reflect on their growth and learning (Darling-Hammond & McLaughlin, 1995; Lieberman & Miller, 2014). Moreover, professional learning should be accessible for teachers and involve teachers in the planning and evaluation of the program. Policy makers should embed professional development opportunities within the workplace so that it is accessible to teachers and relevant to their local context (Corcoran, 1995; Darling-Hammond & McLaughlin, 1995). Top-down initiatives that are “cookie-cutter” programs are found to be ineffective in promoting teacher growth and change. Darling-Hammond and McLaughlin (1995) suggest that policies should be shifted to “capacity-building policies view knowledge as constructed by and with practitioners for use in their own contexts, rather than as something conveyed by policy makers as a single solution for top-down implementation” (p. 82). In this manner, teachers will be more likely to take ownership of their own learning and accept a greater responsibility for student learning (Darling-Hammond & McLaughlin, 1995). Teachers should be empowered to lead their professional growth in concert with administrators and school learning goals and objectives.
Guskey (2000) offers three implementation designs for professional development (pp. 29-32). One is a site-based design where professional learning programs are administered in the local school building for the school staff. Another is a district-wide design where educators from an entire school district participate collectively in a professional development program. Thirdly, an integrated design is offered in which the first two designs are interwoven. Guskey (2000) argues that an integrated design consisting of activities planned in district-wide whole-group sessions, with follow sessions at the building level, represents the most effective practice (p. 32). Holding district-wide whole-group sessions is more efficient than conducting sessions at multiple sites and provides a venue for teachers to collaborate with a larger group of educators, thus spreading expertise and knowledge across the district (Guskey, 2000). Furthermore, implementing an integrated design allows a district to establish a common knowledge base and a shared vocabulary among the teaching staff that facilitates professional dialogue and ongoing collaborative learning experiences (Guskey, 2000). Follow-up sessions at individual school sites can be planned with a school’s specific context in mind (school building culture and climate, school-wide learning targets and goals, student learning needs, teachers’ needs).

Once a school or school district determines its implementation design, several strategies and options emerge from the literature depending on whether the professional development is planned for enactment locally in schools or planned for implementation externally or with external partnerships. Tallerico (2005) identifies five strategies for professional development at the local school level (p. 38). They involve (a) action
research, (b) collaborative problem solving, (c) individually guided development, (d) observation and assessment of teaching, and (e) training. The action research model is an option for teachers to experiment with a research-based strategy or skill, analyzing the results and making adaptations, and then integrating that skill or practice into daily practice (Darling-Hammond & McLaughlin, 1995). Collaborative problem solving involves educators working collectively to identify methods to improve teaching and to share responsibility for student learning (Corcoran, 1995). Teachers may serve on school improvement teams, curriculum development committees, study groups, critical friends, grade-level teams, or building-level leadership or instructional teams (Darling-Hammond & McLaughlin, 1995; Tallerico, 2005). On the other hand, individually guided professional development is simply a professional development program developed by an educator to meet self-identified needs for growth and improvement. The teacher will work individually to set goals for improvement and take measures to meet those goals. Observation and assessment of teaching refers to peer coaching, mentoring, or peer observation intended to provide collegial assessment, constructive criticism, advice, and support for the purpose of providing formative assessment for teachers in a risk-free environment. The state of Ohio has developed and mandated the use of an entry-year teachers program for new teachers (less than five years of service) that employs peer mentoring (Ohio Department of Education, 2015c). Perhaps the most widely utilized form of local professional development is the training model. This is the whole-group direct instruction model that is frequently used for in-service training for teachers (outside of the regularly scheduled work day). Tallerico (2005) cites Joyce and Showers’
(2002) work, which identifies five necessary components for the training model (p. 44). They are (a) theory, (b) demonstration, (c) practice, (d) feedback, and (e) follow-up and coaching. In short, teachers are presented theory, shown a demonstration of a skill or application, given time to practice, provided feedback on their practice, and then offered follow-up training or coaching.

School leaders can also support professional development initiatives that are implemented outside of the school building or with external partnerships. Effective professional development programs can incorporate sources of knowledge and learning from outside the school building in addition to those from within a staff (Lieberman & Miller, 2014). For example, teachers can form teacher networks across schools or across districts that foster collaboration, dialogue, and shared ideas and strategies for improving teacher practice (Corcoran, 1995; Darling-Hammond, 1995). These networks can materialize in the form of face-to-face meetings or technology-based venues of communication such as email, Google Apps for Education, or social media platforms like blogs, Instagram, and Twitter.

Public schools can also form partnerships with institutions of higher education to collaborate on projects and improvement efforts related to topics such as curriculum, student assessment, teaching and learning, and technology integration (Corcoran, 1995; Darling-Hammond, 1995). These relationships can be especially valuable because they allow teachers in public schools to keep abreast of current educational theories and trends. Professional development schools are one example of a product of the collaboration between public schools and higher education (Corcoran, 1995). One final
method for professional development outside of the school building is teacher participation with professional organizations at the local, state, or national level (Darling-Hammond & McLaughlin, 1995). Teachers can benefit from membership in professional organizations through engagement with their resources and professional learning opportunities. For example, many professional organizations offer continuing education and professional development opportunities, such as conferences and trainings, professional assistance and advice, publications geared toward teacher support and development, venues for the purpose of dialoging and networking with teachers from other school districts, and workshops.

*Professional development models and formats.* The results of research reflect copious models and formats of professional development that can be effective for teacher growth. While there are too many models and formats to analyze and discuss in detail in this chapter, some valuable themes have emerged from a brief review of the models and formats. First, several options exist for professional development that is collaborative such as book studies, mentoring, observation/assessment, open-ended local learning community activities, personal learning networks, structured professional dialogue, and teachers’ centers (Diaz-Maggioli, 2004; DuFour, 1991; Guskey, 2000; Joyce & Calhoun, 2010; Loucks-Horsley et al., 1987; Murray, 2013; Zepeda, 2012). In addition, several options are available for individualized learning such as attending conferences, completing individually guided activities, conducting individual research, engaging in individual inquiry, and performing self-analysis of videotapes (Diaz-Maggioli, 2004;

Additionally, multiple formats exist in which teachers participate in active learner roles and are given voice in and ownership over their learning, such as action research, critical development teams, learning circles, teacher-led staff development programs, and teachers’ centers (Diaz-Magglioli, 2004; DuFour, 1991; Guskey, 2000; Joyce & Calhoun, 2010; Loucks-Horsley et al., 1987; Murray, 2013; Zepeda, 2012). Lastly, a distinction needs to be made that no specific program, model, or format is considered the most preferred or best. Professional development designers must keep their schools’ needs, student outcomes, and teachers’ needs in mind when selecting activities. Each school, school leader, or teacher must make decisions on professional development activities that are aligned to their intended outcomes. Guskey (2000) observes, “Combining models in thoughtful ways can provide a highly effective means to professional growth and improvement at both the individual and organizational levels. It can also help ensure that professional development efforts remain intentional, ongoing, and systemic” (p. 29).

Table 2.1 below displays several professional development formats organized by educational researcher.
Table 2.1

**Professional Development Formats by Researcher**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Researcher(s)</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Format</th>
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| Diaz-Magglioli             | 2004 | Collaborative action research  
|                            |      | Conferences and seminars  
|                            |      | Critical development teams  
|                            |      | Mentoring  
|                            |      | Peer coaching  
|                            |      | Professional development through writing  
|                            |      | Sharing living theories to help others develop (in-house, teacher-led training)                                                      |
| DuFour                     | 1991 | Action research  
|                            |      | Artifact collection  
|                            |      | Curriculum development  
|                            |      | Peer consultation  
|                            |      | Self-analysis of videotapes  
|                            |      | Structured professional dialogue  
|                            |      | Submission of articles for publication  
|                            |      | Teacher-led staff development programs  
|                            |      | Team teaching with the principal                                                      |
| Guskey                     | 2000 | Individually guided activities  
|                            |      | Inquiry/action research  
|                            |      | Involvement in a development/improvement process  
|                            |      | Mentoring  
|                            |      | Observation/assessment  
|                            |      | Study groups  
|                            |      | Training                                                      |
| Joyce and Calhoun          | 2010 | Action research  
|                            |      | Curriculum and instructional initiatives  
|                            |      | Individual inquiry  
|                            |      | Open-ended local learning community activity  
|                            |      | Personal/professional services by peers  
|                            |      | Personal/professional services by supervisors  
|                            |      | Sets of workshops scheduled during paid “staff development days”  
|                            |      | Workshops on generic instructional techniques                                                      |
| Loucks-Horsley et al.      | 1987 | Advising teachers  
|                            |      | Clinical supervision  


A Professional Learning Community (PLC) represents the last model that will be described in this chapter. The PLC model revolves around three basic tenets: all students will learn at high levels, collaboration is vital to helping students learn, and educators must focus on results found in student achievement data (DuFour & DuFour, 2012).

Murray (2013) identifies five dimensions of effective PLCs (pp. 21-25). PLCs are led through a distributed leadership style characterized by shared decision-making that

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<th>Researcher(s)</th>
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<tr>
<td>Loucks-Horsley et al.</td>
<td>1987</td>
<td>Implementing innovative practices</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Individually guided professional development</td>
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<td>Mentoring</td>
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<td>Networks</td>
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<td>Partnerships</td>
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<td>Peer coaching</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Teacher as researcher</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Teacher institutes</td>
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<td>Teachers’ centers</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Training of trainers</td>
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<tr>
<td>Murray</td>
<td>2013</td>
<td>Action research</td>
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<td>Critical friends</td>
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<td>Lesson study</td>
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<td>Mentoring</td>
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<td>Online professional development</td>
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<td>Peer coaching</td>
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<td>Personal learning networks</td>
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<td>School rounds</td>
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<td>Zepeda</td>
<td>2012</td>
<td>Action research</td>
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<td>Coaching</td>
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<td>Learning communities</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Portfolios</td>
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<td>Study Groups and book studies</td>
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empowers teachers to share their voice and to take ownership over their learning. Professional development leaders serve to facilitate and to support teachers’ work. Teachers’ work in PLCs is also built upon shared vision and values. Teachers and administrators are in agreement on the intended outcomes for professional growth and student learning. PLCs also feature collective learning through the collective inquiry model and operationalize learning through application in the classroom. Teachers in successful PLCs also share personal practice and dialogue in order to analyze student achievement and learning, to collaboratively plan lessons, to discuss common problems, and to share ideas. In this manner, work in PLCs is ultimately results-oriented. Teachers’ growth, learning objectives, and professional development planning is all accomplished through the lens of student achievement and learning.

**Professional development evaluation.** Effective professional development also includes program evaluation. To begin, effective evaluation of professional development can provide insight regarding teachers’ perceptions of and emotional feelings regarding their training opportunities (Guskey, 2000). Leaders need to know about teachers’ attitudes, beliefs, and feelings toward their learning, the content of their learning, and the implementation of the program (Loucks-Horsley et al, 1987). Evaluators should also determine if teachers are learning new skills and behaviors, expanding their knowledge base, and applying or using their learning (Guskey, 2000; Loucks-Horsley et al., 1987). In other words, professional development leaders need to know whether their programs are leading to changes and improvements, the changes and improvements that are actually occurring, the extent to which learning opportunities are bringing about change,
and the new strategies that are being implemented correctly (Guskey, 2000; Loucks-Horsley et al., 1987). A vital importance exists to determine if teacher-based outcomes align with intended goals and outcomes. Additionally, program evaluators should gauge program success through the lens of student outcomes and organizational outcomes (Loucks-Horsley et al., 1987). The over-arching core purpose in professional development is improving teacher practice leading to improved student learning. The main goal is that students will learn more when teachers engage in professional learning. According to Guskey (2000), evaluating student outcomes “allowed professional development leaders to set their expectations high and make their standards more rigorous…[and] helped to establish more precise criteria for success, encouraged systematic evaluations, allowed progress to be carefully documented, and provided a basis for recognizing and honoring achievements” (pp. 209-210). In short, evaluating student outcomes gives teachers clear objectives and targets that are measurable.

Engaging in professional development without assessing and analyzing its impact on student learning is ludicrous. Organizational outcomes should also be studied. Evaluators should want to know the degree to which professional development programs are meeting organizational goals and priorities. For example, leaders should know if professional development leads to increased collaboration, increased teacher satisfaction, increased parent and student satisfaction, and expanded teacher participation or teacher leadership (Loucks-Horsley et al., 1987).

The data, which emerges from the evaluation of professional development, which is based on teacher outcomes, student outcomes, and organizational outcomes, can be
used to make informed decisions about future program implementation (Guskey, 2000; Loucks-Horsley et al., 1987). Administrators and teachers can identify effective practices and ineffective practices and can identify and plan future practices to make changes and adaptations that will maximize program efficiency and effectiveness (Guskey, 2000; Loucks-Horsley, et al., 1987). By using the data, administrators can more effectively support teacher learning and implement system-wide changes that will influence student learning, while also addressing teacher needs and concerns (Guskey, 2000). Program evaluation also must be an ongoing process both within a professional development cycle and across multiple professional development cycles over time (Loucks-Horsley et al., 1987). Successful professional development implementation depends on periodic monitoring and feedback by administrators who regularly evaluate a program based on its intended outcomes and then provide feedback and make changes that are responsive to the needs of teachers, students, and the organization.

**Principal role and responsibilities for professional development.** Principals can play a vital role in teacher professional development and growth. Research outcomes reflect that active, engaged principals will take a strong role in leading and facilitating professional development (Bradley, 2014; Bredeson, 2000; Diaz-Magglioli, 2004; DuFour, 1991; Firestone & Mangin, 2014; Guskey, 2000; Loucks-Horsley et al., 1987; Reeves, 2012; Zepeda, 2012). While it is true teachers can and often do pursue professional growth opportunities independently (as it is a requisite job function for maintaining certification in most states), principals have an invaluable role to play in delivering the type of effective professional development that is based on a shared vision
and goals for student growth, and that is collaborative, collegial, and focused on useful change. Principals are the nominal leaders of their buildings. For this reason, principals are responsible for nurturing the building climate and creating and promoting a building-wide vision and goals. An expectation often can be found in job descriptions that principals will be the instructional leaders in their buildings. They are tasked with teacher evaluation and are expected to support teacher improvement and growth. Moreover, principals usually maintain the building financial budget or at least serve as the conduit for acquiring funds for professional development activities. Principals also oversee building schedules, calendars, and timetables. In short, principals are the primary decision-makers in their buildings. As such, principals can exert significant influence on teacher professional development. DuFour (1991) suggests, “The principal is a key figure in determining the ultimate success of any effort to develop personnel and thus plays a major role in school improvement” (p. 8).

Bredeson (2000) delineates four dimensions of the responsibility of a principal for leading effective professional development (pp. 391-398). They are (a) designing and delivering professional development, (b) evaluating the outcomes of professional development programs, (c) leading a productive learning environment, and (d) exerting principal leadership qualities. In other words, principals are also responsible for taking an active leadership role in leading professional development (Bradley, 2014; Bredeson, 2000; Diaz-Magglioli, 2004; DuFour, 1991; Firestone & Mangin, 2014). By leading professional development, principals can coordinate professional development activities that unify teachers under a shared vision for learning with objectives and goals that aim
to improve teacher quality and practice with the intent of increasing student achievement (Bradley, 2014; Bredeson, 2000; Diaz-Magglioli, 2004; DuFour, 1991; Firestone & Mangin, 2014; Loucks-Horsley et al., 1987). In doing so, principals can influence their school culture for the purpose of nurturing a teaching staff that has a clear purpose, is goal-oriented, takes responsibility for student learning, collaborates with one another, is reflective about their teaching practice, and is committed to improvement (Bredeson, 2000; Diaz-Magglioli, 2004).

Successful principals have been found to exhibit certain leadership characteristics and roles to establish and maintain this kind of school culture. For example, principals are expected to model behaviors for their teaching staff (Bredeson, 2000). Principals need to demonstrate that they value professional learning and are committed to professional growth through clear and continuous dialogue with teachers. Principals can also establish the value of professional development by showing enthusiasm for learning activities and actively participating in, following through, and promoting effective professional development practices (Bredeson, 2000; Diaz-Magglioli, 2004; DuFour, 1991; Loucks-Horsley et al., 1987). Teachers should be able to recognize that the principal values learning and understands that teacher professional growth is an integral part of the core school mission or vision (Bredeson, 2000; Loucks-Horsley et al., 1987). Thus, principals should commit time, energy, and school resources to professional development in order that teachers view growth and learning as being a priority.

Moreover, principals need to take ownership over their role as instructional leaders of a school. By continuously reiterating and reestablishing the shared vision and
goals for learning, demonstrating their expertise in teaching and learning, and using interpersonal skills, principals can often convince teachers to engage in professional growth and change (Bredeson, 2000; DuFour, 1991; Loucks-Horsley et al., 1987). In short, principals should take an active interest and involvement in creating professional development for their schools. DuFour (1991) notes, “…it is distressing that principals have often limited their involvement in staff development programs to arranging for speakers at disjointed inservice programs. Too often, principals have looked upon staff development as a secondary consideration, an aspect of the operation of the school which warranted little, if any, of their time and attention” (p. 9). Instead, principals should enthusiastically embrace their role as leaders of professional learning in their organizations.

Creating and nurturing a productive learning environment represents another leadership role that principals should embrace for successful professional development. First, principals should be strong communicators (Bredeson, 2000; Diaz-Magglioli, 2004; Firestone & Mangin, 2004; Loucks-Horsley et al., 1987; Zepeda, 2012). Fostering an environment of open communication and dialogue, shared decision-making, and mutual trust is vital to successful professional development. Principals should be adept at talking to teachers about teaching and learning, about the purpose of teacher professional development, and about the expectations for teacher application of new knowledge and skills (Bredeson, 2000; Firestone & Mangin, 2014; Guskey, 2000). Principals also need to be active listeners throughout the professional development process. Teachers should feel safe to voice their concerns, ideas, needs, and wants. They should have a voice in the
decision-making process, and they should be given opportunities to lead (Bredeson, 2000). Essentially, teachers should be treated as professionals whose skills are celebrated and whose voices matter. Principals can and should embrace their roles as advisors, coaches, and critical friends in order that they foster an environment characterized by collegiality, a commitment to learning that is conducive to professional growth critical inquiry, and professionalism (Diaz-Magglioli, 2004; Guskey, 2000). Effective communication fosters environments in which teachers trust one another and their administrators (Diaz-Magglioli, 2004).

In addition, supporting professional development is an essential practice for administrators. Principals have a duty to budget funds for resources and opportunities for growth at the local, district, state, and national level because teachers need to build new knowledge and skills, to collaborate, to explore new ideas, to focus on student learning goals, and to reflect on their practice (Bredeson, 2000; Diaz-Magglioli, 2004; Firestone & Mangin, 2014). For example, principals can approve travel to workshops and conferences, arrange for substitutes, grant release time by granting personal professional days, provide access to consultants and coaching, and purchase instructional technologies and resources (Bradley, 2014; Bredeson, 2000; Diaz-Magglioli, 2004; Loucks-Horsley et al., 1987). Principals can also create and support local policy to increase collaboration and learning opportunities for teachers. Principals can coordinate professional development activities within the school day by making schedules conducive to teacher collaboration, allowing opportunities for peer observation and evaluation, and creating teacher-based teams (Darling-Hammond & McLaughlin, 1995; Guskey, 2000). Principals
should also strive to protect professional learning time by making professional development a priority that demands the attention of the teacher. To accomplish this goal, district and building priorities should be aligned in order that other initiatives and priorities do not conflict with professional development and growth (Bradley, 2014; Loucks-Horsley et al., 1987). Teachers have many responsibilities, which encumber all, or nearly all of their time. Thus, it is vital not to burden them or overwhelm them with too many duties, initiatives, or projects. For that matter, principals should support professional growth on an intellectual and academic level. Teachers should be encouraged to cooperate and collaborate with one another, to develop a shared vision and norms for effective practice, to experiment with and apply new knowledge and practices in their classrooms, and to take risks (Bredeson, 2000; Cranston, 2009; Guskey, 2000). Principals should work to create an environment in which teachers learn new knowledge, skills, and practice and apply them freely without fear of repercussion or failure. Teachers should understand that they are expected to learn and to use these new skills. Teachers should also work cooperatively in mutually beneficial relationships to forward the school vision and mission (Cranston, 2009; Firestone & Mangin, 2014). Principals can cultivate a productive learning environment through effective communications, offering their expertise and advice, and framing teacher evaluation as a growth process, not a punitive one. (Bredeson, 2000; Diaz-Magglioli, 2004; Loucks-Horsley et al., 1987).

