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ABSTRACT

THE FEMALE ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL: STEPPING STONE OR STUMBLING BLOCK TO THE SECONDARY SCHOOL PRINCIPALSHIP

By Mary Jane Gregg

This research attempted to develop a theory that describes how the position of the secondary female assistant principal is a “stepping stone or stumbling block” to the secondary school principalship. The qualitative research was conducted by interviewing five secondary female present or past principals who had also served as assistant principals. Each participant was interviewed twice and completed a survey listing her duties as both an assistant principal and principal. Using grounded theory, the researcher began with an area of study and allowed the theory to emerge from the data. By reading field notes and listening to the interviews, she identified and categorized, what was significant and classified and labeled it into patterns. The overall strategy was one of interpretive research with five basic questions that all interviewees were asked. From the analysis the grounded theory that emerged is that female assistant principals must know how to navigate through the organizational socialization of secondary administration in order to successfully become secondary school principals.

Touted as a valuable training ground for the role of principal, the assistant principal’s major duty is discipline and supervision with varied time or control to exercise genuine leadership. Briefly stated, this study suggests that female assistant principals at the secondary level are limited in opportunities to be an educational or transformative leader; are held to a different standard of performance than male administrators; they are hindered by family obligations; they are provided minimal training for the major duties of being a principal; they view discipline as a time to build relationships with students and parents, including an element of care; they need mentors or support persons to open doors in secondary administration; and they have difficulty being true to themselves in a male dominated profession. Taking great pride in obtaining the position of AP, none of the participants expressed a desire to remain in the AP position but believed it was important to have been a classroom teacher for at least ten years before becoming an AP.

THE FEMALE ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL: STEPPING STONE OR STUMBLING
BLOCK TO THE SECONDARY SCHOOL PRINCIPALSHIP

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my grandchildren with great affection:

- To my grandson Kayden, who will forever live in my heart.
- To my granddaughter Jera, whose wonderful insight is a constant reminder of what is truly important.

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CHAPTER ONE

Overview of Study

Reflection

Becoming an assistant principal, (AP) is the door through which many aspiring administrators hope to enter a career as the building school principal. Although it is difficult to define just exactly what all the duties of an assistant principal are, all that counts to the new AP is that she will finally be entering the administrative domain. Speaking from my own experience in the position, there is usually never enough time to prepare for what an AP will face, and no administrative courses that completely explain all an AP will need to be able to do. My experience as an AP at the secondary level suggests that it is an extremely difficult job, especially for a woman. In this introduction I will describe some of those difficulties.

After twenty-seven years in the classroom, being asked to fill the position of AP two weeks prior to school opening was both exciting and frightening. I had applied for numerous administrative positions for ten years and believed I was ready. My first administrative training lesson occurred when the principal handed me the district's law book and told me to read and make sure I understood all legal procedures and correctly followed them when dealing with school discipline.

Going from being a classroom teacher, where I had learned to cope with diverse situations, to being an AP overseeing an entire building of approximately eight hundred middle school students was quite a change in professional demands. Not only was I struggling to change roles and be a part of an administrative team; I was now dealing with more conflicts in a day than I had dealt with in a month of teaching. Being only the second female administrator in the district and the first female AP, I had numerous obstacles to overcome.

In that first year as AP one's leadership style and attitude are usually formed by the principal one serves. I was fortunate that my principal my first year was highly respected as the former AP and understood the perils of being an AP. He was fair in his distribution of duties and could be counted on to support my decisions. In some ways he

was too kind because he often protected me from situations that I needed to experience myself in order to learn.

My greatest difficulty was in dealing with conflict. Whether it was because I am a “people pleaser” or because I was trying to make a good impression, I hated having people be upset. Parents, students, and teachers continuously questioned my decisions and sometimes completely ignored them. I had parents who hung up on me, teachers who resented being told what to do by a female, and students who physically tried to intimidate me. This put a great deal of stress on top of what was already a very difficult day.

As an AP I was not looked upon as the educational leader I had been as a teacher. I was now the person everyone came to fix their problem. It was not unusual to have a half dozen people greet me as I came through the door at 6:45 a.m., wanting me to handle multiple situations. The situations ranged from removing a child from the bus to an angry parent to a teacher who refused a new student in their class. It was very normal practice for them to dump the problem in my lap so that they could go on about their daily tasks completely free of the responsibility.

As a female AP at the secondary level (which was totally male dominated), I experienced a double discrimination. I had to earn my place in the hierarchy, not only as an AP but also as a female on a male dominated administrative team. Conversations in administrative meetings sometimes became uncomfortable when inappropriate remarks were made by male administrators. Believing I had to keep quiet and go along with what appeared to be the norm, there was little I could do since I was just an AP and only one of two female administrators in the district.

Being the primary disciplinarian in a junior high building of eight hundred students demands a great deal of time. Every discipline situation requires documentation and it often would take a full day or more to collect all the information. My principal expected me to handle discipline by physically intimidating the students, scaring them with my presence. Of course, this never worked. Not only was I not physically large but I was not comfortable in this role. Through trial and error I learned my own style that was comfortable and successful for me. Seldom was I given the opportunity to work as an

educational leader. The only time I was able to get into a classroom was when I was evaluating a teacher or if I purposely made the time to visit with the students.