In addition, principals should critically evaluate the outcomes of the professional development program and design (Bredeson, 2000; Cranston, 2009; Diaz-Magglioli, 2004; DuFour, 1991; Firestone & Mangin, 2014; Loucks-Horsley et al., 1987). On the
individual level, principals can influence effective professional growth by regularly evaluating teachers and providing specific feedback (Bredeson, 2000; DuFour, 1991). Through the evaluation process, principals can work with teachers to identify potential areas for growth and then to plan learning goals and professional development activities for the purpose of achieving the goals (Bradley, 2014; Bredeson, 2000; Diaz-Magglioli, 2004). On the collective level, principals can promote the growth of the staff members by leading them in data collection, analysis, and collective goal-setting (Bredeson, 2000; Diaz-Magglioli, 2004; Firestone & Mangin, 2014). Using data to inform professional development practices should be a collaborative process led by the principal with the intent of establishing a culture of continuous improvement and individual accountability for collective goals (Bredeson, 2000; Cranston, 2009; Loucks-Horsley et al., 1987). This data collection and analysis process should not only be used to monitor student learning and teacher growth but also to assess professional development programs - their designs, strategies, and uses of resources (Diaz-Magglioli, 2004; Firestone & Mangin, 2014). Effective professional development is not conducted in a vacuum, and outcomes matter. By continually evaluating the professional development program, principals can work with teachers to make necessary adjustments or changes that are conducive to teacher growth.

In conclusion, principals play a vital leadership role in effective professional development programs. As leaders, they are uniquely situated with the responsibility, authority, and often the financial resources to create successful professional development initiatives. In fact, Boyer (1983, as cited in DuFour, 1991) found that “in schools with
high achievement and a clear sense of community, it was invariably the principal that made the difference” (p. 8). Principals can set the conditions for successful program implementation and maintenance. Principal support, leadership, and commitment to improvement initiatives are major factors affecting program outcomes (DuFour, 1991). Active, engaged principals are a fundamental ingredient to effective professional development.

**Educational Leadership for Professional Development**

Educational leadership matters. American schools face the vitally important task of educating students, preparing them for an uncertain future, and teaching them citizenship and social responsibility. It is a colossal responsibility that becomes more challenging as societal demographics change, economies change, technology advances, and politics ebb and flow on the local, state, and national levels. American schools today face many challenges, such as students and families struggling in poverty or low socioeconomic status, insufficient education funding, expanding numbers of English as a second language learners, changing family demographics, and other domestic issues affecting school children and their ability to learn (Firestone & Mangin, 2014). In addition, school leaders face intense pressure due to the increasing number of state mandated tests and accountability measures (Firestone & Mangin, 2014). Strong educational leadership is essential for schools to be successful in such a dynamic, fluid environment.

Many factors influence student achievement, which frequently extend past the scope of school influence and control, such as the socioeconomic status of the family of a student or the functionality of student’s family. However, schools can impact student
achievement on a number of factors, including the quality teaching in the classroom. Teachers have a substantial impact on student learning, perhaps greater than any other school-level aspect of schooling (Darling-Hammond, 2000; Kyriakides, Creemers, & Antoniou, 2009; Waters et al., 2003; Wright, Horn, & Sanders, 1997). A second factor that influences student achievement is effective school leadership. In fact, Leithwood and Riehl (2005, as cited in Firestone & Mangin, 2014) conducted a study that found “constructive leadership is second only to good teaching among within-school factors that contribute to student learning” (p. 320). Principal leadership can directly and explicitly contribute to student achievement by prioritizing teacher professional development and creating the conditions for successful, effective teacher growth programs (Firestone & Mangin, 2014).

For these reasons, the nature of leadership is significant. Leadership in any organization is contingent upon the context, culture, and unique qualities of that organization, and its leadership is no different. It is unlikely that any single leadership style or program could be applied universally in any situation or setting or could be guaranteed to work in any school. However, based on the findings in the Coleman Report and the philosophies behind the accountability movement, American schools and teachers need to change or at least adapt their methods. Onorato (2012) frames the question nicely, “Presently our students need different and more advanced skills, such as the ability to solve problems, think critically and possess the ability to work, both in teams and independently. How do we make this transformation from educating students to meet standards of a prescribed level to a student who maintains a skills set of intellectually
thinking, problem solving and obtaining the ability to continuously pursue knowledge on
their own?” (p. 125). A transformational approach to leadership might contain at least a
substantive portion of the needed approach.

**Transformational leadership definition and critical attributes.** James
MacGregor Burns (1978) introduced the theory of transformational and transactional
leadership styles in a seminal work that led to future research regarding leadership and
management practices. Burns studied the leadership style of political leaders, and defined
the characteristics and behaviors that resulted in changes in followers and organizations
as a transformational style of leadership. Burns further defined characteristics and
behaviors related to managing the organization as a transactional style of leadership,
which involves an engagement in transactions. Burns set the foundation for a whole new
field of research into organizational leadership, and over time the definition of
transformational leadership has advanced, most notably by the work of Bernard Bass.
Bass (1990) has defined transformational leadership thusly:

Transformational leadership refers to the leader moving the follower beyond
immediate self-interests through idealized influence (charisma), inspiration,
intellectual stimulation, or individualized consideration. It elevates the follower’s
level of maturity and ideals as well as concerns for achievement, self-
actualization, and the well-being of others, the organization, and society. Idealized
influence and inspirational leadership are displayed when the leader envisions a
desirable future, articulates how it can be reached, sets an example to be followed,
sets high standards of performance, and shows determination and confidence.
Followers want to identify with such leadership. Intellectual stimulation is displayed when the leader helps followers to become more innovative and creative. Individualized consideration is displayed when leaders pay attention to the developmental needs of followers and support and coach the development of their followers. (p. 3)

In fact, Bass authored a six-factor model of leadership that combines aspects of transformational leadership and transactional leadership. The first three factors are considered transformational factors. The first, charisma/inspirational, refers to the leader’s ability to act as a role model, to establish a clear sense of purpose that followers can identify with, and to establish a clear vision that is exciting and motivating (Bass & Avolio, 1999). The second, which is referenced as intellectual stimulation, refers to the leader’s ability to inspire followers to critically examine current organizational and individual practices and to challenge them to make improvements (Bass & Avolio, 1999). The third factor, individualized consideration, refers to the leader’s ability to identify each follower’s needs and to inspire them to work toward their full potential (Bass & Avolio, 1999). The final three factors are transactional in nature. It is important to note that both transformational and transactional leadership are often necessary ingredients for successful leadership of an organization. Transactional leadership practices are fundamental to running the organization, while transformational leadership practices inspire and motivate followers to make changes and improvements that benefit themselves and the organization (Leithwood, 1992).
Critical attributes of transformational leadership. Three critical attributes have emerged from the literature on transformational leadership. The first attribute is a focus on creating a shared vision and goals through the establishment of consensus and the motivation of the followers (Leithwood & Janzti, 2006). Bass (1999), among others, suggests that transformational leaders accomplish this task through charisma and idealized influence, and by inspirational motivation (Bass, 1999; Leithwood & Jantzi, 2006; Phipps, Prieto, & Verma, 2012; Shatzer, Caldarella, Hallam, & Brown, 2014). Educational leaders, who aspire to be transformative, inspire followers to want to be the best at their work and to go beyond their self-interests for the good of the school or school district (Bass, 1999; Dvir, Eden, Avolio, Shamir, 2002; Onorato, 2012; Sergiovanni, 1990). One key aspect to creating a shared vision and collective goals involves the installation of a collective sense of morals and values. Onorato (2012) suggests, “Transformational leadership is based on the leader's values, and how the leader interacts with the organizational members in a way that conveys his or her values to each of the members which engages and transforms them to accept these values as their own” (p. 126). As such, effective transformational leaders are skilled at building and maintaining a collaborative and collegial school culture, building consensus and buy-in, communicating, and motivating teachers to accomplish the vision and school goals (Leithwood, 1992; Onorato, 2012; Shatzer, et al., 2014). Transformational leaders also lead by example and exert an idealized influence on their followers. These leaders model key practices, demand high expectations and performance, demonstrate and engender trust, and model professional practices and values in a way that motivates followers and
raises their morale (Bass, 1999; Firestone & Mangin, 2014; Leithwood & Jantzi, 2006; Onorato, 2012; Phipps et al., 2012).

Effective transformational leaders are also adept at building consensus for the creation and maintenance of a shared vision among the stakeholders of their schools. For example, they create a school climate that is based on equality and democracy and that unites teachers under shared goals and objectives that are meaningful and desirable (Blase & Blase, 1999b; Phipps et al., 2012; Sergiovanni, 1990; Shatzer, et al., 2014). Sergiovanni (1990) describes this process as “leadership by bonding” where the “focus is on arousing awareness and consciousness that elevates school goals and purposes to the level of a shared covenant that bonds together leader and follower in a moral commitment” (p. 2). For this reason, building a significant vision with teacher buy-in makes reform possible because teachers embrace and internalize the school’s goals in a manner that causes the related struggles to seem worthwhile (Bass, 1999; Onorato, 2012; Shatzer, et al., 2014).

The second attribute to transformational leadership is a focus on teachers’ needs (Bass, 1999; Phipps et al., 2012; Shatzer et al., 2014). More specifically, transformational leadership focuses on satisfying higher-order needs such as self-esteem and self-actualization rather than on lower level needs, a phenomenon described by Maslov in his hierarchy of needs (Burns, 1978; Dvir et al., 2002; Onorato, 2012). Sergiovanni (1990) described this process as “leadership by building,” where the “focus is on arousing human potential, satisfying higher-order needs, and raising expectations of both the leader and the led in a manner that motivates both to higher levels of commitment and
performance” (p. 2). Transformational leaders cultivate growth through an objective identification of teachers’ needs and the creation of structures and opportunities for them to grow, to learn, and to expand their roles within the school (Dvir et al., 2002; Leithwood, 1992; Reutzel & Clark, 2014). Teachers are expected to reflect on their teaching and their learning, which transformational leaders nurture by offering individual support and attention (Blase & Blase, 1999b; Leithwood & Jantzi, 2006).

The final attribute of transformational leadership is a focus on organizational change through intellectual stimulation (Bass, 1999; Leithwood & Jantzi, 2006; Phipps et al., 2012; Shatzer et al., 2014). Transformational leadership aims to develop teachers and to improve performance by creating a culture and structures that nurtures teacher learning and growth to blossom (Dvir et al., 2002; Leithwood, 1992; Reutzel & Clark, 2014). Sergiovanni (1990) calls this practice “leadership by banking” where administrators “routinize school improvements” and the school administrator “ministers to the needs of the school and works to serve others so they are better able to perform their responsibilities” (p. 2). The goal is to help teachers to achieve their utmost potential by giving them autonomy and establishing challenging goals and meaningful work while also offering support, coaching, and modeling desired practices (Bass, 1999; Dvir et al., 2002; Firestone & Mangin, 2014; Leithwood & Jantzi, 2006). Additionally, transformational leaders play an active role in organizational change by encouraging teachers to become leaders, to be inventive and creative, to challenge the status quo, and to take risks (Onorato, 2012; Phipps et al., 2012). Transformational leaders develop teachers into leaders by empowering them with a voice in school vision, goals, and
operations, and by encouraging teachers to embrace leadership roles and opportunities (Blase & Blase, 1999b; Onorato, 2012; Reutzel & Clark, 2014). To sum up, transformational leadership nurtures and establishes the conditions for successful school reform and change.

**Effects of transformational leadership.** Transformational leadership has been shown to influence or affect student achievement and organizational culture and climate. To begin, the results emerging from research regarding the effect of transformational leadership on student achievement is mixed. Ross and Gray (2006) found that transformational leadership has strong correlations to teacher self-efficacy and commitment but has weaker correlations to student achievement (as cited in Shatzer et al., 2014). The outcomes of the research of Leithwood and Jantzi’s (2006) shows that “the potency of leadership for increasing student learning hinges on the specific classroom practices which leaders stimulate, encourage, and promote” (p. 23). In fact, the impact of transformational leadership on student achievement is largely mediated by school context and family conditions (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2006). School and family demographics are not uniform, so it stands to reason that local context will influence the influence of transformational leadership, as well as the level of student achievement. Shatzer et al. (2014) argue, “Neither instructional nor transformational leadership predicted a statistically significant amount of variance in measures of student achievement without controlling for school context and principal demographics” (p. 452). These findings suggest that transformational leadership has an inconsequential (or perhaps indeterminate) influence on student achievement. In addition, research may not
show a statistical correlation between transformational leadership and student achievement because of the strong influence of place (school environment, home and family environment and demographics, etc.).

However, some research results indicate that transformational leadership does exert a positive influence on student achievement. Shatzer et al. (2014) also suggest that:

School principals can have a meaningful impact on student achievement…Possibly principals actually do have more influence over the progress of the students in their school than the impact of the school context. School context would seem to be a rather stable characteristic, while principal leadership is more dynamic and may have a larger impact on change, as indicated by the results of both instructional and transformational leadership accounting for nearly twice as much of the variance in student academic progress as school context. (p. 455)

In a 2005 study, Leithwood and Jantzi found the effects of transformational leadership on academic achievement were “mixed but tending toward positive” (p. 23). Leithwood and Sun (2012) found small, positive direct effects on student achievement that can be considered meaningful and significant. Moreover, Leithwood and Sun (2012) found that some leadership practices such as building collaborative structures and providing individualized consideration may have a larger impact on student achievement than others. Shatzer et al. (2014) sum up well the relationship between transformational leadership, school and home environment, and student achievement with “The results from this study support the conclusion that school context and principal demographics
significantly impact student achievement, but that principals contribute to the outcome of student test scores in unique and meaningful ways” (p. 456).

While the effects of transformational leadership on student achievement appear to be murky at best, research results reflect that transformational leadership has a significant influence on the school culture and environment. Transformational leadership has been shown to influence positively teacher attitudes and motivation (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2006; Shatzer et al., 2014). Hallinger (2013) describes the influence of transformational leadership:

In contrast, transformational leadership seeks to generate *second-order effects*. Transformational leaders increase the capacity of others in the school to produce first-order effects on learning (Lambert, 1998; Leithwood & Louis, 1999). For example, transformational leaders create a climate in which teachers engage in continuous learning and in which they routinely share their learning with others. Transformational leaders work with others in the school community to identify personal goals and then link these to the broader organisational \[sic\] goals (Barth, 1990; Lambert, 2002). This approach is believed to increase commitment of the staff who see the relationship between what they are trying to accomplish and the mission of the school. These changes are conceived as *second-order* effects in the sense that the principal is creating the conditions under which others are committed and self-motivated to work towards the improvement of the school without specific direction from above. (p. 10)
In other words, generating second-order effects builds teacher commitment and self-efficacy, influences teachers to see the school as a place of learning and growth, inspires teachers to buy-in to school improvement initiatives, and inspires teachers to embrace school values (Onorato, 2012; Sergiovanni, 1999; Shatzer et al., 2014). Teachers become more invested in collaboration and school improvement and feel empowered in their work (Dvir et al., 2002; Leithwood, 1992). As a result, transformational leadership leads to school cultures with a focus on improvement and increased teacher development (Dvir et al., 2002). As such, transformational leaders reportedly enjoy improved relations with their colleagues and positive effects in the overall school environment (Shatzer et al., 2014). Transformational leaders set the conditions for growth and success, and their followers are motivated and feel empowered to improve their practices.

**Transformational leadership as an effective leadership model for professional development.** Transformational leadership appears to be an effective style for professional development because the two dimensions share numerous tenets, such as cultivating a shared vision and goals, focusing on growth and improvement, and giving individualized consideration to followers’ needs. Professional development is most effective when leaders cultivate a shared vision for the organization (DuFour, 1991; Guskey, 2000). Transformational leaders aspire to establish consensus regarding a vision of improvement for the organization that engenders teacher buy-in and commitment (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2006). Teacher buy-in and commitment are also components of effective professional development (DuFour, 1991; Loucks-Horsley et al., 1987; Raphael et al., 2014). Moreover, effective professional development and transformational
leadership share the principle of building and maintaining a collaborative culture (Blase & Blase, 1999a; Diaz-Magglioli, 2004; Leithwood, 1992; Lieberman & Miller, 2014; Onorato, 2012; Shatzer, et al., 2014; Tallerico, 2005). Transformational leaders create a school climate and culture that is based on equality and distributed leadership, thus empowering teachers to collaborate and motivating teachers to achieve goals (Leithwood, 1992; Onorato, 2012; Shatzer, et al., 2014). Transformational leadership and effective professional development both depend on a leader’s capacity and determination to build a collegial environment in which school improvement and teacher growth are the desired outcomes.

Additionally, effective professional development and transformational leadership aim to improve individual and collective teaching practices. Effective professional development is planned to help teachers improve their teaching practice and pedagogy, and ultimately to build a greater sense of self- and collective efficacy (Blase & Blase, 1999a; Corcoran, 1995; Darling-Hammond & McLaughlin, 1995). Professional development activities are designed to increase teachers’ skills and knowledge and are relevant to classroom practices. Likewise, transformational leadership focuses on teacher growth by identifying teachers’ needs and by building structures and an environment that supports teachers (Bass, 1999; Phipps et al., 2012; Shatzer et al., 2014). Transformational leadership looks to satisfy higher-order needs and building teacher self-esteem (Sergiovanni, 1990). In summary, teacher development and improved performance are the desired outcomes for both effective professional development and transformational leadership (Dvir et al., 2002).
Organizational change and reform are the targeted outcomes for both effective professional development and transformational leadership. Leaders of effective professional development and transformational leaders endorse a growth perspective. For example, effective professional growth and transformational leadership encourage teachers and staff to be creative and to seek innovation, to evaluate current practice, to make significant changes, and to take leadership roles (DuFour, 1991; Guskey, 2000; Onorato, 2012; Phipps et al., 2012; Raphael et al., 2014). Teachers are encouraged to challenge the status quo and engage in meaningful work that results in useful change and improvement in classroom practice (Tallerico, 2005). Moreover, leaders of effective professional development and transformational leaders create and nurture the structures and conditions for teacher learning and improvement (Birman et al., 2000; Dvir et al., 2002; Guskey, 2000; Leithwood, 1992; Reutzel & Clark, 2014). They actively participate in and lead activities that foster growth with the hope that teachers will be engaged in the school improvement process and take ownership of the school vision and their own learning (Blase & Blase, 1999b; Onorato, 2012; Raphael et al., 2014; Reutzel & Clark, 2014). To summarize, transformational leadership aligns neatly with effective professional development through a commitment to school improvement and teacher growth.
Chapter Three: Methodology

Introduction

Waters et al. (2003) have purported that a focus on the identification and improvement of classroom practices as one of two primary variables that positively affect student achievement. Principals can exert a strong – albeit indirect – influence on student achievement through instructional leadership and leading staff professional development (Hallinger & Heck, 2004; Seashore Louis et al., 2010; Waters et al, 2003). The purpose of this study was to identify and analyze the ways that Ohio public high school principals perceive their roles as leaders of professional development, the manner in which the principals prioritize their roles, and the leadership strategies the principals utilize to facilitate and nurture the professional growth and learning of teachers. To this end, a survey was used to study selected elements related to the provision of leadership for professional development. These elements were examined through the lens of selected variables related to the principals and their leadership.

The nature of the variables and the nature of the survey instrument engendered quantitative and qualitative analyses of the responses to the survey items. These analyses were used to formulate an interpretation of the manner in which the principals reported perceiving their roles as leaders of professional development. In this chapter, the researcher will explain the rationale for using a quantitative survey with open-ended response questions; the research design, implementation, and methodology; and the data collection and analysis procedures.
Research Objectives

1. To identify and describe Ohio public school principals using the following demographic characteristics. They include the genders of the principals and the number of years in which they have served as administrators. Other categories were included regarding the nature of schools in which the principals were serving at the time the study was conducted. The categories included the typology of the school districts, the types (classifications) of the schools, the sizes (based upon enrollment) of the schools, the grade levels found in the school buildings, the geographic locations of the schools, and the principals’ perceptions of their responsibilities for the professional development of the teachers in their schools.

2. To identify the factors, which influenced the decision-making of the principals regarding professional development,

3. To determine the types and levels of influence on the implementation of professional development that was experienced by the principals,

4. To ascertain the frequency with which selected characteristics of professional development have occurred at the schools of the principals,

5. To determine the perceptions of the principals regarding the efficacy of the professional development activities at their schools,

6. To identify the leadership strategies that the principals used to foster professional development, and

7. To identify the existence of statistically significant differences among selected demographics that emerged from this study.
Research Design

The research purpose of this study was to summarize and analyze the roles of Ohio public high school principals as leaders of professional development and to examine their perceptions of those roles. The desired outcome of the research was to identify and gain information regarding effective professional development practices, as identified through a quantitative study using a survey instrument to collect the data being pursued. The study was grounded in theory and professional research regarding effective professional development and transformational leadership practices as discussed in Chapter Two.