I had two opportunities to step up into the principal's position. The first time I had only been an AP for a year and believed there was still much to accomplish in the AP position; I was not ready to assume the principal's seat. The second opportunity came the year I was to retire. Looking at the position of the AP from my own experiences does not afford me the ability to know if the experiences of the female secondary AP would have served me in the position of the principal. It is this lack of knowledge and understanding that has led me to choose to explore this question in my dissertation study.

Brief Literature Review

History of the Assistant Principalship

"Early accounts of the role of the assistant principal are sparse" according to Pietro (2000, p. 9). He states, however, that references to principals, teaching principals, and head assistants did begin to appear on the faculty rosters of large city schools in the 1800s. By the 1900's, supervision of schools became the responsibility of the school principal, a person known as the 'principal' teacher (Glanz, 2004). The primary duties were offering assistance to less experienced teachers. The selection of this principal was at the whim of the superintendent and little authority was given to the position. As his administrative duties increased, the principal assumed a more managerial position and other supervisory positions were created to meet the demands of the growing and complex school system.

Beginning in the 1940s the role of the assistant principal evolved, providing additional assistance to meet the increasing demands of the administrative job (Shockley & Smith, 1990). The position of the assistant principal evolved in a very haphazard manner (Hess, 1990). Assistant principals were generally selected by principals (usually male) from the teacher ranks. Originally established to handle mostly clerical duties, the position of assistant principal continues to lack a well-defined purpose in the web of school administration (Black, 1990).

Perspectives of the Literature

“One of the enduring myths of education is that the position of the assistant is a proper and useful training ground for the principalship,” claims Kelly (1990, p. 9). He states that APs experience little satisfaction in the position and the role of the AP continues to be determined by the principal (1990). He concludes that the assistant principal has performed the same duties ever since the position was created and that there is a universal distaste among APs for dealing with discipline and attendance.

Greenfield (1990) adds that the research on the AP has contributed little to an understanding of administration and that most studies of APs are status reports. Job descriptions for APs are virtually non-existent and except for a few studies, relatively little is known about the work of the assistant principal (1990). The literature on the position of AP is not cumulative, empirical, or informed by theory; and it contributes insufficiently to the work of an administrator.

Given these problems, what is it that administrators say they would like to have happen? Bush’s (1997) study found that all categories of administrators want to see an increase in involvement for APs. The areas in which they believe they must be involved are: curriculum, instruction, student activities, teacher personnel, professional development, and school management. However, there is little evidence that the AP’s position is evolving in this direction. Teachers believe it is the role of the AP to control interruptions in the classroom, thus providing direct support for teachers in the classroom. They see the principal as the manager of communication, decision making, and information filtering while the AP is the facilitator improving the environment so that good instruction can take place. With the additional testing and NCLB, the workload for the principal and APs is becoming more unmanageable. While administrative morale and enthusiasm continues to decline, we may be facing a serious problem of a shortage of qualified principals and AP’s.

Duties of the Assistant Principal

Just what are the responsibilities or duties of the assistant principal? Many in the profession think that it is the duty of the AP to do all those things that no one else is ready to do, and the literature reports that APs are often jacks of all trades. Many times the majority of activities the AP performs could be done as well by others, including carpenters and technicians (Astin, 1990). Changing locker combinations, filling pop machines, working the P.A., operating auditorium lights and sound systems (Glanz, 1990); the AP is far removed from the role of an educational leader.

In Glanz's study of 200 New York City AP's he found that 90% of the AP's chief duties were handling disruptive students, parental complaints, lunch duty, and scheduling as well as completing surveys, forms, and other administrative paperwork (Glanz, 2004). He continues by saying that: "Undervalued and often unacknowledged, the AP is the often unseen, yet cohesive element that contributes to an efficient and effective school" (p.2).

Daresh (2004) states in his guide for school administrators that the single most critical duty of an assistant principal is to assist his principal. Hess (1990) agrees. According to Hess, the work of the AP is one of an operations manager, obligated to cooperate, support, and be loyal to the principal. The job includes every other employee's duties, including that of the janitor and the principal. As Johnson (2000) points out, the AP's job description often states "other duties as assigned by the principal" (p. 85). No wonder that Johnson's advice on how to survive the assistant principalship has included the importance of remembering to laugh! The roles and duties of the assistant principal are never measured and never ending as Mertz (2000) sums it up well: "The job of the AP is not to question but to serve" (p. 8).

Problems of the Assistant Principal

There is a universal distaste among assistant principals for their typical responsibilities of discipline and attendance (Kelly, 1990). With little time given to tasks that will constitute their major responsibility as principals, they derive little satisfaction

from the job. Kelly's study of the attitudes of assistant principals showed that assistant principals believe they spend most of their time on tasks they will not be doing as a principal.