A research design that features both quantitative survey items and open-ended response items was used in this study. While the research method was dominated by a quantitative, postpositive view, the addition of open-ended response items generated qualitative responses that added robust data to be analyzed (Johnson et al., 2007). A web-based survey was used to study the population, as it could be easily administered, is relatively inexpensive, and could be used to gauge the distribution of a characteristic in a defined population (Dillman, 1991; Dillman & Bowker, 2001).

In an effort to make this study generalizable to the entire population, an objective that was not obtained, several steps in the construction and delivery of the survey were made to increase the response rate and to decrease the occurrence of error (Dillman & Bowker, 2001). Dillman and Bowker (2001) identify four sources of error in sample surveys. They are coverage error, measurement error, nonresponse error, and sampling error. Coverage error occurs when all the members of a defined population are not
presented with the opportunity to participate in the study, are not covered by the sampling frame, and have a zero probability of being included in the sample (Dillman & Bowker, 2001). Measurement error occurs when respondents give inaccurate responses, due to the characteristics of the questions, the questionnaire, or the respondents which in turn prevent them from providing accurate information (Dillman & Bowker, 2001).

Nonresponse error occurs when some members of the sample do not provide responses to the survey questions (Dillman, 1991; Dillman & Bowker, 2001). Sampling error is caused by studying a sample of the population rather than the entire population (Dillman & Bowker, 2001).

Coverage error should not have been a factor in this study, as nearly all of the public high school principals in Ohio were offered the opportunity to participate in the study. Likewise, sampling error should not have affected the possible generalizability of this study because the only principals in the population, which were excluded, constituted the group that participated in the pilot study and the principals who have a personal or collegial relationship to the researcher. To address nonresponse error, several design elements, which are found in Dillman’s Total Design Method (1991), were incorporated into the survey construction with the intent of increasing the response rate. The Total Design Method is based on the premise that recipients are more likely to respond if they perceive the benefits of participation as outweighing its costs (Dillman, 1991). Therefore, the survey was constructed to give the appearance of having limited costs, such as appearing less time-consuming and simple to complete while also giving the appearance of increasing benefits, such as making the survey interesting and building trust through
confidentiality (Dillman, 1991). Thus, the survey opened with a welcome screen that emphasized the ease of responding, explained the manner in which confidentiality was protected, provided an estimated completion time, and attempted to provide motivation for completing the survey (Dillman, 1991). Next, the researcher purposefully chose an opening question that was likely to pique the respondents’ interest in the survey and that could be effortlessly answered by them (Dillman, 1991). The survey was constructed in such a manner that the respondents could easily scroll from question to question. In addition, the respondents were not required to provide an answer to each question before being allowed to move on to a subsequent question (Dillman & Bowker, 2001). Furthermore, the survey was constructed to display a bar with text to inform the participants of their progress in completing the survey (Dillman & Bowker, 2001). Lastly, the researcher followed up twice with an additional email message to motivate non-respondents to complete the survey, which was accompanied by an extension of the timeline by an additional week. Taken as a whole, these design elements were incorporated to reduce frustration and to provide a respondent-friendly environment for completing the questionnaire.

Similarly, the survey was designed to address measurement error. After all, the use of a web-based survey appears to reduce measurement error as the respondents are less likely to be motivated to provide socially desirable answers, to provide inaccurate answers in order to be perceived in a more favorable light, and to be subjected to potential interviewer subversion (Dillman, 1991; Tourangeau, 1984). Additionally, the survey questions were chosen and presented to encourage the respondents to provide
accurate answers. Each question was presented in a traditional format similar to what respondents might find on a pencil-and-paper self-administered survey (Dillman & Bowker, 2001). Related questions were grouped together to prompt the correct interpretation of each question by the respondents (Dillman & Bowker, 2001; Tourangeau, 1984). An anticipation also existed that the grouping of the items would spark the respondent’s memory, as human memories are linked and the existence of connections tends to spark stronger recall (Tourangeau, 1984).

Furthermore, the survey was created to combat potential measurement error by reducing the occurrence of judgment error by the respondents. Tourangeau (1984) asserts that “respondents exhibit heuristics and biases that impact judgment” and may require complex memory and information retrieval (p. 86). However, the survey featured several Likert-type questions which were included to encourage the retrieval and synthesis of information from the memories of the participants (Tourangeau, 1984). In addition, questions related to the respondent’s experience and knowledge were included, as they are less liable to judgment error. For that matter the topic of professional development is likely to be familiar to Ohio’s public high school principals (Tourangeau, 1984).

Finally, the survey instrument itself was tested for internal validity to ensure that it would measure as it was purported (Kimberlin & Winterstein, 2008). In order to discover potential sources of measurement error, the survey was piloted. The results from the pilot study were analyzed to determine the necessary changes to increase measurement validity, participant comprehension, and readability. Next, the survey was distributed to a panel of experts to measure the construct validity of the instrument. This
expert panel judged the manner that the survey items provided “an adequate and representative sample of all the items that might measure the construct of interest” (Kimberlin & Winterstein, 2008, p. 2279).

**Population and Sample**

The Ohio Educational Directory Data, which is published by the Ohio Department of Education, identified contact information for 739 public high school principals in the state of Ohio. However, the researcher chose to exclude those principals who participated in the pilot survey and other principals with whom the researcher has a personal or collegial relationship. After the adjustments were made, 701 principals were surveyed to identify their perceptions of their roles as leaders of professional development for teachers. Due to the contextual differences between secondary schools and middle and elementary schools, middle and elementary school principals were excluded from this study. Likewise, private school principals and chartered non-public school principals were also excluded from this study, as they are not legally bound to the Ohio Principal Evaluation System. In addition, they are not mandated to be evaluated on the Ohio Principal Standards. Otherwise, all members of the population of 701 principals had the opportunity to participate in the study. The cover email message contained a brief explanation of the study, the purpose of the study, the relevance of the study, and requested the participation in the study of the recipients of the message (See Appendix D). The email also contained a link to the study on Qualtrics, which included Ohio University’s Online Consent form. While the survey instrument generated individual principal data, all data was coded to remove identifiable information in order to protect the confidentiality of all respondents and their responses. All data related to the survey
were kept on a password-protected computer which was only accessible by the researcher.

While a population frame of 701 public high school principals in Ohio was established, 188 respondents started the survey and 152 usable responses were recorded. The researcher used an online sampling calculator (www.surveymonkey.com/mp/sample-size-calculator/) to compute the requisite sample size that would produce a 95% confidence level with a 5% margin of error. The requisite sample size was calculated at 249 respondents, which was not met by the number of responses.

**Methodology and Instrumentation**

**Methodology.** A research design that features both quantitative survey items and open-ended response items was used in this study. While the research method is dominated by a quantitative, postpositive view, collecting qualitative data via open-ended response items complemented and enhanced the data that was collected (Brewer & Hunter, 2006; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007; Jick, 1979; Johnson & Christensen, 2014; Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004). The combination of the quantitative items with open-ended response items produced a more comprehensive view of the participants’ viewpoints which allowed the researcher to be more confident in the interpretation of data and the findings (Brewer & Hunter, 2006; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007; Jick, 1979; Johnson & Christensen, 2014; Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004).

Before distributing the survey to the entire population of Ohio’s high school public principals, the researcher piloted the survey using a convenience sampling method to examine its readability and usability. The researcher distributed the survey via a hyperlink in an email to a group of willing colleagues who serve as high school and
elementary school principals. As current practitioners in the field, these participants could speak with expertise regarding the content of the survey instrument and provide a critical analysis of the instrument. The pilot survey included questions to test the usability of the instrument and the data collection procedures (Fowler Jr., 2014). The pilot group was asked to rate the instrument on its clarity of instructions, layout, and readability. Questions were included to determine whether the pilot group answered the questions accurately, faced problems answering the questions as they were written, understood the questions, and understood the type of possible answers (Fowler Jr., 2014). Through piloting the survey, the researcher intended to reduce measurement error by improving question design (Fowler Jr., 2014). Upon the close of the pilot, several corrections were made to the instrument based on the recommendations made by the pilot respondents:

- An “other” response was added to the survey item pertaining to gender.
- One survey item pertaining to organizing and initiating teacher professional development was broken down into two survey items so that organization and initiation of professional development could be studied individually.
- The demographic items were moved to the end of the survey to be in accordance with Dillman’s Total Design Method (Dillman & Bowker, 2011).
- The wording on one survey item was changed from “never” to “seldom.”
- The wording on another survey item was changed from “During the last 18 months” to “During the last school year (10 months)” when asking about teachers’ participation in professional development activities.
• The wording on one open-ended survey item was changed to distinguish between growth resulting from professional development participation and growth resulting from the teacher evaluation process.

• Three demographic questions were added (area of Ohio in which the respondents serve, grade levels at which the respondents serve, and the classification of the school in which they serve) to improve the analysis of the results by generating categorical data.

The respondents in the pilot group reported that the survey was “adequate in length and easy to follow and finish,” and that the “questions made sense and it was easy to follow along.”

Upon completion of the pilot study, the survey instrument was reviewed by a panel of experts to address threats to its content validity. This panel, which consisted of curriculum directors and school administrators, was perceived to have the requisite knowledge and experience to analyze issues of content validity. The panel examined the content validity of the instrument by determining if the survey provided an “adequate and representative sample of all the items that might measure the domain of principal leadership in regards to professional development” (Kimberlin & Winterstein, 2008, p. 2279). The panelists accessed the survey via a hyperlink provided to them in an email by the researcher. The panelists were asked to consider the following open-ended questions:

• Did you understand the types of responses that were required by the questions?

• Do the questions make sense?
• Do you have any recommendations for improvements?
• Do the questions adequately measure leadership for professional development?
• Is there anything about the sequence of the questions or the format of the survey that either encouraged or discouraged you from continuing the survey?

Revisions to the instrument made based on recommendations from the panelists:
• A “not applicable” response was added to one survey item, and “never” was added as a possible answer to another survey item to enhance the usability of the survey.
• An open-ended response item, which requested the number of professional development activities that the respondents planned or initiated on an annual basis, was added to the survey.
• The demographic questions were moved to Section Three of the four sections of the survey to improve the response rate on those items.
• The response choice “School District or Educational Service Center” found on two survey items was broken down into two separate answer choices.
• The wording on the open-ended survey item regarding the evaluation of teacher growth was modified to distinguish between growth resulting from professional development participation and growth resulting from the teacher evaluation process.

After the second set of revisions was made, a hyperlink to the survey was emailed to the intended population on November 28, 2016 (see Appendix D). Participants were
given a two-week timeframe for survey completion. After the first week passed, the researcher sent a follow-up email encouraging non-participants to participate in the study (see Appendix E). The researcher proceeded to send a second reminder ten days after the first reminder, and then the survey was closed on December 19, 2016 (see Appendix F). These strategies were implemented in an attempt to increase the response rate, thus limiting nonresponse error (Dillman & Bowker, 2001). The researcher also designed the survey following Dillman and Bowker’s research-based principles and criteria for creating respondent-friendly questionnaires that increase participation rates and lower incidents of nonresponse (Dillman, 1991; Dillman, et al., 1999; Dillman & Bowker, 2001).

**Instrumentation.** A survey (see Appendix G), as already noted, was used to conduct the quantitative study. The survey consisted of 23 items, including Likert-type scale questions, multiple selection questions, and open-ended response questions. Brewer and Hunter (2007) have designated several advantages of using surveys, which include (a) that the coding and analyzing of the data can be quicker and less labor intensive than with other research instruments or methods; (b) the participants become involve in the ownership of generating the data; (c) the researcher is able to collect specifically targeted data about a population; (d) the researcher controls the data collection process; and (e) the survey results are highly generalizable (pp. 31; 74-75). Moreover, high school principals were the population of this study, and a survey represents the reportedly most effective design to uncover perceptions and characteristics of a large population of extremely busy professionals (Butin, 2010; Jaeger, 1998).
The survey instrument utilized in this study featured seven questions designed to elicit data regarding the respondents’ personal characteristics and professional context, and five open-ended questions designed to measure respondents’ leadership characteristics and tendencies. The remainder of the questions addressed the perceptions of the participants regarding professional development, funding for professional development, leading professional development, learning from professional development, the organization of professional development, and the selection of professional development activities (Hetzel Associates, LLC, 2006).

The survey instrument was developed by the researcher, with the approved use of items from two existing instruments. The researcher chose to develop a survey instrument rather than using an existing one, as it appeared that no instruments existed to investigate the perceptions of high school principals regarding professional development. The overwhelming majority of surveys instruments, which had been created at the time of this study to examine professional development, were geared toward teachers’ perceptions. To develop the survey, the researcher secured permission to use questionnaire items from two previously developed surveys: the National Center for Educational Statistics’ Schools and Staffing Survey (SASS) Principal Questionnaire (2011-2012), and the PBS TeacherLine National Survey of Teacher Professional Development (2005-2006). See appendices H and I. The researcher chose four questions regarding professional development from the SASS Principal Questionnaire, and seven questions regarding professional development form the PBS TeacherLine National Survey. Because the TeacherLine National Survey was constructed to survey teachers rather than principals,
the researcher chose to modify the questions to glean the perspectives of school principals. These questions were selected in combination with questions from the SASS questionnaire to address the manner in which principals perceive their roles as leaders of professional development.

The questions from the SASS questionnaire were forced-choice, Likert-type scale, in which the participants were asked to rate the frequency by which professional development activities coincide with certain characteristics. An example of a question and the related rating scale follows:

**How often is professional development for teachers at this school conducted?**

- Never
- Rarely
- Sometimes
- Frequently
- Always

The questions, which were used from the SASS instrument, also featured a series of yes or no questions aimed at identifying the manner in which professional development is funded and supported at the school. The questions, which were used from the PBS TeacherLine National Survey, offered a mixture of multiple choice and forced-choice Likert-type scale questions that solicit information on the evaluation of professional development, the funding for professional development, and the selection of professional development activities. Attention was given to the maintenance of the validity and
reliability of the items obtained from the existing instruments when they were being placed in the survey for this study.

In addition to the quantitative items, which were taken from the SASS and the PBS TeacherLine National Survey, the researcher developed open-ended survey questions to identify the strategies that the principals used to lead professional development, to solicit the participating principals’ perceptions of professional development efficacy, and to investigate the principals’ perceptions of their roles as leaders of professional development. The responses to the open-ended questions contributed in-depth data and added richness to the data that could not be achieved through quantitative questioning alone. Furthermore, using open-ended response questions added an additional layer of reliability via triangulation. Jick (1979) notes, “It (triangulation) is largely a vehicle for cross validation when two or more distinct methods are found to be congruent and yield comparable data” (p. 602). In short, the resulting qualitative data corroborated the findings of the quantitative data and vice versa.

**Data Collection Procedures**

The online survey was distributed via email to public high school principals in the state of Ohio, as identified by the Ohio Educational Directory Data published by the Ohio Department of Education. The database identified contact information for 739 principals. However, the researcher chose to exclude those principals who participated in the pilot survey and other principals with whom the researcher has a personal or collegial relationship. After the adjustments were made, 701 principals were sent the survey. The cover email message contained a brief explanation of the study, the purpose of the study, the relevance of the study, and requested the participation in the study of the recipients of
the message. The email also contained a link to the study on Qualtrics, which included Ohio University’s Online Consent form. The email was sent to the principals asking them to complete the web-based survey within two weeks. As a measure to increase the response rate and reduce nonresponse error, two follow-up emails were sent to the non-respondents encouraging their participation (Dillman & Bowker, 2011). Out of a possible 701 invited participants, 188 respondents started the survey and 152 responses were recorded, corresponding to a response rate of 21.7%. The completion rate was calculated at 80.99%.

Data Analysis Procedures

The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences version 24.0 (SPSS v 24.0) was used to analyze the quantitative survey items, thus generating descriptive statistics that were used to determine the perceptions of Ohio public high school principals regarding the provision of leadership for professional development (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007). Participants were asked to identify personal and professional characteristics that served as independent variables for comparisons. The characteristics included the experience levels and genders of the principals, and the grade levels, classifications, geographic locations, sizes, and typologies of the schools which the principals were serving at the time of study.

Levene’s Test was used to examine the homogeneity of variance and a one-way Analysis of Variance was applied to four survey items in order to investigate the existence of statistically significant relationships between the related independent variables (experience level, gender, geographic location of the schools, size of the
schools, and typology of the schools) and the manner in which the principals reported perceiving and prioritizing their role as leaders of professional development and the leadership strategies (if any) that they indicated using to lead professional development. Responses were also measured on a Likert-like scale and were summarized by means and standard deviations. Additionally, responses to the survey items were summarized using frequencies and percentages.

The responses to the open-ended response questions on the survey generated a plethora of rich data. Qualitative analysis is seen as an important aspect of this and other studies as “When researchers quantitatively examine many individuals, the understanding of any one individual is diminished” (Creswell & Plano Clark, 1997, p. 8). As such, the qualitative items created a vehicle for participants to share their individual stories and perceptions. To begin the analysis, the researcher used a coding process to identify often repeated categories and themes that emerged from the responses by which the data could be organized (Fowler Jr., 2014; Huberman & Miles, 1994; Taskakkori & Teddlie, 1998). Once the categories emerged, similar strands of data were analyzed to differentiate between responses and to identify and group answers that were “analytically similar” (Fowler, Jr., 2014, p. 140). See Appendix J. These patterns were analyzed to formulate an interpretation of the manner that the principals reported perceiving their roles as leaders of professional development.

Finally, the analysis and results from the quantitative items and the open-ended items were integrated to inform the interpretations of findings for this study (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004). Using a quantitative survey supplemented with open-ended
questions allowed the researcher to examine the data from multiple perspectives, thus augmenting the interpretations and leading to complementary findings that were useful to the field of study (Jick, 1979; Johnson & Christensen, 2014; Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004; Johnson et al., 2007). Utilizing a quantitative approach led the researcher to a more comprehensive and holistic understanding of the principals’ perceptions of their roles as leaders of professional development. In addition, the approach contributed to the identification and understanding of the strategies that the principals reported employing to lead professional development in their schools.

**Limitations**

The research design and research instrument have limitations. Brewer and Hunter (2006) noted that, “surveys always involve a high risk of reactive measurement” (p. 31). Because the participants knew that they were being observed, they may have altered their answers, as a reaction to being scrutinized through the survey. In this manner and others, surveys are susceptible to error (Butin, 2010). Moreover, the research design may be considered limited by the degree to which it is dominated by quantitative items. It seems fair to criticize this study for not utilizing a more robust method (such as interviews) for collecting qualitative data from the participants. Further qualitative research would have been helpful to corroborate the findings of this study.

An outcome of the study was that the sample was not generalizable to the entire population. The researcher did not conduct a follow-up with the non-responders to examine if their responses would have differed significantly from the responders.
Ethical Considerations

This study was designed to ask Ohio high school principals their perceptions regarding their roles in leading professional development and about their leadership styles relating to staff development. The Institutional Review Board at Ohio University approved the study prior to the implementation of the research (see Appendix K). The data emerging from the survey were kept on a password-protected computer and on an external hard drive, both of which have only been accessible to the researcher. Furthermore, the respondents were not required to answer questions that created any personal or professional discomfort or caused any concern regarding reputational risks. The respondents were also given the option to withdraw from the survey before final submission. In addition, all of the data were coded in order to maintain the participants’ confidentiality.
Chapter Four: Findings

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to investigate the perceptions of Ohio public high school principals regarding their roles as leaders of professional development and to identify the strategies they have undertaken to lead professional growth among their teachers. Seven research objectives drove this study. The focus of these research objectives was to

- Examine Ohio public high school principals based on their demographic characteristics,
- Identify the manner in which the decision-making of the principals regarding professional development has been influenced,
- Determine the influenced that the principals perceive having exerted on the implementation of professional development,
- Ascertain the characteristic of profession development which exist at the schools of the principals,
- Identify the perceptions of the principals regarding the efficacy of professional development activities that have occurred at their schools,
- Determine the leadership strategies (if any) that the principals reported using to lead staff professional development, and
- Ascertain if statistically significant differences exist among the responses of the principals, based on the selected demographics of gender, years of administrative experience, and typology of school.
The data for this study were collected from the responses to an online survey, which was distributed to high school principals in Ohio’s public schools.

**Measures and Procedures**

Participants’ perceptions were gleaned using an online survey that was developed and administered by the researcher. In creating the survey instrument, the researcher secured permission to use questionnaire items taken from two previously developed surveys from the National Center for Educational Statistics’ Schools and Staffing Survey (SASS) Principal Questionnaire (2011-2012), and the PBS TeacherLine National Survey of Teacher Professional Development (2005-2006). The researcher chose four questions regarding professional development from the SASS Principal Questionnaire, and seven questions regarding professional development form the PBS TeacherLine National Survey. Because the TeacherLine National Survey was constructed to survey teachers rather than principals, the researcher chose to modify the questions to address the school principal perspective rather than the teacher perspective. Finally the researcher added seven questions designed to elicit data on respondents’ personal characteristics and professional context, and five open-ended questions designed to ascertain the respondents’ leadership characteristics and tendencies.