Greenfield (1990) believes that the current socialization process for APs only leads to a custodial response and that this is a dysfunctional preparation for the leadership role of the principalship. According to Panyako and Rorie (1990), the assistant principalship is the most dynamic and changing feature of the school system, but it continues to be the most overlooked in significance and prestige.

According to researchers the selection process for administrators is ill defined, and there are few evaluation instruments by which to measure the best practice. Rarely does anyone become a principal before serving as an assistant principal at the secondary level (Glanz, 2004). Correctly thought to be the stepping stone to a principal's career, Marshall and Hooley (2006) tell us that approximately 40 to 50 per cent of assistant principals go on to professional posts as principals.

Few students who take administrative courses aspire to be APs, but most know that usually one achieves the secondary principalship by serving as an assistant to the principal. Research shows that administration preparation programs pay little attention to the assistant principalship, which creates another problem for those aspiring administrators beginning their training. No courses are designed to address the qualities needed by APs nor is the role of the assistant principal often mentioned. There is also little attention given to the role of the principal as the mentor to the assistant principal. Nonetheless, the AP's job is thought to be useful training for the role of the superintendent (Hess, 1990; Marshall, 1990).

Researcher shows that minorities and women are under represented in the positions of AP at the secondary level. Lovelady -Dawson explains that while administrative positions are dominated by white males (1990), that non-white APs take longer to advance because they are allowed only limited involvement as APs and are usually unaware of the barriers in their career paths. As for women in secondary schools, they have problems, also. Whereas women are predominant in numbers in American public schools, men are predominant in power. "Schools and school systems are staffed by women in the U.S., but men run them," states Lovelady- Dawson (1990, pp.180-181).

The 'Old Boy Network'

Gardiner, Enomoto, and Grogan (2000) have described the 'old boy network' this way:

When one is defined by oneself and others as a member of a certain group, certain rights, responsibilities, and privileges are granted. Elders of the group may look out for and promote the well-being of younger members, and those who do not belong may be ostracized or treated less well than insiders. This type of gate keeping mentoring is embodied in the practice of the 'old boy network' that has traditionally operated in educational administration whereby male-to-male relationships of men with like values and norms were established, and women and men of color received little or no opportunity to participate in educational administration. (p.14)

Brunner informs us in *Principles of Power: Women Superintendents and the Riddle of the Heart* that women are 43 percent of the principals (52 percent of elementary and 26 percent of secondary principals), and 12 percent of the superintendents. She points out that while women are overrepresented in teaching and the elementary principalship in relation to their proportions in education, they are underrepresented in the secondary principalship and the superintendency (2000, p. xi). She contends that women and minority candidates are certified in much larger numbers than they are chosen for administrative positions; and at the end of the twentieth century, the percentage of women superintendents is about the same as it was at the beginning of the twentieth century (p.xii).

In Rousmaniere's (2007) essay on the development of the principal, she explains that because elementary schools were bureaucratized later than secondary schools, women were able to remain in leadership positions longer in elementary schools. She argues that to twentieth century school reformers the low status, expansive job description, and feminization of the elementary principalship did initiate strategies to redesign the elementary principalship in order to replace the women principals with men (p.15-17).

Blount expressed that since the secondary assistant principal position has traditionally been thought of as a position inappropriate for women, women encounter

another barrier if they aspire to begin the journey to higher levels of educational leadership. Over the past century, women have been systematically restricted in their access to these administrative positions. Women, then, essentially have little formally structured control over the purposes or conditions of the profession they dominate numerically (Blount, 1998).

Struggling to Fit In

“Women are sometimes succeeding by fitting in and placing no special demands on the organization, and this comes at a cost to women individually and collectively,” say Gardiner, Enomoto, & Grogan. (2000, p.104). Women in educational administration must be able to balance work and family responsibilities while keeping them separate from their leadership responsibilities. “This is an example of women treated the same as men in the patriarchal structures, and making no additional demands on the system” they continue (p.103). Women struggle to ‘balance everything’ in order to minimize disruption to the leadership position and the organization. Inclusion in educational leadership roles is designed to meet the needs of men free of the ties of childcare and domestic labor.

While there is no doubt that school administrators often provide valuable services to students, teachers, and school communities, I wish to suggest that the present configuration of school administration is inextricably woven with traditional gender definitions that are premised on males controlling females” states Blount (1998, p. 161).

Women seeking to be included in leadership have had to negotiate the conflicting demands made upon them by their dual role as best they could on an individual basis.

Women’s Aspirations to Leadership

Through the years, analysts have blamed women for their lack of ambition or desire for power in schools (Blount, 1998). Upon a closer look by researchers, what appears to be a lack of ambition may be attributed to other causes. According to Blount, women simply do not aspire to the superintendency as it is currently configured. Having

had little if any role in defining and shaping the structure of public schools, women see the construction of administration as appealing to a narrow class of men, who wish to elevate their status in a profession of women. “Women have little desire for a position created largely by and for a few men” (1998, p.162).

“When we witness only men in leadership roles, it becomes our reality, our norm, though we know women are just as ready and capable. Female leaders are simply an unfamiliar sight—an enormous issue if we are to put women in equal power” writes Wilson, (2004, p. 132). She continues on to say that most women only know of one understanding: that of the white male as the role model for leadership. “Yes, we will learn to lead like men if we are surrounded only by men; with little chance of speaking in a different and authentic voice, we will tend to join the pack,” claims Wilson (2004, p. xv). Wilson, in discussing women in leadership, states that she is convinced that the future depends on the leadership of women, not as a replacement of men, but to transform our options with them. This power sharing will provide a different voice, giving women the opportunity to shape policy in line with our values, creating an environment where men can bring all of themselves into leadership, including their soft side.

Fletcher claims that:

A number of recent studies indicate that women are increasingly dissatisfied with organizational norms about routes to success and effectiveness and their inability to challenge or change these norms. Whether lawyers, entrepreneurs, or corporate executives, women who have made it to the top playing by the rules are beginning to question the rules themselves (2001, p. 119).

Females need to draw a concrete, empirically based picture of the different ways in which men and women approach the diverse tasks that constitute management.

Research Questions

Based on the literature review, it seems important to address the following questions:

Overarching question:

To what extent does the experience of the female secondary assistant school principal prepare her for the various aspects of being a building principal?

Subordinate questions:

Does the focus of the female secondary assistant principal on discipline help or hinder performance once the assistant principal becomes a building principal?

Does the female secondary assistant principal perform any duties which develop the qualities needed as an educational leader? If so, what are they?

Does the female secondary assistant principal have experiences that prepare her to become a transformative leader? If so, what are they?

Do female secondary principals perceive their experience as APs as being different from that of male principals? If so, how?

Significance of Study

This study will contribute to the knowledge about females in the assistant secondary principalship, especially exploring whether the position of the female secondary assistant school principal is a valid and productive preparation or apprenticeship for the position of building principal. Since limited studies on female secondary assistant principals have been carried out, there is a fundamental need to know more about this position in order to determine whether it needs to be redefined or reconstructed, as a step on the administrative career ladder. The outcomes of this study will hopefully provide information about which experiences of the female secondary assistant principal provide school principals with a solid foundation for beginning their work as building administrators. Specifically, as a former assistant principal, I hope that the information obtained will contribute to the educational leadership programs for the future of all school administrators.

Methodology

The nature of this study was a qualitative interview study using a semi-structured interview protocol (See Appendix A for the interview protocol). Interviewees also completed a survey about their AP experience, see Appendix C. The interview group consisted of present or past female secondary principals who had also served as assistant principals prior to obtaining a school principal's position. Each was interviewed twice. Thus, the sample was purposive rather than random. All participants were voluntary, and a list of potential interviewees was generated from schools in the Ohio counties of Hamilton, Montgomery, Warren, and Butler. I composed a list of possible participants from school directories in the selected counties. Candidates were also selected from a pool of doctoral candidates at Miami University who had served as assistant principals before becoming principals. While it was my desire to have an equal balance of urban, suburban, and rural districts, participation responses determined how representative the distribution was. Selection of participants was also based on issues of convenience, meaning that those women, who were easily contacted and willing to meet nearby, were given priority. Time and place of interviews was determined by mutual agreement between the interviewee and the interviewer with the intent that both time and place were based on comfort and convenience.

The study focused upon no more than five present or past secondary female school principals who had formerly been assistant principals and who were willing to be interviewed. At the time of their interviews, interviewees were given a personal information sheet to fill out. It provided such information as the education background, administrative career, and future career goals of the participant.

"The purpose of interviewing, then, is to allow us to enter into the persons' perspective" according to Patton (2002, p.341). The researcher took notes during the interview as well as tape recording the conversations. Tape recording was used to obtain the actual wording while note taking supplemented the interview with key phrases, major points, and key terms to capture the language. Notes provided additional thoughts for later reflection by the interviewer and a record of the interview if all or part of the tape was unusable. Upon completion of each interview, interview notes were reviewed for

clarification by the interviewee, and details about the setting and interview were noted. I reflected on the interview as to how well it went and where improvements were needed. Time was scheduled with each interviewee for clarification and evaluation of all data once the tape was transcribed.

Data management strategies was integrated so that all data was easily retrievable and manipulable. An inventory of each completed interview was made immediately since field notes, tapes, and data were properly labeled and filed. Four copies of all data were made: one master copy, one on which to write, one for cutting and pasting, and one hard copy. Using grounded theory as described by Straus and Corbin (1998), “Rather the researcher begins with an area of study and allows the theory to emerge from the data” (p. 12), I began by reading all field notes and listening to the interviews to identify what was significant. Comments were made in the margins as I identified coded, categorized, classified, and labeled patterns. Data was organized into topics and filed. Data analysis was searched for relationships among the categories of data. Themes were identified and coded. Participants’ truths were used to build a coherent interpretation of the data. “Grounded theory is meant to ‘build theory rather than test theory’” states Patton (2002, p. 127). The overall strategy was one of interpretive research. Related literature and research questions also provided a framework for the researcher to use in analyzing and interpreting the data. As in all qualitative studies, when new understandings emerged from data analysis, alterations were made to the plan. Straus and Corbin (1998) explain in referring to grounded theory, “The importance of this methodology is that it provides a sense of vision, where it is that the analyst wants to go with the research” (p. 8).