The online survey was distributed via email to public high school principals in the state of Ohio, as identified by the Ohio Educational Directory Data published by the Ohio Department of Education. The database identified contact information for 739 principals. However, the researcher chose to exclude those principals who participated in the pilot survey and other principals with whom the researcher has a personal or collegial
relationship. After the adjustments were made, 701 principals were sent the survey. The cover email message contained a brief explanation of the study, the purpose of the study, the relevance of the study, and requested the participation in the study of the recipients of the message. The email also contained a link to the study on Qualtrics, which included Ohio University’s Online Consent form. Out of the 701 invitees, 188 started the survey and of those 152 usable sets of responses were recorded in Qualtrics. The response rate was calculated at 21.7% while the completion percentage was calculated at 80.9%.

Data Analysis and Results

A statistical analysis of the quantitative data was performed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences version 24.0 (SPSS v 24.0). The open-ended response questions were coded by the researcher based on “analytically similar” responses and sorted into categories based on the patterns that emerged (Fowler, Jr., 2014, p. 240). These patterns were analyzed to formulate an interpretation of the manner in which the principals reported perceiving their roles as leaders of professional development.

Research objective one: Respondent demographics and responsibilities. The Ohio high school principals who participated in this study were asked to identify the following personal characteristics and professional context. They are the genders of the participants, the number of years that the participants have served as an administrator, the types of school districts in which the participants were serving at the time of the study, types of schools in which the participants were serving at the time of the study, the size of the schools in which the participants were serving, the grade levels included in the schools, and the geographic area of Ohio in which the participants were serving. All of
the responses to the categorical variables were translated into frequencies (number of responses) and percentages.

**Gender.** The participants were asked to identify their genders. The majority of the respondents identified their gender as male (n = 118, 78.7%), while 33 respondents (21.3%) identified their gender as female.

Table 4.1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Survey Item</th>
<th>Response</th>
<th># of Responses</th>
<th>% of Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>21.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>118</td>
<td>78.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>151</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* One respondent failed to respond to the gender item on the survey. No respondent selected the “other” choice on the gender item on the survey.

This sample closely mirrors the population of Ohio public school principals. Of the 741 Ohio public high school principals identified in the Ohio Educational Directory Data published by the Ohio Department of Education, 574 principals identify as male (77.5%).

**Number of years serving as an administrator.** The participants were asked to identify the number of years they have served as administrators. Because the survey response choices included both “11-20” and “20+” as options, the resulting data were organized into the following categories in order to avoid potential reporting error for a principal who may have served 20 years: a) Less than 1; b) 1-5; c) 6-10; and d) 11 and
above. The largest number of respondents indicated their experience serving as an administrator as being 11 years or more (n = 72, 47.7%).

Table 4.2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Experience Level Reported by Ohio Public High School Principals</th>
<th>Survey Item</th>
<th>Response</th>
<th># of Responses</th>
<th>% of Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of Years Serving as an Administrator</td>
<td>Less than 1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1-5</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>21.9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6-10</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>30.5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>11+</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>47.7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>151</td>
<td>100.1*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. One respondent failed to respond to the experience level item on the survey.

*Does not equal 100.0 due to rounding.

Typology of school. The respondents were further requested to indicate the typologies of the schools in which they were serving. The typologies were grouped for reporting purposes as being an urban/suburban school or rural school.

Table 4.3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Typology of School District Reported by Ohio Public High School Principals</th>
<th>Survey Item</th>
<th>Response</th>
<th># of Responses</th>
<th>% of Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Typology of School District</td>
<td>Urban/suburban</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>33.6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>65.8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>152</td>
<td>100</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. One respondent failed to respond to the typology of school district item on the survey.
The largest number of respondents indicated their school was rural (n = 100, 65.8%), while 51 respondents identified their school as urban/suburban (33.6%). This sample aligned nicely to the population of Ohio public school principals. According to the 2013 school district typology overview conducted by the Ohio Department of Education, 431 out of 609 public school districts were classified as “Rural” or “Small Town,” which computes to 70.8% of the population.

**Classification of school.** The respondents were asked to classify their schools, based on the following designations: a) public school, b) community school, c) vocational school, d) alternative school, e) charter school, and f) other. While only one respondent reported serving in a community school, the remainder of the sample (n = 151) reported working in a public school. Because 99.7 percent of the respondents fall into the public school category, all of their responses were grouped together for reporting purposes.

**School size.** The principals were asked to report on the size of their schools using the following researcher-created scale: a) 1-249, b) 250-499, c) 500-749, d) 750-999, and e) over 1,000. The largest number of respondents reported working in a school size ranging from 500 to 749 students (n = 60, 40%). The smallest group of respondents indicated serving in a school size ranging from one to 249 students (n = 11, 7.3%).
Table 4.4

School Size Reported by Ohio Public High School Principals

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Survey Item</th>
<th>Response</th>
<th># of Responses</th>
<th>% of Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>School size</td>
<td>1-249</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>7.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>250-499</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>40.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>500-749</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>22.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>750-999</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>12.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1000+</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>18.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>150</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* Two respondents failed to respond to the school size item on the survey.

**Grade levels served.** The respondents were asked to identify the grade levels in which they were serving according to the following designations: (a) 9-12, (b) 7-12, (c) 10-12, and (d) other. The largest number of respondents indicated that they were serving in a school with students in grades nine through twelve (n = 99, 66%). The smallest group of respondents indicated they serve in a school with students in grades ten through twelve (n = 1, 0.7%).

Table 4.5

Grade Levels Served Reported by Ohio Public High School Principals

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Survey Item</th>
<th>Response</th>
<th># of Responses</th>
<th>% of Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grade levels served</td>
<td>9-12</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7-12</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10-12</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>11.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>150</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* Two respondents failed to respond to the grade levels served item on the survey.
**Geographic location.** The participants also were requested to identify the geographic area of Ohio in which they were serving. The largest number of respondents indicated that they served a school located in northwestern Ohio (n = 54, 36%). The smallest group of respondents reporting serving a school located in southeastern Ohio (n = 17, 11.3%).

Table 4.6

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Survey Item</th>
<th>Response</th>
<th># of Responses</th>
<th>% of Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Geographic location of school</td>
<td>Northwest</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>36.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Northeast</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>25.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Central</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>14.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Southwest</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>12.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Southeast</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>11.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>150</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* Two respondents failed to respond to the geographic location of school item on the survey.

**Responsibilities.** The data indicate that the respondents reported that organizing and initiating professional development, as being the primary responsibility of the principal or district. Seventy-two and two tenths percent of the respondents expressed that organizing professional development is a principal or school district responsibility, and 71.5% of the respondents suggested that principals or the school district should initiate professional development.
Table 4.7

*Primary Responsibility for Organizing Teacher Professional Development*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>School district</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>33.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principal or assistant principal</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>38.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>25.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational Service Center (ESC)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>151</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.8

*Primary Responsibility for Initiating Teacher Professional Development*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>School district or ESC</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>27.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principal or assistant principal</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>43.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>22.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>150</strong></td>
<td><strong>99.3</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>151</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

One hundred six of the principals declared that they plan to or that they had initiated annually at least one professional development activity. Forty-three of the principals responded that they plan to or that they had initiated annually one to five activities and twenty-two of the principals indicated that they had initiated annually six to ten activities. In a similar vein, 56.7% of the respondents offered that they have a great deal of influence as a principal on the decisions that determine the content of in-service professional development programs for the teachers of their schools.

While the responses reflected that a majority of the respondents perceive that planning and organizing professional development as being a primary responsibility of
the principal or school district, not all of the respondents appeared to agree with this perspective. One principal wrote “I don’t plan to initiate any of them (professional development activities). But I always try to have food at them to keep the animals satisfied.” Three out of the on 109 respondents indicated they do not plan or initiate professional development.

Another responsibility tied to leading professional development pertains to professional development evaluation. Survey item four indicated, “How often are professional development activities evaluated?” Forty-nine percent of the respondents indicated that professional development activities are evaluated after each activity is completed, while 13.9% of the participants responded that professional development is seldom or never evaluated. Yet, 35.1% of the respondents indicated that professional development is evaluated in an ongoing manner throughout the school year. These results would seem to indicate that the majority (64.9%) of principals do not evaluate professional development in a comprehensive, ongoing manner, even though they reported evaluating them immediately after the training.
Table 4.9

*Frequency in Which Professional Development Activities are Evaluated*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>After each activity</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ongoing throughout the school year or professional development program</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annually</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seldom</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>151</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* Mean = 1.82; SD = 1.046.

The resulting data also offered insight regarding the manner in which principals evaluate professional development. Survey Item 5 indicated, “In what manner are professional development activities evaluated?” The participants were asked to select all of the following activities that applied to their schools. The options included (a) activities not evaluated; (b) classroom observations; (c) feedback from instructional coaches; (d) student achievement scores; (e) teacher and administrator team/committee evaluations; (f) teacher interviews; and (g) teacher surveys. The most frequent response to this query was the use of teacher surveys. Seventy-one and seven tenths percent of the respondents indicated the use of surveys.
### Table 4.10

**Strategies for Evaluation of Professional Development Activities**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategy</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Percent of Cases</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student achievement scores</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>12.9</td>
<td>30.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher interviews</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>12.1</td>
<td>28.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher surveys</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>30.0</td>
<td>71.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classroom observations</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>11.3</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher and administrator team/committee evaluation</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>22.0</td>
<td>52.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feedback from teachers' instructional coaches</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>9.6</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activities are not evaluated</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>4.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>363</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>238.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Twenty-two percent of the respondents (n = 80) suggested that teacher and administrative teams or committees in their schools evaluate professional development.

On the open-ended portions of the question, five respondents indicated that their districts utilize the Ohio Improvement Process (OIP) to improve practice and to increase student achievement. One respondent replied:

Ohio Improvement Process – We collect data at the Teacher Based Teams, Building Leadership Team, and District Leadership Team to evaluate the effectiveness of our PD. Informally in discussions with teachers. We also created a “Strategies in Action” forum where teachers observe other teachers performing our PD in the classroom and teachers during their prep period observe and evaluate the strategy.

These findings reflect that approximately one-half of the participating principals reported undertaking the evaluation of professional development in a collaborative
setting. Out of the 113 participants who responded to the open-ended question, 77% indicated either a collaborative effort was used or feedback was elicited from teachers when evaluating professional development.

The data on professional development evaluation also reflected the ways in which the participants perceived and prioritized a focus on increased student achievement, as a component of professional development. When asked if professional development is evaluated for evidence of improvement in student achievement, 45.9% of respondents indicated they “frequently” use student achievement data when evaluating professional development activities.

Table 4.11

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency in Which Professional Development Activities are Evaluated for Evidence of Improvement in Student Achievement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Frequency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sometimes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequently</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Always</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* Mean = 2.65; SD = .790.

Only ten out of the 148 respondents (6.8%) indicated that evidence of improvement in student achievement had not been used when evaluating professional development. Open-ended Survey Item Number 21 indicated, “Excluding the Ohio Teacher Evaluation System (OTES), do you evaluate professional development at your school and how it helps teachers grow? If yes, what criteria do you use?” In contrast to
the previous findings, which were reported above, student performance data was only mentioned by four out of the 113 respondents (3.5%). And, 23% of the respondents (n=26) indicated they do not evaluate professional development at their school, at all. One respondent offered:

This (evaluating professional development) is an area that needs to improve.

Usually I sit down with the teacher’s (sic) to see what they learned and then ask them to share this information during TEAM meetings or at staff in-service days.

By the same token, another respondent added:

Currently, we do not (evaluate professional development) but this is in the process of changing. The key to evaluation is not in a criteria or specific process but in creating a vision, direction, and TRULY imbedding that in everything you do. It has to be come (sic) part of the culture and not just a fireworks show.

The data also reflect the manner in which principals support professional development for the teaching staff. Ninety-three and four tenths percent of the principals (n= 142) indicated that the school district provides teachers with funding for their professional development activities, and 25.7% of principals (n= 39) indicated that they provide funding for professional development.
Table 4.12

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source of Funding For Teachers’ Professional Development Activities</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Percent of cases</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The district</td>
<td>142</td>
<td>64.3</td>
<td>93.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The principal</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>17.6</td>
<td>25.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Department chair</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>5.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (e.g. grants)</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>13.1</td>
<td>19.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>221</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>145.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Research objective two: To determine the manner in which the principal is influenced pertaining to decision making impacting professional development. The findings suggest that several factors influence principals’ decisions regarding professional development activities for the teachers of their schools. Survey Item 3 indicated, “How much influence do the following have on your choice of professional development activities for the teachers of this school?” The participants were asked to rate the amount of influence certain factors have on their choice of professional development activities, using a four-point Likert scale: 1 = none at all, 2 = a little, 3 = a moderate amount, 4 = a great deal. The factors included: college or university partner, curriculum specialists, district superintendent, educational service center, local school board, Ohio Department of Education, school improvement plan, school site council or parent associations, self, staff development coordinator, teachers, teachers’ instructional coaches, and teachers’ union. The overall mean score and standard deviation for the various factors were calculated. The mean item score was highest for “self” (mean =
3.48). In contrast, the lowest scoring item was “college or university partner” (mean =1.31).

Table 4.13

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scale Item</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Range</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Self</td>
<td>157</td>
<td>3.48</td>
<td>0.721</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>District Superintendent</td>
<td>156</td>
<td>3.43</td>
<td>0.737</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff Development Coordinator</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>3.28</td>
<td>1.040</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curriculum Specialists</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>3.19</td>
<td>0.998</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers</td>
<td>155</td>
<td>3.10</td>
<td>0.791</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Improvement Plan</td>
<td>141</td>
<td>2.90</td>
<td>0.958</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ohio Department of Education</td>
<td>145</td>
<td>2.43</td>
<td>0.814</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers' Instructional Coaches</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>2.29</td>
<td>0.985</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational Service Center</td>
<td>148</td>
<td>2.28</td>
<td>0.953</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers' Union</td>
<td>142</td>
<td>1.98</td>
<td>0.911</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local School Board</td>
<td>147</td>
<td>1.56</td>
<td>0.652</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Site Council or Parent Associations</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>1.45</td>
<td>0.774</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College or University Partner</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>1.31</td>
<td>0.564</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The data appear to signal that the principals rely on their own judgments when choosing professional development activities for their teachers.
Table 4.14

*Influence of Self on Principal Choice of Content of In-service Professional Development for Teachers*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>None at all</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A little</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>7.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A moderate amount</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>31.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A great deal</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>59.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>157</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* Mean = 3.48; SD = .721.

The data presented in Table 4.15, Table 4.16, and Table 4.17 pertain to other factors that influence principals’ choices of professional development activities for teachers of their school. The numbers reflect that curriculum specialists (52%), the district superintendent (56.4%), and the staff development coordinator (59.2%) each exert “a great deal” of influence on principals’ decision-making in regards to choosing professional development activities.

Table 4.15

*Influence of Curriculum Specialist on Principal Choice of Content of In-service Professional Development for Teachers*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>None at all</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>8.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A little</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>15.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A moderate amount</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>24.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A great deal</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>52.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* Mean = 3.19; SD = .998.
Table 4.16

Influence of District Superintendent on Principal Choice of Content of In-service Professional Development for Teachers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Influence Level</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>None at all</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A little</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>10.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A moderate amount</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>31.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A great deal</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>56.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>156</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Mean = 3.43; SD = .737.

Table 4.17

Influence of Staff Development Coordinator on Principal Choice of Content of In-service Professional Development for Teachers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Influence Level</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>None at all</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>11.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A little</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A moderate amount</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>21.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A great deal</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>59.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Mean = 3.28; SD = 1.040.

However, the numbers pertaining to teachers’ influence on principals’ choice of professional development activities indicate that teachers only influence principals’ choices “a moderate amount” (40.6%) or “a little” (22.6%).
Similarly, the data regarding the influence of the school improvement plan on principals’ choice of professional development activities for the teachers indicate the plan only appears to hold “a moderate amount,” that is 37.6%, of influence on the principals’ decision-making. Nine and nine-tenths percentage of the respondents indicated the school improvement plan does not “at all” influence their choice of professional development activities for teachers of their school.
Research objective three: To determine how much influence the principal perceives having on implementation of professional development. A majority of the participating principals indicated that they perceive having a strong influence in implementing professional development. Table 4.20 illustrates that 56.7% of the respondents (n = 85) offered that they have a great deal of influence as a principal on decisions that determine the content of in-service professional development programs for the teachers of their schools. In addition, 34.7% of the respondents (n = 52) reported having “a moderate amount” of influence. In contrast, only three respondents (2.0%) indicated they had “no influence at all” on determining the content of professional development activities for teachers in their schools.

Table 4.20

Principal Influence on Determining Content of In-service Professional Development for Teachers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Influence Level</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>None at all</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A little</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>6.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A moderate amount</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>34.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A great deal</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>56.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Mean = 3.46; SD = .711.

The respondents reported perceiving that they have a strong influence as a principal on decisions concerning evaluating teachers of their schools. An overwhelming majority of the respondents said they exert “a great deal” (92%, n = 138) of influence on
decisions concerning the evaluations of teachers, and 7.3 percent said they have “a moderate amount” of influence (n = 11).

Table 4.21

*Principal Influence on Decisions Concerning Teacher Evaluation*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>None at all</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A little</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A moderate amount</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A great deal</td>
<td>138</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* Mean = 3.91; SD = .354.

The data also reflect that 46% of the principals perceive that they have “a great deal” of influence in deciding the manner that the school budget will be developed and spent for professional development, while 32% perceive they have “a moderate amount” of influence on budgeting and related expenditures.

Table 4.22

*Principal Reported Perceptions of their Influence on Budgetary Matters and Expenditures*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>None at all</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A little</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A moderate amount</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A great deal</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* Mean = 3.19; SD = .900.
Research objective four: To determine how often characteristics of profession development occur at their schools. Survey Item 9 indicated, “How often do the following items related to professional development occur at this school?” The participants were asked to rate the frequency with which certain professional development items occur, using a four-point Likert scale of 1 = never, 2 = sometimes, 3 = frequently, 4 = always. The items included (a) accompanied by the resources teachers need, (b) considered part of teachers’ regular work, (c) designed or chosen to support the implementation of state or local standards, (d) designed or chosen to support the district’s improvement goals, (e) designed or chosen to support the school’s improvement goals, (f) evaluated for evidence of improvement in student achievement, and (g) planned by teachers in the school district. The overall mean score and standard deviation for the various items were calculated. The mean item score was highest for “designed or chosen to support the district’s improvement goals” (mean = 3.04). The mean item score was lowest for “planned by teachers in this school district” (mean = 2.30).
Table 4.23

Mean Scores of the Frequency in Which the Following Activities Related to Professional Development Occur at this School

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scale Item</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Range</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Designed or Chosen to Support the District's Improvement Goals</td>
<td>149</td>
<td>3.04</td>
<td>0.734</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Designed or Chosen to Support the School's Improvement Goals</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>3.03</td>
<td>0.789</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Designed or Chosen to Support Implementation of State or Local Standards</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>2.88</td>
<td>0.655</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Considered Part of Teachers' Regular Work?</td>
<td>146</td>
<td>2.82</td>
<td>0.77</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluated for Evidence of Improvement in Student Achievement</td>
<td>148</td>
<td>2.65</td>
<td>0.79</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accompanied by the Resources Teachers Need</td>
<td>149</td>
<td>2.55</td>
<td>0.711</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planned by Teachers in this School District</td>
<td>149</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>0.683</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The respondents noted that professional development designed or chosen to support school improvement goals occurs “always” (29.3%) or “frequently” (48.0%), and that professional development designed or chosen to support district improvement goals occurs “always” (26.8%) or “frequently” (52.3%). The respondents also indicated that professional development designed or chosen to support the implementation of state or local standards occurs “frequently” (56%).
Interesting themes emerged regarding the manner in which the participating principals described professional development and its characteristics. Survey Question 19
indicated, “What is your definition of professional development?” To this question, the respondents offered answers regarding desirable aspects of professional development, such as desired outcomes, methodology, planning, student effects, and teacher effects and benefit. Fifty of the respondents defined professional development by its desired outcomes. Some of the outcomes were that teachers should learn new content, ideas, instructional and learning tools, knowledge, methods, skills, and strategies. The principals indicated that professional development leads to greater teacher effectiveness, improved expertise or practice, and increased abilities. Principals also answered that professional development leads to improved student achievement, improved student experiences, and will have an impact on students. Other respondents noted that professional development increases student growth, student learning, and student performance. One principal indicated “such (professional) learning should be targeted towards improving student achievement or other professional goals, such as moving a district forward.” Twenty principals responded that professional development should be aligned to stated goals, which are designed to follow a systematic plan. One respondent noted “professional development is any thoughtfully prepared and aligned activity that corresponds to stated goals that improves teacher preparation, teacher and assessment which then, improves student performance.”

Research objective five: To determine the perceived efficacy of professional development activities that occur at their schools. Survey Item 10 indicated, “To what extent do you believe each of the following activities increase teachers’ knowledge of their subject areas or skills?” The participants were asked to rate the extent to which they
perceive that each of the professional development activities increases teachers’ knowledge, using a four-point Likert scale: 1 = none at all, 2 = a little, 3 = a moderate amount, 4 = a great deal. The activities included: taking college courses, participating in conferences, completing requirements for National Board Certification, individual or group research projects, instructional coaching, internships, involvement in teacher study groups, mentoring, observing other teachers’ classes, participating in online courses/modules, participating in a network of teachers formed for professional development, participating on teacher committees or task forces, using teacher resource centers and engaging in workshops. The overall mean score and standard deviation for the various choices were calculated (see Table 4.27). The mean item score was highest for “observations of other teachers’ classes.” In contrast, the lowest scoring item was “use of teacher resource center.”
Table 4.27

*Mean Scores of the Extent to Which Respondents Believe Activities Increase Teachers' Knowledge of Their Subject Area or Instructional Skills*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scale Item</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Range</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Observations of other teachers' classes</td>
<td>148</td>
<td>3.20</td>
<td>0.771</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mentoring</td>
<td>149</td>
<td>3.13</td>
<td>0.765</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instructional coaching</td>
<td>147</td>
<td>3.02</td>
<td>0.806</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation in a network of teachers formed for professional development</td>
<td>146</td>
<td>2.95</td>
<td>0.853</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conferences</td>
<td>149</td>
<td>2.87</td>
<td>0.691</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workshops</td>
<td>148</td>
<td>2.85</td>
<td>0.674</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internships</td>
<td>143</td>
<td>2.78</td>
<td>0.913</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Involvement in teacher study groups</td>
<td>147</td>
<td>2.78</td>
<td>0.826</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College Courses</td>
<td>148</td>
<td>2.68</td>
<td>0.747</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual or group research project</td>
<td>146</td>
<td>2.64</td>
<td>0.769</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation on teacher committee or task force</td>
<td>146</td>
<td>2.55</td>
<td>0.761</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online courses/modules</td>
<td>149</td>
<td>2.54</td>
<td>0.653</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of teacher resource center</td>
<td>145</td>
<td>2.30</td>
<td>0.774</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Completing requirements for National Board Certification</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The survey respondents also described successful professional development in response to an open-ended item. The responses appear to be most effectively categorized as causes of change, effects on classroom or instructional outcomes, and effects on teachers or goal-oriented planning. Nineteen and eight tenths percentage of the principals (n=19) purported that professional development is successful when it causes change.
Their responses suggested that effective professional development is a change agent that exhibits transformational qualities by improving the school culture, increasing buy in, and inspiring or motivating teachers. One principal indicated:

Successful professional development changes/moves a culture. Inspires superstar teachers, motivates backbone teachers and makes mediocre teachers uncomfortable. Making mediocre teachers uncomfortable is important because it will move them to backbone teachers or out the door because NO ONE wants to stay in an uncomfortable place. The problem with many schools and companies is that we work to the weakest link, not the strongest. "We can't do that, Joe won't ever try that!" These are the statements that stop good professional development from being implemented.

In addition, the responses of the principals seemed to suggest that they perceive the efficacy of professional development by the ways that it affects classroom or instructional practices and outcomes. The responses of 36% of the respondents (n=35) reflected a perception that classroom implementation represents an important outcome for successful professional development. Twenty-one percent of the principals (n=20) indicated that professional development leads to increased student learning and achievement. Another 12.5% (n=12) of the principals indicated that professional development, which benefits students in the classroom, reflects the success of the professional learning activities. Nineteen and eight tenths percent of the principals (n=19) suggested that they perceive that learning activities are effective if teachers grow or learn new skills and strategies. The principals also indicated that they viewed professional development as being
successful if it leads to positive effects on teachers. Seven principals noted that they believe professional development is successful when it is meaningful or when the teachers find value in the activity. Other responses indicated that the principals perceived value in professional development that engages teachers, helps teachers, improves collaboration, increases teacher confidence, and supports teachers. Seven percent of the respondents noted that they judge the efficacy of their professional development programs via positive teacher feedback.

Lastly, 15.6% of principals (n=15) indicated that professional development is successful when it is planned for effectiveness and addresses areas of improvement. The respondents indicated perceiving that the efficacy of professional development is increased when it is aligned with student needs (n=1), aligned with teacher needs (n=4), and meets desired outcomes and goals (n=2). One principal wrote “successful professional development is when growth activities are aligned with identified needs, faculty are motivated to participate, and new content, practices, and/or philosophies are embedded into the culture and practice of a school district.”

Two principals added that successful professional development is an ongoing process. Overall, the percentage of principals, who indicated that they perceive that effective planning is a vital component to successful professional development, is relatively small (15.6%) compared to the percentage of principals who indicated that they perceive that the benefits of improved classroom or instructional practices and positive teacher effects are related to effective professional development.
Research objective six: To determine what leadership strategies (if any) do principals use to lead staff professional development. An analysis of the frequency of the responses to the open-ended questions appears to divulge the manner in which the principals perceived their styles and strategies for leading professional development. Fifty-five and six tenths percent of the principals, who responded (n=65), indicated that they perceive their own leadership style as collaborative or shared. These principals offered several methods by which they share leadership. They are (a) allowing teachers to develop plans for their work, (b) empowering the staff with responsibilities, (c) encouraging teacher-led initiatives, (d) fostering a professional learning community, (e) keeping decision-making in-house, and (f) using a leadership team approach. One principal noted “we have in-house experts. Letting them present is often more meaningful than bringing in people from the outside. We are killing people with PD that focuses on mandates and more work.” Another principal shared a similar perception on empowering staff:

I would describe my leadership style with respect to p.d. as transformational. I feel it’s important to empower others by allowing them input regarding p.d. opportunities. I’ve allowed my specials teachers to develop their own p.d. in the past because there have been times when they’ve felt that what was offered was not directly applicable to their content areas…and I agreed. I believe that by offering them this opportunity it elevated their motivation to grow.

Twenty and five tenths percent of the principals, who responded (n=24), indicated that they perceive their leadership styles, as being direct or hands-on. These principals
characterized their leadership as attaining, facilitating, organizing, and planning professional development opportunities. Nine and four tenths percent of the principals, who responded (n=11), indicated that they perceived their role in leading professional development, as being a coach who demonstrates, models, and provides instruction to their teaching staff.

When describing their leadership styles, the respondents also indicated the personal characteristics that they perceive as being vital ingredients to their leadership styles. Eight principals described their personal characteristics as being flexible and supportive. One principal indicated:

I feel I am very supportive of staff and professional development, particularly when a staff member comes to me with a conference or workshop they want to attend so they can grow. If they can show me how it will help them, I almost always approve this and usually even pay for it.

Seven of the principals detailed the manner that they are active, engaged, and involved in leading professional development. Four other principals purported their openness, as an important aspect of their leadership style.

Furthermore, thirty respondents described their leadership styles based upon the method in which they plan and deliver professional development. Nine principals indicated that they plan professional development based on teacher needs. Likewise, six principals offered that goal-oriented professional development is good for the professional growth and the learning of the teachers. Three principals indicated that they choose learning opportunities that are relevant to the teachers, while three other
participating principals mentioned the need for meaningful and well-timed professional development. One respondent summed the perceived focus on planning with:

My leadership style is to develop capacity in my staff to lead professional development, or to encourage an environment where professional learning opportunities are collaborative, job-embedded and moves the district or building forwarded (sic). Professional development should be aligned with district or building goals.

On the other hand, a small percentage of the participating principals voiced dissatisfaction regarding their perceived roles or lack of roles in leading professional development. One respondent wrote that there is no budget for professional development for the school, so the teachers are responsible for finding their own professional growth opportunities. Two other principals indicated that they perceive their district leadership erects barriers to leadership for professional development:

Respondent A: Principals are given the agendas of what will be done. Some of it I clench my teeth to support. Teachers get meeting-exhaustion and there is nothing worse than a poor-speaking ‘expert.’

Respondent B: If I were to be given more chance (sic) to lead professional development opportunities, rather than following district initiatives, I would have teachers lead more. This would promote buy-in as well as promote a shared sense of leadership. We need to empower future leaders to plan and guide professional development and increase cohesiveness of our team.
Another respondent discussed the effect that legislation plays on school leaders as “I would love to survey and talk to teachers about what they feel they need, however, it seems that we are always reacting to new legislation and trying to prep teachers for new initiatives.” These results seem to be suggestive that some of the participating principals desire a more profound role and a more conducive environment for leading professional development.

In addition, the respondents offered their perceptions regarding the pedagogy and practice of leading professional development. Sixty respondents described professional development as an activity, session, study or research, training, or workshop. One hundred percent of the principals reported that their teachers had attended a conference or workshop during the last school year, 97.3% of their teachers had participated in college courses, 95.2% of their teachers had taken an online course or module, and 94.6% of their teachers had been involved in peer mentoring. The results appear to suggest that the principals and teachers prioritize these activities for their professional development.
Very few principals discussed intentional planning of professional development in their schools, as a function of effective practice. Only five principals noted that professional development is a continuous, ongoing practice, while only three indicated that professional development is planned or delivered according to research-based, best practices. Six principals answered that professional development gives an opportunity for collaboration, and eight principals identified a meaningful transfer to use in the classroom, as a component of their definition of professional development. One principal wrote “professional development needs to be current, timely, and thought provoking. It needs to give teachers the tools to go back into the classroom to use immediately.” Moreover, the data seem to illustrate the manner in which principals prioritize leading
professional development and their perception of engaging in professional development as part of their teachers’ regular work. For instance, 47.9% of the respondents believe that professional development is frequently considered part of the teachers’ regular work.

Table 4.29

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Professional Development Considered Part of Teachers' Regular Work</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sometimes</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>30.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequently</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>47.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Always</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>18.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>146</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Mean = 2.82; SD = 0.770.

Furthermore, the data in Table 4.30 and Table 4.31 reflect the manner the principals and their schools allocate resources for professional development. The data gave evidence that “sometimes” (43.6%) or “frequently” (43.6%) professional development is accompanied by the resources that teachers need. For example, 96.6 percent of the respondents indicated they provide substitute teachers to cover teachers’ classes, 92.6% indicated that professional days are built in before the beginning of the students’ school year, and 89.2% noted professional days are built in during the students’ school year. However, only 55.4% responded that they plan common planning time for teachers for professional development.
Research objective seven: To determine if a statistically significant difference exists based on selected demographics (gender, years of administrative experience, typology of school). The researcher conducted the Levene’s Test of Homogeneity of Variance, which revealed the presence of equal variance between the different gender groups \[ F (1, 149) = 2.274, p < .134 \]. A One-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was used to determine if differences existed when comparing the variable pertaining to gender
to principals’ perceptions regarding their roles as leaders of professional development and the strategies they have undertaken to lead professional growth among their teachers. The results indicated that there were no statistically significant differences between the reported gender groups in regards to principals’ perceptions pertaining to their roles as leaders of professional development at the p < .05 level for the three conditions, [F (1, 149) = .782, p < .378].

The application of Levene’s Test of Homogeneity of Variance revealed the presence of equal variance between the different groups based on the number of years served as an administrator [F (2, 148) = 1.410, p < .247]. A One-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was used to determine if differences existed when comparing the variable pertaining to the number of years serving as an administrator to principals’ perceptions regarding their roles as leaders of professional development and the strategies they have undertaken to lead professional growth among their teachers. The results indicated that there were no statistically significant differences among the reported groups based on number of years served as an administrator in regards to principals’ perceptions regarding their roles as leaders of professional development and the strategies they have undertaken to lead professional growth among their teachers at the p < .05 level for the three conditions, [F (2, 148) = 1.224, p < .297].

The application of Levene’s Test of Homogeneity of Variance revealed the presence of equal variance between the different groups based on the typology of the school in which the participants serve [F (1, 149) = .001, p < .978]. A One-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was used to determine if differences existed when comparing the
variable pertaining to the typology of the schools in which the principals were serving to
their perceptions regarding their roles as leaders of professional development and the
strategies they have undertaken to lead professional growth among their teachers. The
results indicated that there were no statistically significant differences among the reported
groups based on the typology of the school in which respondents serve in regards to the
principals’ perceptions pertaining to their roles as leaders of professional development at
the p < .05 level for the three conditions, \[ F (1, 149) = .545, p < .462 \].

**Summary of Findings**

The purpose of this study was to evaluate Ohio public high school principals’
perceptions regarding their roles as leaders of professional development and to identify
the leadership styles and strategies that they have used to lead professional growth among
their teachers. An analysis of the data collected from a survey completed by 152 public
high school principals in the state of Ohio regarding their perceptions of their roles as
leaders of professional development has been presented in this chapter. The demographic
data collected indicate the sample is majority male (78.7%), features a majority of
participants with over eleven years of administrative experience (47.4%), and includes a
large percentage of principals who serve in a rural school district (65.8%). The
participating principals reported perceiving that their primary responsibility was to
organize and initiate professional development.

The largest influences on the principals’ choice for professional development
activities were self (mean = 3.48), district superintendent (mean = 3.43), and staff
development coordinator (mean = 3.28), while the influence of the teachers scored a
reported mean of 3.10. In addition, the data indicate that the participants believe they have a great deal of influence as principals on decisions that determine the content of in-service professional development. The data also point to the frequency at which certain characteristics of professional development occur at their schools. It appears that “frequently” professional development is designed or chosen to support the district’s improvement goals (mean = 3.04) and the school’s improvement goals (mean = 3.03). However, professional development is only “sometimes” planned by teachers in the school district (mean = 2.30).

Interesting data emerged regarding the manner that principals perceive the efficacy of professional development activities. It appears the participants perceive that observations of other teachers’ classes (mean = 3.20) increase teachers’ knowledge of their subject area or instructional skills “a moderate amount.” Mentoring (mean = 3.13) and instructional coaching (mean = 3.02) also earned high marks in perceived efficacy. The data also reflected the manner that principals exhibit support for professional development. The principals reported providing substitutes to cover classes for teachers participating in professional development during school hours. In addition, the principals reported that professional development days were built into the calendar to occur before and during the school year. However, a percentage of the respondents expressed dissatisfaction with their perceived roles as leaders of professional development. Some felt stifled by their district leadership, while others conveyed frustration with legislation that impinged upon their professional development efforts.
The principals’ reported strategies for the implementation of professional development were focused on generating positive effects for teachers, increasing student achievement, intentionally planning professional development, and meeting desired outcomes. A majority of the principals indicated that professional development activities are evaluated immediately after being conducted, with no ongoing evaluation of professional development programming. Teacher surveys appear to be the most popular method for the evaluation of professional development, and evaluation by teacher and administrative teams seems to be the second most popular choice. Moreover, the participating principals indicated that successful professional development causes change, involves goal-oriented planning, results in positive effects on classroom and instructional practices, and results in positive teacher effects.
Chapter Five: Implications and Recommendations

Introduction

School administrators, including principals, are expected to address numerous responsibilities and duties. Many of the most important roles pertain to meeting the professional needs of their colleagues, particularly the teachers, and the educational needs of students. For example, the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) of 2015 has added to those expectations by mandating a strong focus on improving teacher quality and leading evidence-based programs with the intention of increasing student achievement. Likewise, the state of Ohio issued in 2015 updated standards for principal performance that include a charge to “establish and sustain collaborative learning and shared leadership to promote learning and achievement of all students” (Ohio Department of Education, 2015b, p. 3).

The purpose of this study has been to evaluate the perceptions of Ohio public high school principals regarding their roles as leaders of professional development and to identify the strategies they have undertaken to guide such growth among their teachers.

Seven research objectives were developed to evaluate the perceptions of the principals regarding their roles as professional development leaders. The focus of these research objectives was to examine Ohio public high school principals based on their demographic characteristics, to identify the manner in which the decision-making of the principals regarding professional development has been influenced, to determine the level of influence the principals perceive that they have regarding the implementation of professional development, to ascertain the frequency that the characteristic of profession development occur at their schools, to identify the perceived efficacy of professional
development activities that occur at their schools, to reveal the leadership strategies (if any) the principals use to lead staff professional development, and to determine whether statistically significant differences exist based on selected demographics (gender, years of administrative experience, typology of school).

A survey was used to obtain the information needed in order to address the research objectives. In creating the survey instrument, the researcher chose and adapted questionnaire items taken from two previously developed surveys, added questions designed to elicit data regarding the respondents’ personal characteristics and professional context, and then completed the survey construction with the inclusion of five open-ended questions designed to measure the respondents’ leadership characteristics and tendencies. A small cadre of currently practicing high and elementary school principals participated in a pilot study of the survey instrument in order to establish the instrument’s reliability, to reduce measurement error, and to test potential participant comprehension of the items of the survey. Next, a panel of experts, consisting of curriculum directors and school administrators, examined the survey instrument to ensure that its contents offered “an adequate and representative sample” of all the items that might be needed to measure the domain of principal leadership in regards to professional development (Kimberlin & Winterstein, 2008, p. 2279). Finally, the survey instrument was placed in Qualtrics, a web-based program that the researchers use to disseminate surveys to potential participants.

The web-based survey was distributed via email to public high school principals in the state of Ohio, as identified in the Ohio Educational Directory Data produced by the
Ohio Department of Education. Out of a possible 701 invited participants, a sample size of 152 participants emerged. A statistical analysis of the data was performed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences version 24.0 (SPSS v 24.0). The open-ended questions were analyzed by coding the responses that were “analytically similar” and placing them into categories based on the patterns that emerged (Fowler, Jr., 2014, p. 240). These patterns were analyzed to formulate an interpretation of the manner that the principals reported perceiving their roles as leaders of professional development. The addition of open-ended response items produced a more comprehensive and holistic view of the principals’ perceptions of their roles. In other words, the use of the responses to the open-ended questions led to a more robust understanding of the strategies that the principals employ to lead professional development in their schools.

The research design and research instrument have limitations. For example, Brewer and Hunter (2006) have purported the inclination of participants to respond to surveys with consideration that they are being observed. In other words, surveys are susceptible to error because the participants know they are being observed and may not answer truthfully or honestly to avoid potential scrutiny through the survey (Butin, 2010). Moreover, the research design for this study may be considered to be limited by the degree to which it was dominated by quantitative items. It seems fair to criticize this study for not utilizing a more vigorous method (such as interviews) for collecting qualitative data from the participants.
The remaining sections of this chapter summarize the findings of this study, describe the implications of the study, and offer recommendations for future policy considerations and research.

**Summary of Findings**

**Research objective one.** The demographic data collected describes the sample as mainly male (78.7%), featuring a majority of participants with over eleven years of administrative experience (47.4%), and including a large percentage of principals who serve in a rural school district (65.8%). Ninety-nine and seven tenths percent of the respondents serve in the traditional public school setting. The largest group according to school size reported by the participants was those principals serving in schools with enrollments ranging from 250-499 students (n = 60, 40%), while the smallest group of was principals serving in schools with enrollments ranging from 1-249 students (n = 11, 7.3%). The majority of the respondents served in schools with grade levels 9-12 (n = 99, 66.0%), with those serving in schools with grades 7-12 numbering the second largest group (n = 33, 22.0%). The geographic location of the schools in which the participants served ranged across the state of Ohio with principals from Northwestern Ohio comprising the largest group (n = 54, 36%), followed by Northeastern Ohio (n = 38, 25.3%), Central Ohio (n = 22, 14.7%), Southwestern Ohio (n = 19, 12.7%), and Southeastern Ohio (n = 17, 11.3%).

The principals reported perceiving that they and the district were primarily responsible for organizing and initiating professional development. Seventy-two and two tenths percent of the respondents expressed that organizing professional development is a
principal or school district responsibility, and 71.5% of the respondents suggested that principals or the school district should initiate professional development. One hundred six of the principals declared that they plan to or that they have annually initiated at least one professional development activity. Forty-three of the principals responded that they plan to or that they have initiated annually one to five activities, and 22 of the principals indicated that they initiate six to 10 activities per year.

Regarding the evaluation of professional development activities, the principals (56%) reported having “a great deal” of influence on decisions regarding teacher evaluation and professional development. The principals of the majority of the schools (49.0%) indicated that professional development activities were evaluated immediately after they had been conducted. However, the principals reported the absence of ongoing evaluation techniques for professional development. Surveys (71.7% of cases) appeared from the results of this study to be the most popular method for evaluating professional development, with the use of evaluations by teacher and administrative teams being the second most popular choice.