All interviews were confidential. No names of participants, or schools, or school districts were given in the research study; only pseudonyms were used. From the beginning all interviews were transcribed and individually filed and coded with a manageable classification scheme. All data was organized into topics and all information was kept in a secure and safe area.

Since there are five basic questions that all interviewees were asked, I used a cross-case analysis strategy and grouped together answers from different people to those questions in addition to analyzing different perspectives on central issues. A case

analysis looked at individual experiences as unique in themselves. Both were utilized to deepen the significance of the study.

Limitations/Delimitations

This study was delimited to interviewing five female secondary school principals from Southwestern Ohio who have been APs. Interviewees were selected from the counties of Montgomery, Warren, Butler, and Hamilton and were women who are or have been secondary school principals and who previously served as APs.

My study had some limitations. As an interview study, it was based on retrospective accounts which will not be as accurate as accounts of current experiences would be. Moreover, the fact that I have served as a female secondary assistant principal, I am presently a doctoral student, and I have never been a principal may also have influenced what respondents chose to tell me. Finally, I was unable to generalize my findings to other populations.

Definition of Terms

Administrator-A hierarchical position in schools, usually filled by one thought to be the authority.

Assistant principal- “The assistant principal usually refers to a person who is the administrative assistant to the principal, the person who is responsible for carrying out the directions of the principal in the areas of school organization, guidance, and education policy” (Golden, 1997, p. 100).

Attendance-A record of people designating the frequency of being present in an organization.

Axial coding- The process of relating categories to their subcategories, termed “axial” because coding occurs around the axis of a category, linking categories at the level of properties and dimensions (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 123).

Categories- Concepts that stand for phenomena (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 101).

Coding-The analytic processes through which data are fractured, conceptualized, and integrated to form theory (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p.3).

Concepts-The building blocks of theory (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 101).

Conceptual ordering-Organizing (and sometimes rating) of data according to a selective and specified set of properties and their dimensions (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 15).

Diagrams-Visual devices that depict the relationships among concepts (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p.217).

Disciple- term used by interviewee in reference to the actions of a biblical person, such as Jesus’ disciples.

Discipline-Any action used in schools as a deterrent for inappropriate behavior by students.

Educational leader-Any persons in schools whose major focus is meeting the educational needs of the students, teachers, or community.

Functional domains-Various tasks determined by an organization, a person needs to perform in their particular organizational role.

Glass ceiling-A term coined in the 1970s in the United States to describe the invisible artificial barriers, created by attitudinal and organizational prejudices, which block women from senior executive positions (Wirth, 2001).

Grounded theory-theory that was derived from data, systematically gathered and analyzed through the research process (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 12).

Hierarchical domains- The rank or position one holds in an organization.

Inclusionary domains-Acquiring and demonstrating appropriate conformity to the social roles, norms, and values of the organization.

Memos-Written record of analysis that may vary in type and form (Strauss & Corbin, 1983, p. 217).

Mentor- A trusted counselor or guide, a tutor or coach (Collins, 1983, p. 6).

Open coding-The analytic process through which concepts are identified and their properties and dimensions are discovered in data (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 101).

Organizational socialization- The process by which one learns how to perform a particular organizational role (Greenfield, 1990).

Preparation program-College courses attended by persons seeking an administrative licensure, which meet the necessary requirements for becoming an administrator.

Principal-A hierarchical, administrative position in school districts designated as the overseer of the building and staff, one who is concerned with the management and educational needs of particular grade levels.

Subcategories- Concepts that pertain to a category, giving it further clarification and specification (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 101).

Theoretical saturation- The point in category development at which no new properties, dimensions, or relationships emerge during analysis (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 143).

Transformative leader-A person who seeks to create a school community where educators advance through, respect, cultural enrichment, creative expression, intellectual honesty, and personal freedom (Shields, 2003).

Organization of Study

My study was organized as follows:

Chapter I. Introduction

Chapter II. Review of Literature

Chapter III. Methods and Procedures

Chapter IV. Findings: Background and Experiences of the Interviewees

Chapter V. Findings: The Organizational Socialization of APs

Chapter VI. Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

CHAPTER TWO

Literature Review

According to Reed and Himmler (1990), “[V]irtually all secondary schools in the U.S. with student enrollment of 600 or more have assistant principals” (p. 99). Considered to be the “forgotten stepchild” of administrative study and research (Norton & Kirkard, 1990; Kaplan & Owings, 1999) the AP provides educational leadership at a grassroots level, supported by the basic educational purposes of the local district (Hess, 1990). “Undervalued and often unacknowledged, the AP is the often unseen, yet cohesive element that contributes to an efficient and effective school” writes Glanz (2004, p.2). This position is also seen as the “stepping stone” and training ground into administration, a way through the door (Holman, 1997).