**Research objective two.** The findings suggest that several factors influence principals’ decisions regarding professional development activities for the teachers of their schools. The participants were asked to rate the amount of influence certain factors have on their choice of professional development activities using a four-point Likert scale (with a not applicable choice): 1 = none at all, 2 = a little, 3 = a moderate amount, 4 = a great deal. The factors included college or university partner, curriculum specialists, district superintendent, educational service center, local school board, Ohio Department
The overall mean score and standard deviation for the various factors were calculated. The principals reported that first and foremost they rely on themselves (n = 157, mean = 3.48) to make decisions regarding professional development activities for their teachers. The outcomes also reflected that the district superintendent (n = 156, mean = 3.43), the staff development coordinator (n = 76, mean = 3.28), and curriculum specialists (n = 125, mean = 3.19) each exert “a great deal” of influence on principals’ decision-making in regards to choosing professional development activities. The data pertaining to teachers’ influence on principals’ choice of professional development activities indicate that the teachers have a moderate amount” or “a little” (n = 155, mean = 3.10) influence. Similarly, the data regarding the influence of school improvement plans on principals’ choices of professional development activities for the teachers indicate that the plan (n = 141, mean = 2.90) only appears to hold “a moderate amount” of influence on the principals’ decision-making. Nine and nine-tenths of the respondents indicated the school improvement plan does not at all influence their choice of professional development activities for teachers of their school.

**Research objective three.** The data indicate that the participants perceive they have a great deal of influence as principals on decisions that determine the content of in-service professional development. A majority of the respondents (n = 85, 56.7%) offered that they have a “great deal” of influence on decisions that determine the content of in-service professional development programs for the teachers of their schools. In addition,
34.7% of the respondents (n = 52) reported having “a moderate amount” of influence. In contrast, only three respondents (2.0%) indicated they had no influence at all on determining the content of professional development activities for teachers in their schools. The data also reflected that 46% of the principals perceive that they have “a great deal” of influence in deciding the manner that the school budget will be developed and spent for professional development, while 32% perceive they have “a moderate amount” of influence on budgeting and related expenditures.

**Research objective four.** The participants were asked to rate the frequency in which certain professional development items occur, using a four-point Likert scale: 1 = never, 2 = sometimes, 3 = frequently, 4 = always. The items included: accompanied by the resources teachers need, considered part of teachers’ regular work, designed or chosen to support implementation of state or local standards, designed or chosen to support the district’s improvement goals, designed or chosen to support the school’s improvement goals, evaluated for evidence of improvement in student achievement, and planned by teachers in the school district. The overall mean scores and standard deviations for the various items were calculated. The mean item score was highest for “designed or chosen to support the district’s improvement goals” (mean = 3.04). The mean item score was lowest for “planned by teachers in this school district” (mean = 2.30).

The respondents noted that professional development designed or chosen to support school improvement goals occurs “always” (29.3%) or “frequently” (48.0%), and professional development designed or chosen to support district improvement goals
occurs “always” (26.8%) or “frequently” (52.3%). The respondents also indicated that professional development designed or chosen to support implementation of state or local standards occurs “frequently” (56%).

The respondents offered answers to open-ended response questions regarding desirable aspects of professional development, such as desired outcomes, methodology, planning, student effects, and teacher effects and benefit. Fifty of the respondents defined professional development by its desired outcomes. Some of the outcomes were that teachers should learn new content, ideas, instructional and learning tools, knowledge, methods, skills, and strategies. The principals indicated that professional development leads to greater teacher effectiveness, improved expertise or practice, and increased abilities. Principals also answered that professional development will nurture improved student achievement and improved student experiences, and will have an overall influence on the students. Other respondents noted that professional development increases student growth, student learning, and student performance.

**Research objective five.** The participants were asked to rate the extent to which they believe each of selected professional development activities increases teachers’ knowledge, using a four-point Likert scale: 1 = none at all, 2 = a little, 3 = a moderate amount, 4 = a great deal. The activities included college courses, conferences, completing requirements for National Board Certification, individual or group research project, instructional coaching, internships, involvement in teacher study groups, mentoring, observations of other teachers’ classes, online courses/modules, participation in a network of teachers formed for professional development, participation on a teacher
committee or task force, use of teacher resource center, and workshops. The overall mean scores and standard deviations for the various choices were calculated. The mean item score was highest for “observations of other teachers’ classes” (mean = 3.20). In contrast, the lowest scoring item was “use of teacher resource center” (mean = 2.30).

The survey respondents also described successful professional development in response to an open-ended item. The responses could be categorized as: (a) causes of change; (b) effects on classroom or instructional outcomes; and (c) effects on teachers or goal-oriented planning. Nineteen and eight tenths of the principals (n=19) purported that professional development is successful when it causes change. Their responses suggested that effective professional development is a change agent that exhibits transformational qualities by improving the school culture, increasing buy in, and inspiring or motivating teachers.

In addition, the responses of the principals seemed to suggest that they perceive the efficacy of professional development by the ways that it affects classroom or instructional practices and outcomes. The responses of 36% of the respondents (n=35) reflected a perception that classroom implementation is a key measurement of successful professional development. Twenty-one percent of the principals (n=20) indicated that professional development leads to increased student learning and achievement. Another 12.5% (n=12) of the principals indicated that professional development, which benefits students in the classroom, also contributes to the success of the professional learning activities. Nineteen and eight tenths percent of the principals (n=19) suggested that they perceive that learning activities are effective if teachers grow or learn new skills and
strategies. The participating principals also indicated that they viewed professional
development as being successful if it leads to positive effects on teachers. Seven
principals noted that they believe professional development is successful when it is
meaningful or when the teachers find value in the activity. Other responses indicated that
the principals perceive value in professional development that engages teachers, helps
teachers, improves collaboration, increases teacher confidence, and supports teachers.
Seven percent of the respondents noted that they judge the efficacy of their professional
development programs via positive teacher feedback.

Lastly, 15.6% of principals (n=15) indicated that professional development is
successful when it is planned for effectiveness and addresses areas of improvement. The
respondents indicated perceiving that the efficacy of professional development is
increased when it is aligned with student needs (n=1), aligned with teacher needs (n=4),
and meets desired outcomes and goals (n=2).

Research objective six. An analysis of the frequency of responses to the related
questions appears to divulge the manner in which the principals perceive their leadership
styles and strategies for leading professional development. For example, 55.6% of the
principals, who responded (n=65), indicated that they perceive their own leadership style
as collaborative or shared. These principals offered several methods by which they share
leadership. They are (a) allowing teachers to develop plans for their work, (b)
empowering the staff with responsibilities, (c) encouraging teacher-led initiatives, (d)
fostering a professional learning community, (e) keeping decision-making in-house, and
(f) using a leadership team approach.
Twenty and five tenths percent of the principals, who responded (n=24), indicated that they perceive their leadership style, as being direct or hands-on. These principals characterized their leadership as attaining, facilitating, organizing, and planning professional development opportunities. Nine and four tenths of the principals, who responded (n=11), indicated that they perceived their role in leading professional development, as being a coach who demonstrates, models, and provides instruction to their teaching staff.

Furthermore, 30 respondents described their leadership styles based upon the method in which they plan and deliver professional development. Nine principals indicated that they plan professional development based on teacher needs. Six principals offered that goal-oriented professional development is good for the professional growth and learning of the teachers. Three principals indicated that they choose learning opportunities that are relevant to the teachers, while three other participating principals mentioned the need for meaningful and well-timed professional development.

A small number of the participants voiced dissatisfaction regarding their perceived roles or lack of roles in leading professional development. One respondent wrote that there is no budget for professional development for the school, so the teachers are responsible for finding their own professional growth opportunities. Two other principals indicated that they perceive their district leadership erects barriers to leadership for professional development.

The data also show the manner that principals exhibit support for professional development. The data gave evidence that “sometimes” (43.6%) or “frequently” (43.6%)
professional development is accompanied by the resources teachers need. For example, 96.6 percent of the respondents indicate they provide substitute teachers to cover teachers’ classes, 92.6% say professional days are built in before the beginning of the students’ school year, and 89.2% note professional days are built in during the students’ school year. However, only 55.4% responded that they plan common planning time for teachers for professional development. Moreover, few principals discussed intentional planning of professional development in their schools, as a function of effective practice. Only five principals noted that professional development is a continuous, ongoing practice, while only three indicated professional development is planned or delivered according to research-based, best practices.

**Research objective seven.** The researcher conducted the Levene’s Test of Homogeneity of Variance, which revealed the presence of equal variance between the different gender groups \[ F_{(1, 149)} = 2.274, p < .134 \]. A One-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) indicated that there were no statistically significant differences between the reported gender groups in regards to principals’ perceptions pertaining to their roles as leaders of professional development at the \( p < .05 \) level for the three conditions, \[ F_{(1, 149)} = .782, p < .378 \].

The Levene’s Test of Homogeneity of Variance revealed the presence of equal variance between the different groups based on the number of years served as an administrator \[ F_{(2, 148)} = 1.410, p < .247 \]. A One-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) determined that there were no statistically significant differences among the reported groups based on number of years served as an administrator in regards to principals’
perceptions regarding their roles as leaders of professional development and the strategies they have undertaken to lead professional growth among their teachers at the p < .05 level for the three conditions, [F (2, 148) = 1.224, p < .297].

The Levene’s Test of Homogeneity of Variance revealed the presence of equal variance between the different groups based on the typology of the school in which the participants serve [F (1, 149) = .001, p < .978]. A One-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) revealed that there were no statistically significant differences among the reported groups based on the typology of the school in which respondents serve in regards to principals’ perceptions pertaining to their roles as leaders of professional development at the p < .05 level for the three conditions, [F (1, 149) = .545, p < .462].

Implications

The overall findings of this study clearly indicate that Ohio public high school principals perceive professional development as a vehicle to improve staff effectiveness. One principal from Northeast Ohio described professional development as “any thoughtfully prepared and aligned activity that corresponds to stated goals that improves teacher preparation, teacher and assessment which then, improves student performance.” The principals noted that teachers should learn new content, ideas, knowledge, methods, skills, strategies, and tools as a result of participation in professional development, and that professional development leads to increased abilities, improved expertise and practice, and greater teacher effectiveness. When asked about the effective characteristics of professional development, 19.8% of principals indicated that learning activities are effective if teachers grow or learn new skills or strategies. This finding is consistent with
the research regarding the efficacy of professional development. Effective professional development is planned with a focus on improving teachers’ skills and knowledge in their academic content areas (Birman et al., 2000; Diaz-Magglioli, 2004; DuFour, 1991; Lieberman & Miller, 2014; Loucks-Horsley et al., 1987; Murray, 2013; Tallerico, 2005). Moreover, effective professional development is connected to teachers’ daily practices (Birman et al., 2000; Corcoran, 1995; Darling-Hammond & McLaughlin, 1995; DuFour, 1991; Murray, 2013; Zepeda, 2012). Rather than learning abstract concepts in an esoteric context, effective professional development allows teachers to tackle relevant concerns or concepts in their classroom settings (Raphael et al., 2014). The reported perceptions of the Ohio principals appeared to complement this line of reasoning. Implementation of new learning in the classroom was seen as a key outcome of effective professional development by 36% of the respondents. Eight of the participating principals identified a meaningful transfer of professional development knowledge and skills to classroom use, as reflecting successful professional development, and seven of the principals noted that they believe professional development is successful when it is meaningful and when the teachers find value in the activity.

Professional development, which has been implemented purposefully with a vision for school improvement, is considered to be an effective practice (Birman et al., 2000; Diaz-Magglioli, 2004; DuFour, 1991; Guskey, 2000; Loucks-Horsley et al., 1987; Murray, 2013; Tallerico, 2005). Fielding and Schalock define professional development as, “the deliberate effort to alter the professional practices, beliefs and understanding of school personnel toward an articulated end” (as cited in DuFour, 1991, p. 10). However,
the results of this study reflect that 15.6% of principals (n=15) indicated that professional development is successful when it has been organized to achieve school improvement. Only a small number of respondents identified alignment with student needs (n=1), alignment with teacher needs (n=4), and meeting desired outcomes and goals (n=2), as being part of effective professional development practice. In fact, the percentage of participating principals, who reported perceiving that effective planning as being a vital component of successful professional development, seemed proportionately small (15.6%), particularly when compared to their perceptions of the importance of achieving improved classroom and instructional practices and positive teacher effects. A minority of the responding principals discussed intentional planning of professional development in their schools as a function of effective practice. Only five principals noted that professional development is a continuous, ongoing practice, while only three indicated professional development is planned or delivered according to research-based best practices.

A number of the principals in this study reported valuing professional development practices, which are linked to increased student achievement. In response to an open-ended question regarding the efficacy of practice, 32% of principals (n=32) responded that classroom outcomes, including a better classroom experience, improved classroom instruction for students, and increased student learning and achievement, are related to effective professional development. These principals responded that effective professional development will lead to improved student achievement and student experiences, and will make a positive impact on students. When asked if professional
development is evaluated for evidence of improvement in student achievement, 45.9% of respondents indicated they “frequently” use student achievement data when evaluating professional development activities. Similarly, the research suggests professional development should be goal-oriented with a focus on student learning (DuFour, 1994; Guskey, 2000; Reeves, 2012). Dagen and Bean (2014) purport that professional development should “increase educators’ knowledge about content and pedagogy and enable them to use that knowledge to improve classroom and school practices that improve student learning” (p. 44). In this study, fifty respondents defined successful professional development by its desired outcomes, including increased student achievement. One principal indicated “such (professional) learning should be targeted towards improving student achievement or other professional goals, such as moving a district forward.”

However, the outcomes, which emerged from this study, suggest that while some principals frame effective professional development in terms of increased student achievement and utilize achievement data to evaluate success, the larger majority of principals do not. When asked in the open-ended question regarding the manner that professional development is evaluated at their school, student performance data was only mentioned by four out of the 113 respondents (3.5%). These mixed results indicate that setting student achievement goals and using student achievement data for the evaluation of professional development represents a potential area for the developmental growth of the respondents of this study.
Another key aspect that emerged from this study was the relevance of evaluation to successful professional development. For example, leaders, such as principals, reportedly need to know about teachers’ attitudes, beliefs, and feelings toward their learning, the content of their learning, and the implementation of learning programs (Guskey, 2000; Loucks-Horsley et al., 1987). For this reason, systematic evaluation of organizational goals and intended outcomes typically need to be an ongoing process, both within a given professional development cycle and across multiple professional development cycles (DuFour, 1991; Guskey, 2000; Loucks-Horsley et al., 1987). When asked the manner in which professional development activities are evaluated, 49% of the respondents indicated that professional development activities are evaluated after each activity is completed. However, 14.6% responded that professional development is seldom or if ever evaluated. When asked about the method of evaluation, 77% indicated either a collaborative effort is used or feedback is elicited from teachers via a collaborative team, interviews, surveys, and the like. Yet, only 35.1% of the respondents indicated that professional development is evaluated in an ongoing manner throughout the school year or the program itself. These results would seem to indicate that while professional development activities are often evaluated immediately after the training, the larger majority (64.9%) of participating principals do not evaluate professional development in a comprehensive, ongoing manner. Furthermore, student performance was only mentioned in the responses to the open ended questions by four out of the 113 respondents (3.5%) as being a measure of effective professional development, and for
that matter 23% of the respondents (n=26) indicated they do not evaluate professional development at their schools.

An implication that emerged from the data analysis and research regarding effective professional development was the perceptions of the principals regarding the factors that inhibit their ability to lead their teachers in professional growth. A finding from a 2014 study was that Turkish administrators feel they cannot find time to plan professional development that is adequate for teachers. This hurdle reportedly stems from the Turkish administrators being inundated with managerial roles such as student discipline and budget management and leadership roles like evaluating and mentoring teachers, much in the same manner as experienced by Ohio principals (Balyer, 2014).

More specifically, principals are expected to assume multiple roles and responsibilities, including being building managers, disciplinarians, instructional leaders, public relations directors, and visionary leaders (Copland, 2001; Keith, 2008; Lynch, 2012; Shoho & Barnett, 2010; Usdan et al., 2000). With so many responsibilities and duties, the impediments to providing leadership for professional development, become evident and perhaps its provision could be viewed as an unattainable goal (Blase & Blase, 1999b; Bredeson, 2000; Cranston, 2009; DuFour, 1991; Firestone & Mangin, 2014). Some respondents from this study shared similar perceptions, including this response on an open-ended question that “I would love to survey and talk to teachers about what they feel they need, however, it seems that we are always reacting to new legislation and trying to prep teachers for new initiatives.” In summary, finding time and enjoying the
needed support to lead professional development appears to be a difficult responsibility in the schools of some of the principals who participated in this study.

The leadership strategies principals use to lead staff professional development emerged as a major aspect of this study. The literature suggests the need for active, engaged principals who will take a strong role in leading and facilitating professional development (Bradley, 2014; Bredeson, 2000; Diaz-Maggioli, 2004; DuFour, 1991; Firestone & Mangin, 2014; Guskey, 2000; Loucks-Horsley et al., 1987; Reeves, 2012; Zepeda, 2012). Principals are expected to create structures and opportunities for teachers to grow and to learn (Dvir et al., 2002; Leithwood, 1992; Reutzel & Clark, 2014). By the same token, 72.2% of the respondents in this study indicated that organizing professional development is a principal and school district responsibility, and 71.5% of the respondents suggested that principals and the school districts should initiate professional development. One hundred six principals declared that they plan and then initiate at least one professional development activity annually. In addition, 20.5% of the principals, who responded (n=24), reported that their leadership styles are direct and hands-on. These principals characterized their leadership of professional development as attaining, facilitating, organizing, and planning developmental opportunities. In summary, the data from this study appear to indicate that the participating principals perceive facilitating, initiating, and planning professional development as being a role of the principal.

As facilitators and planners of professional development, the respondents in this study reported being supportive of and initiating needed budgetary and scheduling matters in order to facilitate professional development opportunities in their buildings.
For example, 96.6% of the respondents (n=144) indicated that they provide substitute teachers to cover teachers’ classes so that those teachers can participate in professional development activities. Professional development also necessitates attention to scheduling, as 92.6% of the respondents (n=137) indicated professional development days were built into the calendar before the beginning of the students’ school year, and 89.2% of the respondents (n=132) indicated that professional development days were scheduled during the students’ school year. Research suggests that principals need to appropriate budgetary funds and resources for professional development (Bredeson, 2000; Diaz-Magglioli, 2004; Firestone & Mangin, 2014). Such principals typically approve travel to workshops and conferences, grant release time by allocating personal professional days, provide access to consultants and coaching, and purchase instructional technologies and resources (Bradley, 2014; Bredeson, 2000; Diaz-Magglioli, 2004; Loucks-Horsley et al., 1987). Every principal, who participated in this study, reported that their teachers had attended a conference or workshop during the last school year, 97.3% indicated that their teachers had participated in college courses, 95.2% indicated that their teachers had taken an online course or module, and 94.6% reported their teachers had been involved in peer mentoring. These outcomes appear to indicate that the principals in this study support professional development through budgetary and managerial decision-making.

The leadership style of principals reportedly plays a major role in the efficacy of professional development programs and activities. Effective principals create a school climate that is based on equality and democracy and that unites teachers under shared
goals and objectives that are meaningful and desirable (Blase & Blase, 1999b; Phipps et al., 2012; Sergiovanni, 1990; Shatzer et al., 2014). The principals develop teachers into leaders by empowering them with a voice in their school’s vision, goals, and operations, and by encouraging the teachers to embrace leadership roles and opportunities (Blase & Blase, 1999b; Onorato, 2012; Reutzel & Clark, 2014). In short, effective leaders refrain from top-down leadership strategies and give their teachers a voice in the decision-making process and opportunities to lead (Bredeson, 2000). When asked about their leadership styles, 55.6% of the responding principals (n=65) reported that they perceive their own leadership style as collaborative and shared. These collaborative leaders offered several methods by which they share leadership. The reported methods include (a) allowing teachers to develop and lead activities, (b) empowering the staff with a voice in decision-making, (c) forming leadership teams for collaboration and shared leadership, keeping professional learning in-house, and (d) promoting professional learning communities that encourage collaboration and staff engagement. The respondents also mentioned instructional leadership, servant leadership, and transformational leadership, as being effective styles. In a complementary manner, several of the respondents indicated that they perceive value in professional development that engages teachers, helps teachers, improves collaboration, increases teacher confidence, and supports teachers. These results appear to suggest that employing a collaborative leadership model may lead to effective professional development.