History

History of the AP

During the 1800’s, Boston had two classifications of schools: one under the writing master, the other under the grammar master (Bush, 1997). The grammar teacher became the master and the writing teacher became the submaster. The master’s position evolved during the 1830s to 1870s; by the 1900s increases in the size of urban schools had led to the creation of the position of head teacher or principal.

English (1994) informs us that educational administration was the descendent of the growth in population and migration to the cities during the time period of 1820 to 1860. He states that the local superintendent position was created in Buffalo in 1837; the county superintendent position was created in Delaware in 1829; and the state superintendent position was created in New York in 1812. “School administration became the beneficiary of bureaucratic centralization based on notions of efficiency that were grounded in fundamental protestant, capitalistic, socioeconomic ideologies of the reform of the cities and the domination of them by business-professional elites,” he says (p.102). English goes on to quote Callahan, who stated:

The result in educational administration was a situation that “produced men who did not understand education or scholarship,” and who, when questioned about

their academic preparation for their jobs, indicated that the most important fields to study were finance first and public relations second. (Callahan (1962), p.260 as quoted by English (1994), p. 102).

The development of educational leadership theory stemmed from organizational theory that was cultivated in businesses to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of the corporation (R. Quantz, personal communication, June 10, 2007).

Glanz informs us that in the early twentieth century, two groups of supervisors were found in schools (2004). Special supervisors, usually female, helped assist the less experienced teachers; and general supervisors, usually male, assisted the principal with administrative operations. The special supervisors did not have any independent authority, whereas the general supervisors were viewed as critics looking for weaknesses of the teacher. General supervisors were the primary assistant of the principal, selected by the principal from the ranks of teachers. Based on gender discrimination, the special supervisor was eliminated, which meant that by the early 1900s school managerial positions were almost always filled by men (Glanz, 2004). Glanz states, “Sex role stereotyping in education as a whole were commonplace and in consonance with bureaucratic school governance” (p.5).

History of the Female Administrator

Shakeshaft (1987) tells us that schools were transformed from autonomous organizations with loosely coupled classes run by strong men and women into bureaucracies ruled by one administrator and in which super ordinates and subordinates were manufactured. “Male teachers were put in charge and women were looked to as the ideal subordinate,” according to Shakeshaft (1987, p.31). Laws were even created to restrict women in school administration, keeping them in their place, she goes on to explain that until 1858 in New Hampshire, women had to meet a different set of qualifications than males to become school administrators (Shakeshaft, 1987). Patterns of male dominance solidified numerous beliefs about women that were accepted by both men and women. Later, negative attitudes continued as a major barrier, the disciplining of students being one. “Women were thought to be constitutionally incapable of

discipline and order, primarily because of their size and supposed lack of strength,” says Shakeshaft (1987, p.39).

Nonetheless, as recently as 1928 women held over half the principal positions, which was twice the percentage they held in 1973 (Lovelady-Dawson, 1990). After 1930, the number of women in administration decreased. Based on historical studies of early twentieth century schools, Rousmaniere (2007) states:

In the United States between 1900 and the 1950's, over two-thirds of American elementary schools had women principals. Most of these positions were in rural schools, but women were also prominent in city schools, holding over three-fourths of elementary principalships in cities under 30,000, and well over half in many of the largest American cities (p. 15).

It is important to emphasize here that these were elementary principal positions, not secondary ones.

World War II gave women a brief opportunity to be administrators, however, as Shakeshaft (1987) explains, “Women who served their country during WWII by taking school jobs were rewarded by being dismissed when the men returned” (p.45). Just as women were needed to fill positions in the war industries due to a shortage of men, they were also given a brief opportunity to be administrators in secondary schools. The reality was that most women returned to being full-time homemakers during the prosperity of the 1950's. In the 1950s, the consolidation of small schools into larger ones also caused women in small districts to lose their jobs to men in the new structure (Shakeshaft, 1987). A discouraging time for women administrators was when men were encouraged to become teachers and women were encouraged to remain at home. Teaching was presented as a good job for married women only because it was a vocation where they could combine motherhood, wifehood, and work. The push to hire more males in schools as teachers impacted the administrative structure enormously as men remained in teaching for only a short period of time when the call for administrators was greatest as schools expanded. Shakeshaft (1987) states that, “Most women enter teaching to teach but most men enter teaching to administer’ (p.87). Dunn (1990) explains further by stating,

Because 19th century women's low social status and subordination to men in all other aspects of their lives allowed school reformers to create male-dominated bureaucratic structures curtailed to their options, teaching evolved as a profession that was structured by a sex segregated system of hierarchical control and supervision. (p. 323)

Perspectives

As an AP

Astin (1990) found that the AP's position was confusing: "Throughout the assistant principal study there is support from a host of findings for the conclusion that this position is one which is more oriented to crisis than to security and stability" (p.73). Consistently putting out fires, working in an emergency room type of environment, the AP spends most of her time doing those things no one else is willing or ready to do.