Effective leaders also reportedly support teachers as learners by coaching them in their classrooms, exercising patience with them throughout the learning process, giving
critical feedback and constructive criticism, and modeling best practices and expected behaviors (Loucks-Horsley et al., 1987; Sparks, 1983). Effective leaders are adept at talking and listening to teachers about teaching and learning, about the purpose of teacher professional development, and about the expectations for teachers to apply new knowledge and skills (Bredeson, 2000; Firestone & Mangin, 2014; Guskey, 2000). When asked to describe their leadership, 9.4% of the principals who responded (n=11) reported perceiving their leadership role as a coach who demonstrates, models, and provides instruction to their teaching staff. These principals measure successful leadership by inspiring or motivating teachers through hands-on, engaged leadership. For that matter, effective principals can use interpersonal skills to convince teachers to engage in professional growth and change (Bredeson, 2000; DuFour, 1991; Loucks-Horsley et al., 1987).

**Recommendations**

Several characteristics for successful professional development have emerged from this study. For example, successful professional development is deliberately planned, as an ongoing program designed to encourage collaboration, improve teacher practice, and increase student achievement. Effective leaders utilize collaborative, transformational leadership practices to build a shared vision for success that empowers teachers to be leaders and sets mutually agreed upon goals for school and district improvement. However, the results of this study also reveal areas of concern and opportunities for growth for current practitioners and for policy makers. Additionally, the
results of this study and the manner that it was conducted may stimulate implications for future research.

**Practitioners and policy makers.** The literature regarding effective professional development clearly advocates for learning that is part of an ongoing, intentionally planned and consistently evaluated program (Diaz-Magglioli, 2004; DuFour, 1991; Guskey, 2000; Zepeda, 2012). However, the results of this study indicate that few of the participating principals intentionally plan ongoing professional development in their schools. For example, only five of the participating principals offered that professional development is a continuous, ongoing practice in their schools. Three of the participating principals indicated that professional development in their schools is planned or delivered according to research-based best practices. Without ongoing implementation and evaluation however, professional learning may unfortunately become disjointed, and teachers may not have an opportunity to practice new knowledge and skills in their classrooms and particularly to reflect on their current practices. Teachers need opportunities to try new practices, to reflect on and to discuss those practices collegially, and then to implement them effectively (Loucks-Horsley et al., 1987). For that matter, teachers may weary from being inculcated with what they perceive as the newest fad in education when professional learning is offered in a haphazard manner. Therefore, current school leaders may benefit from taking a more comprehensive view regarding the manner that they plan their professional development in order to align it with a shared vision based on clearly defined outcomes that can be evaluated over time. In this manner, teachers will be afforded more time to learn, more time to practice, and potentially more
feedback and coaching from peers and administrators. Learning opportunities then will be grounded in a classroom context. In turn, teachers may likely witness increased growth from a clearly articulated vision and professional development that is planned to meet the goals derived from that vision.

In addition, principals may benefit from leading a collaborative process that uses data to establish a culture of continuous improvement, to designate individual accountability for collective goals, and to inform professional development practices (Bredeson, 2000; Cranston, 2009; Loucks-Horsley et al., 1987). Effective data analysis is aligned with a school’s vision, establishing clear goals linked to student achievement and well-defined strategies for improvement (DuFour, 1991; Guskey, 2000). While nearly one-half (49%) of the participating principals in this study indicated that professional development activities are evaluated after each activity is completed, only 35.1% indicated that the activities are evaluated in an ongoing manner throughout the year or over the course of a professional development program. In fact, 14.6% responded that professional development is seldom or if ever evaluated. For that matter, successful professional growth necessitates that principals, as the instructional leaders of schools, know about teachers’ attitudes, beliefs, and feelings toward their learning, the content of their learning, and the implementation of the program (Guskey, 2000; Loucks-Horsley et al, 1987). If professional development is not evaluated, principals would be “hard pressed” to know for certain if an activity is effective. Ineffective professional development programs could easily lead to teacher alienation and dissatisfaction, waste school funding, and squander valuable time for both administrators and teachers.
Moreover, principals, by failing to evaluate professional development practices, unwittingly may send a message to teachers that professional learning is not valuable.

Principals may also benefit by involving teachers in the planning and execution of professional development activities in their schools. When asked about their leadership styles, 55.6% of the responding principals reported that they perceive their own leadership styles as being collaborative or shared. However, the mean item score was lowest for professional development planned by teachers. The participants only “sometimes” engage teachers in professional development planning (mean = 2.30). Moreover, the numbers pertaining to teachers’ influence on principals’ choice of professional development activities indicate that teachers only influence principals’ choices “a moderate amount” (40.6%) or “a little” (22.6%). While planning professional development to meet district or school improvement goals may indirectly lead to teacher improvement, collaborating with teachers to determine professional development that is meaningful and relevant to teachers and their practice is considered an effective practice (Birman et al., 2000; Corcoran, 1995; Darling-Hammond & McLaughlin, 1995; DuFour, 1991; Murray, 2013; Zepeda, 2012).

District leadership and policy makers may also benefit from recognizing that principals need support with professional development, as they work under a myriad of roles and responsibilities. Several principals, who responded to this study, voiced dissatisfaction with the conditions under which they attempted to provide leadership for professional development in their schools. These principals decried the context under which they are asked to meet their responsibilities.
Respondent: “We are killing people with PD that focuses on mandates and more work.”

Respondent: “Principals are given the agendas of what will be done. Some of it I clench my teeth to support.”

Respondent: “Since I have no budget for PD teachers find their own.”

Respondent: “Until this year, I was a passive participant. This year, I had to lead a session of the professional development.”

Respondent: “If I were to be given more chance to lead professional development opportunities, rather than following district directives, I would have teachers lead more.”

These principals expressed their reactions with powerful, loaded words such as “clench my teeth,” “focus on mandates,” and “killing people,” that clearly appear to reflect frustration. This type of frustration can and likely will influence the efficacy of the work of the principals, their motivation to work, and their commitment to their work.

Principals, who perceive a lack of support from their district-level leaders, may suffer from” burn-out” under weighty expectations, and then may eventually exit the profession. These types of repercussions not only can hurt an individual principal, but also can damage the students and teachers in their school buildings and districts. Thus, district leaders and policy makers may benefit by seeking more collaboration with building principals, giving them voice in the decision-making process, and empowering them to lead their buildings. District leaders may benefit by supporting the principals financially through budgeting funds that allow them to lead professional development in their
schools. Moreover, the district leadership may experience a benefit by facilitating professional learning experiences for their principals in order that they can grow and mature as leaders. Principals are constantly bombarded by new legislation, mandates, and local initiatives, and in turn their own professional development can easily suffer from a lack of attention, funding, opportunity, and time. These concerns should be addressed in order to offer principals the support that they need to be effective leaders.

**Future research.** This study could be replicated using middle school and elementary school principals to investigate the manner in which they perceive their roles as leaders of professional development. Future studies could explore the manner that the principals exercise their roles and responsibilities as leaders of professional development. Middle school and elementary school principals possibly face different challenges with the provision of professional development for their teachers when compared to high school principals. For this reason, these principals may require their own distinct, unique styles and measures when leading professional development. Potential future studies could also compare the perceptions of high school principals, middle school principals, and elementary principals. For that matter, the researcher of this study identified no existing literature in which professional development at different grade spans had been examined, the outcome of which suggests the need for further research and investigation.

Research also could be conducted to study if the number of principals in a school building makes a difference on the practice of leading professional development. Principals have many roles and responsibilities. As such, they need to prioritize their time and efforts. An investigation of the manner in which administrative school teams, with a
lead principal and assistant principals, work together to address their responsibilities, particularly as they pertain to professional development, might produce useful results. With more principals in a building, they may have differing priorities than a single principal in a school building. A study could be conducted to discover the manner in which the principals in buildings with multiple principals rate the importance of delivering professional development and perceive their roles as leaders of professional development in comparison to a single principal in a school building.

This study could also be adapted to determine if a principal’s preparation program makes a difference in the manner in which principals perceive their roles as leaders of professional development. In Ohio, principals are expected to address five standards for effective practice. Within those five standards are multitudinous roles and responsibilities. Leading professional development could easily get “lost in the shuffle.” Thus, it might be useful to learn the extent to which preparation programs influence the perceptions of principals regarding their roles as leaders of professional development. This question could be answered via survey, but it could also be researched in a qualitative study, which would include interviews.

Further, this study could be replicated in another state, or across multiple states to investigate the perceptions regarding the provision of leadership for professional development that principals exercise in other states compared to principals in Ohio. The United States Constitution provides to the states, through the Tenth Amendment, the power to regulate education. As such, each state has the power to use its own distinct standards for its principals and educators. For this reason, an examination of the
differences in perceptions and practices among principals in different states and regions of the country could lead to useful information. A study of this type could extend to a review of the standards in each state or region as well as the manner in which principal preparation programs influence principal behavior in regard to their roles as professional development leaders.

Lastly, this study could be replicated as a qualitative study. There are limitations to conducting a survey to collect data on perceptions. For example, a researcher cannot ask follow-up questions in a survey format. Therefore, it may be beneficial to conduct this study through a qualitative lens. A comprehensive case study might provide additional insight into the motivations and decision-making processes that principals use when prioritizing their job functions. The results of this survey-based study were bolstered by including five open-ended questions, the answers to which provided limited qualitative outcomes. However, the use of interviews and other qualitative measures could lead to even more robust findings.
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Appendix A: No Child Left Behind Section 9101

Section 9101 Part A of the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) offers various definitions as they relate to the Title IX general provisions originated in the Elementary and Secondary Education Act and reauthorized by NCLB. The following definition represents the U.S. Department of Education’s definition of professional development.

34) PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT- The term “professional development” (A) includes activities that —

(i) improve and increase teachers' knowledge of the academic subjects the teachers teach, and enable teachers to become highly qualified;

(ii) are an integral part of broad schoolwide and districtwide educational improvement plans;

(iii) give teachers, principals, and administrators the knowledge and skills to provide students with the opportunity to meet challenging State academic content standards and student academic achievement standards;

(iv) improve classroom management skills;

(v)(I) are high quality, sustained, intensive, and classroom-focused in order to have a positive and lasting impact on classroom instruction and the teacher's performance in the classroom; and

(II) are not 1-day or short-term workshops or conferences;

(vi) support the recruiting, hiring, and training of highly qualified teachers, including teachers who became highly qualified through State and local alternative routes to certification;

(vii) advance teacher understanding of effective instructional strategies that are —

(I) based on scientifically based research (except that this subclause shall not apply to activities carried out under part D of title II); and

(II) strategies for improving student academic achievement or substantially increasing the knowledge and teaching skills of teachers; and

(viii) are aligned with and directly related to —

(I) State academic content standards, student academic achievement standards, and assessments; and
(II) the curricula and programs tied to the standards described in subclause (I) except that this subclause shall not apply to activities described in clauses (ii) and (iii) of section 2123(3)(B);

(ix) are developed with extensive participation of teachers, principals, parents, and administrators of schools to be served under this Act;

(x) are designed to give teachers of limited English proficient children, and other teachers and instructional staff, the knowledge and skills to provide instruction and appropriate language and academic support services to those children, including the appropriate use of curricula and assessments;

(xi) to the extent appropriate, provide training for teachers and principals in the use of technology so that technology and technology applications are effectively used in the classroom to improve teaching and learning in the curricula and core academic subjects in which the teachers teach;

(xii) as a whole, are regularly evaluated for their impact on increased teacher effectiveness and improved student academic achievement, with the findings of the evaluations used to improve the quality of professional development;

(xiii) provide instruction in methods of teaching children with special needs;

(xiv) include instruction in the use of data and assessments to inform and instruct classroom practice; and

(xv) include instruction in ways that teachers, principals, pupil services personnel, and school administrators may work more effectively with parents; and

(B) may include activities that —

(i) involve the forming of partnerships with institutions of higher education to establish school-based teacher training programs that provide prospective teachers and beginning teachers with an opportunity to work under the guidance of experienced teachers and college faculty;

(ii) create programs to enable paraprofessionals (assisting teachers employed by a local educational agency receiving assistance under part A of title I) to obtain the education necessary for those paraprofessionals to become certified and licensed teachers; and

(iii) provide follow-up training to teachers who have participated in activities described in subparagraph (A) or another clause
of this subparagraph that are designed to ensure that the knowledge and skills learned by the teachers are implemented in the classroom.
Appendix B: Every Student Succeeds Act Section 8002

Section 8002 of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) offers various definitions as they relate to the Title IX general provisions originated in the Elementary and Secondary Education Act reauthorized by the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB) and again reauthorized by ESSA in 2015. The following definition represents the U.S. Department of Education’s definition of professional development.

“(42) PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT.—The term ‘professional development’ means activities that—

(A) are an integral part of school and local educational agency strategies for providing educators (including teachers, principals, other school leaders, specialized instructional support personnel, paraprofessionals, and, as applicable, early childhood educators) with the knowledge and skills necessary to enable students to succeed in a well-rounded education and to meet the challenging State academic standards; and

(B) are sustained (not stand-alone, 1-day, or short term workshops), intensive, collaborative, job-embedded, data-driven, and classroom-focused, and may include activities that—

(i) improve and increase teachers’—

(I) knowledge of the academic subjects the teachers teach;

(II) understanding of how students learn; and

(III) ability to analyze student work and achievement from multiple sources, including how to adjust instructional strategies, assessments, and materials based on such analysis;

(ii) are an integral part of broad schoolwide and districtwide educational improvement plans;

(iii) allow personalized plans for each educator to address the educator’s specific needs identified in observation or other feedback;

(iv) improve classroom management skills;

(v) support the recruitment, hiring, and training of effective teachers, including teachers who became certified through State and local alternative routes to certification;

(vi) advance teacher understanding of—

(I) effective instructional strategies that are evidence-based; and

(II) strategies for improving student academic achievement or substantially increasing the knowledge and teaching skills of teachers;
“(vii) are aligned with, and directly related to, academic goals of the school or local educational agency;
“(viii) are developed with extensive participation of teachers, principals, other school leaders, parents, representatives of Indian tribes (as applicable), and administrators of schools to be served under this Act;
“(ix) are designed to give teachers of English learners, and other teachers and instructional staff, the knowledge and skills to provide instruction and appropriate language and academic support services to those children, including the appropriate use of curricula and assessments;
“(x) to the extent appropriate, provide training for teachers, principals, and other school leaders in the use of technology (including education about the harms of copyright piracy), so that technology and technology applications are effectively used in the classroom to improve teaching and learning in the curricula and academic subjects in which the teachers teach;
“(xi) as a whole, are regularly evaluated for their impact on increased teacher effectiveness and improved student academic achievement, with the findings of the evaluations used to improve the quality of professional development;
“(xii) are designed to give teachers of children with disabilities or children with developmental delays, and other teachers and instructional staff, the knowledge and skills to provide instruction and academic support services, to those children, including positive behavioral interventions and supports, multi-tier system of supports, and use of accommodations;
“(xiii) include instruction in the use of data and assessments to inform and instruct classroom practice;
“(xiv) include instruction in ways that teachers, principals, other school leaders, specialized instructional support personnel, and school administrators may work more effectively with parents and families;
“(xv) involve the forming of partnerships with institutions of higher education, including, as applicable, Tribal Colleges and Universities as defined in section 316(b) of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1059c(b)), to establish school-based teacher, principal, and other school leader training programs that provide prospective teachers, novice teachers, principals, and other school leaders with an opportunity to work under the guidance of experienced teachers, principals, other school leaders, and faculty of such institutions;
“(xvi) create programs to enable paraprofessionals (assisting teachers employed by a local educational agency receiving assistance under part A of title I) to obtain the education necessary for those paraprofessionals to become certified and licensed teachers;
“(xvii) provide follow-up training to teachers who have participated in activities described in this paragraph that are designed to ensure that the
knowledge and skills learned by the teachers are implemented in the classroom; and
‘‘(xviii) where practicable, provide jointly for school staff and other early childhood education program providers, to address the transition to elementary school, including issues related to school readiness.’’
Appendix C: The Ohio Standards for Principals (Specific to Professional Development)

The Ohio Standards for Principals were developed to set common expectations for leadership, professional conduct, and professional growth for Ohio’s principals. This framework, adopted by the Ohio State Board of Education in fall 2005, defines goals, responsibilities, and roles for Ohio’s principals. The sections of the standards specific to leading professional development can be found below.

Standard 1: Continuous Improvement

- (1.1) Principals facilitate the articulation and realization of a shared vision of continuous school improvement.
- (1.2) Principals lead the process of setting, monitoring and achieving specific and challenging goals that reflect high expectations for all students and staff.
- (1.3) Principals lead the change process for continuous improvement.
- (1.4) Principals anticipate, monitor and respond to educational developments that affect school issues and environment.

Standard 2: Instruction

- (2.6) Principals support staff in planning and implementing research-based professional development.
  - Principals collaboratively assess the impact of professional development on multiple levels including participant satisfaction and knowledge, organizational impact and changes in student achievement.
  - Principals collaborate with staff to research and design professional development initiatives.
  - Principals ask questions that facilitate the examination of instructional practice.
  - Principals use data to determine if professional development activities strengthen teachers’ instructional skills to enhance student learning.
  - Principals participate in extensive professional development to increase their knowledge and skills.
  - Principals use staff and student data to identify professional development needs.
  - Principals provide ongoing opportunities for teachers to reflect on their practice.
Principals create learning teams in which teachers serve as school leaders in modeling and guiding other teachers to effectively support student learning and achievement.

(2.2) Principals ensure instructional practices are effective and meet the needs of all students.

- Principals analyze and recommend instructional practices that result in improved student performance system-wide.
- Principals lead stakeholders in the process of selecting and adopting school and district improvement initiatives.
- Principals guide staff in the implementation of research based instructional practices.
- Principals empower and facilitate teachers in designing curriculum and addressing instructional and assessment issues.

(2.4) Principals know, understand and share relevant research.

- Principals engage staff in identifying and discussing research and theory that support the academic needs of students.
- Principals serve as a model for effective teaching.

(2.5) Principals understand, encourage and facilitate the effective use of data by staff.

- Principals provide ongoing learning opportunities that facilitate staff to learn how to collect, analyze, interpret and use data on student progress.
- Principals facilitate teachers’ use of assessment data to continually design and adapt instruction based on student needs.

Standard 3: School Operations, Resources, and Learning Environment

(3.3) Principals allocate resources, including technology, to support student and staff learning.

- Principals engage the staff in procuring additional funding targeted to support student and staff learning that result in improved student performance.

(3.4) Principals institute procedures and practices to support staff and students and establish an environment that is conducive to learning.

- Principals analyze, select and communicate institutional policies, procedures and practices that result in improved student performance.
- Principals influence policies and procedures related to instruction at the district level and beyond.

Standard 4: Collaboration

(4.1) Principals promote a collaborative learning culture

- Principals design practices and structures that create and maintain a collaborative learning culture.
Principals collaborate district-wide to make system improvements.
Appendix D: Initial Survey Participation Invitation

Dear colleagues,

My name is Jeff Wise and I am the high school principal at Pandora-Gilboa High School in Putnam County Ohio. I am writing you to ask for your participation in an online survey that is part of my dissertation research at Ohio University. This survey focuses on principals’ perceptions regarding their roles and responsibilities for the professional development of the teachers and other staff members in their schools.

If you agree to participate, please complete and submit your responses to the online survey within two weeks. The survey will take you about 10-15 minutes to complete. Your participation in this study is voluntary, and your responses will be maintained in a completely confidential manner.

If you wish to participate in this study, please follow the link below:

Follow this link to the Survey:
${l://SurveyLink?d=Take the survey}

Or copy and paste the URL below into your internet browser:
${l://SurveyURL}

I greatly appreciate your consideration of my request for you to participate in this study. Your responses would be valuable because they would contribute to the relatively small body of research results regarding principals’ perceptions of their roles as leaders of professional development and for that matter leadership in general.

Thank you for taking the time to consider this request.

Best regards,
Jeff Wise

Follow the link to opt out of future emails:
${l://OptOutLink?d=Click here to unsubscribe}
Appendix E: Second Survey Participation Invitation

Dear Colleagues,

Last week I sent out an invitation to all public high school principals in the state of Ohio to participate in an online survey that is part of my dissertation research at Ohio University. This survey focuses on principals' perceptions regarding their roles and responsibilities for the professional development of the teachers and other staff members in their schools.

As a practicing principal, I understand you are very busy, especially with the fall testing window opening today. However, I would really appreciate your participation because your opinion matters! If you agree to participate, please complete and submit your responses to the online survey within two weeks. The survey will take you about 10 to 15 minutes to complete. Your participation in this study is voluntary, and your responses will be maintained in a completely confidential manner.

If you wish to participate, please follow the link below:

Follow this link to the Survey:
$\{\text{SurveyLink}\text{?d=Take the survey}\}$

Or copy and paste the URL below into your internet browser:
$\{\text{SurveyURL}\}$

Thank you for considering this request. Best of luck to those of you administering exams this week!