According to Ortiz, the AP tends to be the position to 'try out' administrators. The ideal is that the AP has the opportunity to interact with students and teachers throughout the school while developing an intensive interpersonal relationship with her superior. Having the AP position should increase the likelihood that she will be in contact with other school administrators (Ortiz, 1982). If she is in the secondary AP position, she is valued more by school board members because they believe it to be a more rigorous position than that of the elementary administrator (Dana & Bourisau, 2006). As Daresh (2004) explains,

Many assistant principals take their first jobs as administrators fully aware of the fact that a major responsibility that will face them involves the need to discipline students. Some may look at this duty as something that is anything but desirable.

But disciplining students is truly an instructional activity. (p. 38)

He goes on to further explain that discipline is best understood not as punishment, but as a form of counseling and student advisement. However, even in this area, it is the task of the APs to implement the visions of those who lead them.

Problems

Bush (1997) reports that since a job description covering all the duties performed by the AP usually does not exist, their primary responsibility is generally thought to be discipline and school attendance with little opportunity to receive positive reinforcement. The unclear role of the AP means that it lacks a real niche in school administration and is characterized by a lack of time to fulfill the responsibilities. Many APs look upon their job as custodial, ambiguous, and powerless (Greenfield, 1990).

Garawski's (1990) study on job satisfaction found that APs were dissatisfied with their salary levels, their ten hour work days, and their lack of secretarial assistance. They felt ignored by their supervisors and constrained in dealing with staff. They disliked the negativity of the teachers, as well as being perceived as only disciplinarians who received little credit for their work. Garawski believed that this dissatisfaction might hamper the efficiency and decision making effectiveness of the APs.

It would seem natural for schools to promote the APs to principalships, since they have experience and training; however, not all APs advance. According to research some APs are happy to remain in the position with no desire to take on the challenge of being the principal. Marshall (1993) tells us that career APs find rewards in working with children and that "Career assistants put their energies into their current positions" (p.3). She further explains that assistant principals who are comfortable remaining in the position put their families first and object to the time commitment required to be a principal. They also are not interested in the political nature of the principalship" (Marshall, Mitchell, Gross, & Scott, 1992). Unfortunately, many APs are eliminated from consideration for promotion by their school systems because the district desires new blood or believe the AP is too close to the faculty and students (Brown and Rentscheler, 1990). Brown and Rentscheler (1990) also found that many principals withhold opportunities for advancement from their APs because they feel threatened or have given little thought to the training of the AP. Also, if the AP is part of an unsuccessful administrative team, the district leaders may believe they need to completely "clean house."

Aspirations of the Female APs

Marshall and Hooley (2004) state in *The Assistant Principal: Leadership Choices and Challenges*:

Almost half of the elementary principals and more than half of the elementary assistant principals 'recent hire' were women. However, women were making far less progress in secondary positions and central office line positions leading to the highest leadership positions. (p.101)

Shakeshaft (1989) goes on to say that, "Women have seldom attained the most powerful and prestigious positions in the schools, and the gender structure of males as managers and females as workers have remained relatively stable for the past 100 years" (1989, p.51). According to Pigford and Tonnsen (1993) the secondary principalship is a frequent stepping stone to the superintendency, but few women are chosen as high school principals. Until equity has been achieved, however, the secondary AP position remains a crucial position for women interested in advancement.

Shakeshaft (1987) adds that the emphasis on maintaining discipline as a component of the AP position keeps women from being hired for the position. The overwhelming amount of research that shows that women are better than men at maintaining discipline has done nothing to dispel hiring committees' view that women are weak disciplinarians. "They continue to hire athletic directors and coaches based on unsupported conclusions that athletic directors and coaches are able to discipline. This belief is repeatedly used to justify hiring a man and not a woman" (1987, p.87). While sharing a general optimism about changes in hiring practices, women wonder if new opportunities actually exist equally at the elementary and secondary levels. According to Dana and Bourisaw (2006):

Even when women have strong teacher leadership, have chaired task forces and committees for their schools, have served on district wide councils, have solid reputation as effective and successful educators, and have secured the necessary credentials, acquiring an assistant principal position remains challenging. (p.35) Because more men serve as assistant principals than women, the job pool for promotion from assistant principal to principal is predominately male (Dana & Bourisaw, 2006). It

also means more men are given leadership experience, denying women equal access and entry into administration.

Researchers have stated that female and male teachers have different aspirations and qualifications for school administration. Women are not as eager to leave teaching, nor do they often have advanced training in educational administration (Holloway, 2000). “Many women did not see themselves as leaders until well into their 40’s and were surprised when they found others saw them that way” (Blackmore, 1999, p.76). According to Shakeshaft (1987), those who succeed in getting administrative jobs in the first few tries generally move into two kinds of positions: the elementary principalship or a position as a subject matter specialist. The typical woman in administration remains at this level or will be promoted to a supervisory position in the central office as a director or coordinator (Shakeshaft, 1987). This is where the majority of women administrators stay.