Best regards,
Jeff Wise

Follow the link to opt out of future emails:
$\{\text{OptOutLink}\text{?d=Click here to unsubscribe}\}$
Appendix F: Final Survey Participation Invitation

Dear Colleagues,

Over the past two weeks I have sent out an invitation to all public high school principals in the state of Ohio to participate in an online survey that is part of my dissertation research at Ohio University. This survey focuses on principals' perceptions regarding their roles and responsibilities for the professional development of the teachers and other staff members in their schools.

This email represents my final plea for your help. If you agree to participate, please complete and submit your responses to the online survey by the end of the day on Monday, December 19. The survey will take you about 10 to 15 minutes to complete. Your participation in this study is voluntary, and your responses will be maintained in a completely confidential manner.

Thank you for taking time from your busy schedules to consider my request. As a fellow principal, your voice matters to me and to my research, and I highly encourage you to participate in this study.

If you wish to participate, please follow the link below:

Follow this link to the Survey:
${l://SurveyLink?d=Take the survey}

Or copy and paste the URL below into your internet browser:
${l://SurveyURL}

Best wishes for a successful close of school before the break, and Happy Holidays to you and yours!

Sincerely,

Jeff Wise

Follow the link to opt out of future emails:
${l://OptOutLink?d=Click here to unsubscribe}
Appendix G: Survey Instrument

High School Principals' Perceptions of Professional Development

You are being asked to participate in a study. For you to be able to decide whether you want to participate in the study, you would be served to understand the project, as well as the possible risks and benefits in order to make an informed decision. This process is known as informed consent. This form describes the purpose, procedures, possible benefits, and risks. The form also contains an explanation of the manner in which your personal information will be used and protected. Once you have read this form and your questions about the study have hopefully been answered, you will be asked to participate in this study. You may print a copy of this document for your records.

Explanation of Study This study is being done to identify, synthesize, and analyze the perceptions of Ohio public high school principals regarding their roles and responsibilities for the professional development of the teachers and other staff members in their schools. If you agree to participate in the study, you will be asked to complete and submit, within two weeks, a web-based survey. Your participation in the study will last approximately ten (10) to fifteen (15) minutes.

Risks and Discomforts As the focus of the survey pertains to your job duties, you might experience some risks or discomforts by participating. You are encouraged to ignore any question that creates personal or professional discomfort or causes concern regarding reputational risks. You may withdraw from the survey before its final submission.

Benefits The results of this study can be important to the educational community because they can add to the existing relatively small body of research results regarding the perceptions of principals regarding their roles as leaders of professional development and for that matter leadership in general.

Confidentiality and Records Your study information will be kept confidential by collecting data anonymously. Any data related to the survey will be kept on a password-protected computer and on an external hard drive, both of which will only be accessible by the researcher. All data will be coded to maintain your confidentiality. For maximum confidentiality, please clear your browser history and close the browser before leaving the computer.

Contact Information If you have any questions regarding this study, please contact the investigator Jeffrey Wise, 419-384-3225 or wisej@pgrockets.org or the advisor Dr. William Larson, 740-597-1324 or larsonw@ohio.edu. If you have any questions regarding your rights as a research participant, please contact Dr. Chris Hayhow, Director of Research Compliance, Ohio University, (740)593-0664 or hayhow@ohio.edu.

By agreeing to participate in this study, you are agreeing that: you have read this consent form (or it has been read to you) and have been given the opportunity to ask questions and have them answered; you have been informed of potential risks and they have been explained to your satisfaction; you understand Ohio University has no funds set aside for any injuries you might receive as a result of participating in this study; you are 18 years of age or older; your participation in this research is completely voluntary; you may leave the study at any time; if you decide to stop participating in the study, there will be
no penalty to you and you will not lose any benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. Version Date: [11/28/16]

☐ I give my consent by participating in this survey.
☐ I do not give my consent.

Thank you for participating in this survey! Part 1/4: Please respond to the following questions.

1 Who assumes the primary responsibility for organizing teacher professional development at this school?
   ☐ School district
   ☐ Principal or assistant principal
   ☐ Teacher
   ☐ Educational Service Center (ESC)
   ☐ Other ____________________

2 Who assumes the primary responsibility for initiating teacher professional development at this school?
   ☐ School district or ESC
   ☐ Principal or assistant principal
   ☐ Teacher
   ☐ ESC
   ☐ Other ____________________
3 How much influence do the following have on your choice of professional development activities for teachers of this school?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>None at all</th>
<th>A little</th>
<th>A moderate amount</th>
<th>A great deal</th>
<th>N/A</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>District superintendent</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff development coordinator</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ohio Department of Education</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ESC</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local school board</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers' instructional coaches</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers' union</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curriculum specialists</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School site council or parent</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>associations</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College or university partner</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School improvement plan</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4 How often are professional development activities evaluated?
- After each activity
- Ongoing throughout the school year or professional development program
- Annually
- Seldom
- Never

5 In what manner are professional development activities evaluated? (select all that apply)
- Student achievement scores
- Teacher interviews
- Teacher surveys
- Classroom observations
- Teacher and administrator team/committee evaluation
- Feedback from teachers' instructional coaches
- Activities are not evaluated

6 In general, who provides teachers with funding for their professional development activities? (select all that apply)
- The district
- Principal
- Department chair
- Teacher
- Other (e.g. grants) ____________________
Part 2/4: Please respond to the following questions.

7 How much influence do you think you have as a principal on decisions concerning the following activities?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>None at all</th>
<th>A little</th>
<th>A moderate amount</th>
<th>A great deal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Determining the content of in-service professional development programs for teachers of this school</td>
<td>○</td>
<td></td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deciding how your school budget will be spent</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluating teachers of this school</td>
<td>○</td>
<td></td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
8 During the last school year (10 months), did teachers of this school participate in any of the following professional development activities?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Workshops</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College courses</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online courses/modules</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conferences</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internships</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual or group research project</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instructional coaching</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Observations of other teachers' classes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Involvement in teacher study groups</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mentoring</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation in a network of teachers formed for professional development</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of teacher resource center</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation on teacher committee or task force</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Completing requirements for National Board Certification</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
9 How often do the following items related to professional development occur at this school?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Designed or chosen to support the school's improvement goals?</th>
<th>Never</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Frequently</th>
<th>Always</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Designed or chosen to support the district's improvement goals?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Designed or chosen to support implementation of state or local standards?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluated for evidence of improvement in student achievement?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Considered part of teachers' regular work?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planned by teachers in this school district?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accompanied by the resources teachers need (e.g. time and materials) to make changes in the classroom?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
10 To what extent do you believe each of the following activities increase teachers' knowledge of their subject area or instructional skills?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>None at all</th>
<th>A little</th>
<th>A moderate amount</th>
<th>A great deal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Workshops</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College courses</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online courses/modules</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conferences</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internships</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual or group research project</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instructional coaching</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Observations of other teachers' classes</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Involvement in teacher study groups</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mentoring</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation in a network of teachers formed for professional development</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of teacher resource center</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation on teacher committee or task force</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Completing requirements for National Board Certification</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
11 Are the following used to provide teachers in this school with time for professional development during regular contract hours?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Substitute teachers to cover teachers' classes</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Early dismissal or late start for students</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional days built in before the beginning of the students' school year</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional days built in during the students' school year</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional days built in after the students' school year</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Common planning time for teachers for professional development</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Part 3/4: Please respond to the following demographic questions.

12 Gender
☐ Female
☐ Male
☐ Other

13 Number of years serving as an administrator
☐ Less than 1
☐ 1 - 5
☐ 6-10
☐ 11-20
☐ 20+
14 Type of school district in which you serve
☐ urban
☐ suburban
☐ rural

15 Type of school in which you serve
☐ Public school
☐ Community school
☐ Vocational
☐ Alternative
☐ Charter
☐ Other ____________________

16 School size (student enrollment)
☐ 1-249
☐ 250-499
☐ 500-749
☐ 750-999
☐ 1000+

17 Grade levels served
☐ 9-12
☐ 7-12
☐ 10-12
☐ Other ____________________

18 Area of Ohio in which you serve
☐ Northwest
☐ Northeast
☐ Central
☐ Southwest
☐ Southeast
Part 4/4: Please respond to the following four questions if you feel you have time. I know your schedule is extremely busy, but I greatly value your responses to these items and thank you for your time and help! Thank you for participating in this survey!

19 What is your definition of professional development?

20 How would you describe your leadership style pertaining to leading professional development?

21 Excluding the Ohio Teacher Evaluation System (OTES), do you evaluate professional development at your school and how it helps teachers grow? If yes what criteria do you use?

22 How do you define successful professional development?

23 Typically, how many professional development activities do you plan or initiate on a yearly basis?
Appendix H: Schools and Staffing Survey Approval

The following email exchange illustrates that permission is not required to use items from National Center for Education Statistics.

From: O'Rear, Isaiah <Isaiah.ORear@ed.gov>
Date: Fri, Aug 5, 2016 at 2:58 PM
Subject: RE: SASS survey use
To: Jeff Wise <wisej@pgrockets.org>
Cc: "Ho, Amy" <Amy.Ho@ed.gov>

Jeff,

NCES permission is not required to use items from NCES surveys.

Best of luck with your research.

-Isaiah

*Isaiah O'Rear*
Statistician
National Center for Education Statistics
(202) 245-6926
nces.ed.gov

Dear Mr. O'Rear,

My name is Jeff Wise and I am a doctoral candidate at Ohio University as well as a high school principal in Ohio. For my dissertation, I plan to study high school principals' perceptions of professional development using a survey instrument. As such, I am seeking permission to use some of your questionnaire items from the Schools and Staffing Survey Principal Questionnaire from 2011-2012.
Please instruct me on the procedure I will need to undertake to secure your permission to use the questionnaire items and I will gladly work with you to obtain permission.

Thank you in advance for your assistance! I also sent this request to Ms. Amy Ho from your division.

Best regards,

Jeff Wise

Jeffrey T. Wise
Pandora-Gilboa High School Principal
419-384-3225 x305
Appendix I: PBS TeacherLine National Survey of Teacher Professional Development Approval

The following email exchange illustrates that permission was obtained to use items from the PBS TeacherLine National Survey of Teacher Professional Development.

From: Jeff Wise <wisej@pgrockets.org>
Date: Mon, Sep 26, 2016 at 12:47 PM
Subject: Re: PBS TeacherLine National Survey of Teacher Professional Development
To: Kirk Knestis <Kirk@hezel.com>

Thank you, Kirk! I appreciate your help!

On Mon, Sep 26, 2016 at 11:13 AM, Kirk Knestis <Kirk@hezel.com> wrote:
My apologies (again), Jeff. I did get it but it fell below the fold in my inbox and got lost in my to-do pile.

I went digging and that project is old enough that it predates current practices here and the archives aren’t complete. Given that, or perhaps because of how the work was apportioned out to us in the first place, I haven’t been able to find the actual instrument.

Regardless of all that, it’s TOTALLY fine for you to use an instrument derived from what you saw in that report. If you’d simply describe it as “adapted from” or similar language and cite that document, you’re good to go.

I’m sorry I haven’t been of more help on this but BEST WISHES for a successful study!

Best,

Kirk

----------------------------------
On Thu, Sep 8, 2016 at 2:01 PM, Jeff Wise <wisej@pgrockets.org> wrote:
Hi Kirk,

It seems we are in the same boat...my school year has started here and I'm swamped! Anyway, with this email I have attached the 2005-2006 PBSTeacherLine National Survey report that I used to generate survey questions. For my survey, I analyzed this report and used it to generate questions that I could use for my survey. I didn't find a copy of the actual survey instrument Hezel
Associates used, so I extrapolated question items from the report. For your use, I have also attached the items I plan to use that I generated from the published report.

So in essence, I just need permission to use these items I generated from reading your report. If it is possible to see the actual survey instrument Hezel employed and use the items directly, I would appreciate that assistance as well! But if not, I'm happy with the extrapolated items as well.

If you have further questions, don't hesitate to email me or call me. My work phone number is 419-384-3225. I greatly appreciate your willingness to work with me on this project.

Best regards,
Jeff Wise

----------------------------------

On Mon, Aug 22, 2016 at 8:19 AM, Kirk Knestis <Kirk@hezel.com> wrote:
I apologize for being slow getting back to you, Jeff. I have nobody to blame but myself so thanks for the reminder.

The TeacherLine project predates my tenure here at Hezel Associates so, while it may sound a little odd, can you please provide me with the specific version and items that you’d like to use, and an indication of where you got them? So far as I know – and this would be typical practice for any of our for-fee research or evaluation projects – we left dissemination to the client. They also technically own anything that we developed under contract so I need more information re: the provenance of what you specifically need before I can know how to help.

We’ll absolutely do what we can to get you what you require for your study. I just have to figure out what we can say “yes” to.

Thanks in advance,

Kirk

----------------------------------

From: Jeff Wise [mailto:wisej@pgrockets.org]
Sent: Thursday, August 18, 2016 10:53 AM
To: Kirk Knestis <Kirk@hezel.com>
Subject: Re: PBS TeacherLine National Survey of Teacher Professional Development

Hi Kirk,
My name is Jeff Wise and I am a doctoral candidate at Ohio University and a high school principal in Ohio. For my dissertation, I plan to study high school principals' perceptions of professional development using a survey instrument. As such, I am seeking permission to use some of your questionnaire items from your PBS TeacherLine National Survey of Professional Development.

Please instruct me on the procedure I will need to undertake to secure your permission to use the questionnaire items and I will gladly work with you to obtain permission.

Thank you in advance for your assistance!

Best regards,

Jeff Wise

On Thu, Aug 4, 2016 at 4:47 PM, Cheryl Baldwin <Cheryl@hezel.com> wrote:
Hi Jeff,
Thank you for your interest in our work. I have copied our CEO, Kirk Knestis as he would be the one best able to respond. He will reach out to you shortly.

Good luck with your research!

Best regards,

Cheryl

Cheryl Baldwin | Hezel Associates, LLC | 315-422-3512 x 205 | Cheryl@hezel.com

To Whom It May Concern:

My name is Jeff Wise and I am a doctoral candidate at Ohio University as well as a high school principal. For my dissertation, I plan to study high school principals' perceptions of professional development using a survey instrument. As such, I am seeking permission to use some of your questionnaire items from your PBS TeacherLine National Survey of Professional Development.

Please instruct me on the procedure I will need to undertake to secure your permission to use the questionnaire items and I will gladly work with you to obtain permission.
Thank you in advance for your assistance!

Best regards,
Jeff Wise
### Appendix J: Coding Process Sheets

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<td>value-added activity</td>
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| PD methodology | activity | 1, 2, 15, 21, 29, 34, 37, 38, 47, *see 48 -- lists activities, 49, 58, 61, 63, 65, 74, 86, 89, 93, 96, 99, 100, 101 | 23 |
|                | training | 4, 16, 17, 18, 24, 28, 44, 46, 55, 79, 81, 98 | 12 |
|                | session/workshop | 57, 92, 102 | 3 |
|                | task | 72 | 1 |
|                | instruction | 85 | 1 |
|                | learn/learning | 5, 12, 23, 25, 28, 30, 39, 44, 46, 47, 61, 64, 68, 69, 70, 81, 88, 94, 97, 99 | 20 |
|                | study/research | 11, 69 | 2 |
|                | expand thinking | 35 | 1 |
|                | reflect on current practice | 11, 55, 83 | 3 |
|                | education | 50 | 1 |
|                | collaborate | 19, *see 48, 64, 68, 94, 96 | 6 |

| PD support | resources/time/materials | 6, 9, 19, 24, 32, 44, 84 | 7 |
|            | job-embedded | 27 | 1 |

<p>| PD effects | improve | 2, 4, 12, 17, 23, 24, 25, 33, 38, 41, 44, 45, 47, 50, 51, 60, 64, 66, 69, 71, 72, 74, 75, 77, 80, 82, 84, 86, 89, 90, 94 | 31 |
|            | grow/growth | 10, 14, 16, 17, 26, 29, 33, 39, 48, 57, 61, 62, 67, 77, 92, 95, 96, 99, 100 | 19 |
|            | higher level of performance | 13 | 1 |</p>
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<td>leadership styles</td>
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<td>PD characteristics</td>
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<td>allow teachers to choose own</td>
<td>ongoing/over time</td>
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<td>meaningful / well-timed</td>
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<td>PLCs</td>
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<td>consultant</td>
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<td>situational</td>
<td>evaluate/monitor</td>
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<td>plan/organizing/attaining/facilitator</td>
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<td>transformational</td>
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<tr>
<td>pioneer</td>
<td>use evaluations/observations</td>
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<td>academic/instructional leader</td>
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<td>direct, hands-on</td>
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<td>servant leader</td>
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<tr>
<td>discipleship developer</td>
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<td>model/demonstrate/provide/coach</td>
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| | 39, 40, 63, 69, 70, 75, 88, 93, 95 |
| | 53, 82 |
| | 3, 19, 37, 42, 44 |
| | 4, 76 |
| | 4, 19, 23, 33, 46, 49, 57, 74, 77, 79, 81, 87, 90, 92, 96, 102 |
| | 48 |
| | 50 |
| | 49, 91 |
| | 9, 24, 45, 49, 72, 82, 92 |
| | 10, 41, 93 |
| | 51 |
| | 1, 11, 36, 49, 77, 78, 80, 86, 89, 91, 100 |
| | 36, 54, 75, 85 |
| | 12, 84 |
| | 16, 59, 60, 87, 97, 100, 102 |
| | 18, 20, 31, 38, *see 39, 85, 93, 100 |
| | 51 |
| | 2, 50 |
| | 1, 2, 22 |
| | 7, *see 25, 29, 42, 43, 45, 65, 73, 81 |
| | 8, 44, 88 |
| | 19, 21, 30, 33, 50, 98 |
| | 31, 32, 100 |
| | 34 |
| | 46 |
| | 33, 89 |
**Principal dissatisfaction**

27, 64, 69, 82, 92, 99

**Ones to see**

25, 30, 39, 45, 48, 49, 50, 53, 55

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Feedback

- **Surveys**
  - 1, 4, 10, 11, 14, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 28, 34, 38, 39, 41, 53, 61, 65, 71, 74, 76, 77, 85, 86, 87, 89, 90, 91
  - 31
- **Feedback/talk with teachers**
  - 7, 9, 24, 37, 40, 47, 57, 60, 66, 68, 69, 71, 80, 88
  - 14
- **Exit ticket**
  - 59, 68, 91
  - 3

Observation and data

- **Student surveys**
  - 10
  - 1
- **Observations in classrooms / anecdotal**
  - 7, 8, 23, 40, 47, 58, 64, 69, 70, 73, 79, 85
  - 12
- **Work samples**
  - 13
  - 1
- **Student performance data**
  - 16, 66, 79, 86
  - 4

Admin leadership team

- **Administrative meetings**
  - 17, 37, 78
  - 3
- **TBT/BLT/DLT leadership team PLC**
  - 10, 16, 26, 34, 42, 49, 52, 70, 71, 73, 75
  - 11
- **OIP**
  - 26, 42, 59, 63, 73
  - 5
- **Rubric**
  - 10, 87
  - 2

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<td>Benefit students (experience, better instruction, etc.)</td>
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<td>Student learning/achievement</td>
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<tr>
<td>Teacher effects</td>
<td>helps teachers</td>
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<td></td>
<td>teachers engaged</td>
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<td>meaningful/worthwhile, teacher finds value</td>
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<td>models for teachers</td>
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<td>makes mediocre teachers uncomfortable</td>
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<td>teacher reflection</td>
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<td>teachers more confident</td>
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<td>improves collaboration</td>
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<td>PD planning</td>
<td>meets desired outcomes/goals</td>
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<td>planned out for effectiveness/goals, addresses areas of improvement, systematic</td>
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<td>aligned/based on student needs</td>
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<td>Change agent</td>
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<td>changes, improves culture</td>
<td>47, 87, 91, 94</td>
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<td>inspires/motivates teachers, increase buy in</td>
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<td>transformative qualities / makes impact / leads to change</td>
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<td>it depends</td>
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<td>on tuesdays</td>
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<td>principal</td>
<td>dissatisfaction</td>
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## Appendix K: Ohio University Internal Review Board Approval

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<tr>
<td>Committee:</td>
<td>Social/Behavioral IRB</td>
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<tr>
<td>Compliance Contact:</td>
<td>Shelly Rex (<a href="mailto:rexs@ohio.edu">rexs@ohio.edu</a>)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary Investigator:</td>
<td>Jeffrey Wise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project Title:</td>
<td>Principals' Perceptions of Professional Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level of Review:</td>
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The Social/Behavioral IRB reviewed and approved by expedited review the above referenced research. The Board was able to provide expedited approval under 45 CFR 46.110(b)(1) because the research meets the applicability criteria and one or more categories of research eligible for expedited review, as indicated below.

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<td>Review Category:</td>
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This approval is issued under the Ohio University OHRP Federalwide Assurance #00000095. Please feel free to contact the Office of Research Compliance staff contact listed above with any questions or concerns.