Davidson and Cooper (1992) explained that, “When comparing male and female managers in terms of managerial efficiency and performance, numerous cross-cultural studies and reviews have concluded that there are far more similarities than differences in terms of managerial efficiency and performance” (p.41). Real differences are not significant and the reason is that female managers have adapted their style to the male model along with the behavior and attitudes that are not consistent with the female outlook (Billing & Alvesson, 1994). Female executives claim, though, that they have to be better at their jobs than male colleagues in order to succeed and are at a disadvantage since, as girls, they were told not to be assertive, aggressive, or seek power and control (Davidson & Cooper, 1992). In schools, some women apply for promotion out of anger and frustration when they see less qualified and capable men rapidly moving up in the hierarchy. Edson (1988) explained in her study that:

According to a number of women in this study, preoccupation with sports is one of the major failings of male administrators: ‘I burn up when I see a male coach two years younger than me moved through an elementary position to a secondary principalship. I’m not the hating kind, but I get angry knowing the struggle I’ll face as a woman—even with my doctorate’. (p.149)

Edson clarifies that with few women employed in public school management, female educators lack same-sex models on which to pattern their career aspirations and goals (1988). Some women find themselves questioning their desire to be school executives and their abilities to competently perform should they be hired. The absence of other women in leadership hinders their thinking. With few standards of excellence to imitate and no role models showing how to balance career and marriage, it becomes very complicated. “The end result of this confusion over roles and appropriate career ambitions for women is that the few who do break through the stereotypes to aspire to management positions often feel isolated” (Edson, 1988, p. 63). Women who do succeed in administration often do so without the type of support and confidence men receive from each other.

Mentors

“Webster defines a mentor as a ‘trusted counselor or guide, a tutor or coach’ (Collins, 1983, p.6). By sharing inside information about the organization, mentors have a special capacity to help women obtain the political support they are going to need. Gardiner, Enomoto, and Grogan (2000) explain this further:

In the academe and in the public schools there are clearly consequences to non political behavior. Merit alone is not enough. Building relationships and being a colleague are political acts in themselves. Dedication and practical accomplishments are insufficient in the world of educational leadership: one must also be prepared to engage in conversations and to do the necessary interpersonal work of relating to others” (p. 22)

“Mentors have the special capacity to help women to garner the political support that they need from others, by sharing the inside information about the organization” (Gardiner, Enomoto, & Grogan, 2000, p.27). Mentors become an essential part in assisting protégés to work smarter, not necessarily harder.

Good mentors should consider themselves teachers above anything else. By teaching skills necessary for solving problems, mentors encourage their mentees to observe their own style, while developing skills which are appropriate to themselves (Collins, 1983). Gardiner, Enomoto, and Grogan (2000) tell us that “good mentors play a

very important role in the development of protégés but finding a mentor is very difficult for most women” (p.27). They go to explain where women value and appreciate male mentors; difficulties are created because men handle things differently. Since they usually begin their administrative careers later in life, it is difficult for women to find someone who is willing to mentor them since mentors are typically older than their protégés. Also, most men are reluctant to serve as mentors to women due to differences in administrative style and because they fear having their motives questioned (Witmer, 2006). Women mentors often do not have a place in the networks that are influential. Consequently, 43% of men remain in the position of AP, while only 8% of women remain (Marshall, 1992).

Male Mentors

According to Shakeshaft (1993), when mentors are traditionally white males, they tend to promote other white males. The male mentor teaches men how to develop leadership skills by taking risks, taking directions, and providing information on what is going on. With so few female role models in educational administration, mentoring female aspirants to leadership typically falls to men. However, female aspirants have two distinct views when discussing the competence and support of current male administrators. As Edson (1988) describes, one group holds their colleagues in high esteem and finds their job performance excellent. The other group disagrees and criticizes the abilities of male administrators to motivate them to enter the field of administration because of their inadequacies (Edson, 1988).

Another problem that comes from the research is that male mentors may be more aggressive in their approach to a situation or see it in a completely different way than females. This makes it difficult for, as a female if she believes she must duplicate the leadership style of her male mentor. Gardiner, Enomoto, and Grogan (2000) explain further problems by stating:

Oftentimes people can be caught in relationships that are not helpful, when they have a mentor who is experienced or powerfully connected but not providing mentoring. Connections with the powerful people are not always worthwhile to

cultivate, for it is the quality of the relationship that characterizes mentoring.
(p.51)

Davidson and Cooper (1992) state that while mentoring is an important training tool for the career success of male and female managers, women are likely to suffer specific problems when mentored by a man. The problem, Pigford and Tonnsen (1993) conclude, is the practice of studying male behavior and assuming the results are appropriate for understanding administrative behavior. “Women need women as mentors because only women can truly empathize with the experience of being a woman” claims Duff (1999, p.4)

Female Mentors

Edson (1988) stated that, “As a role model as well as mentor, women in leadership roles can offer something men cannot” (p. 75). Duff (1999) states that, “Women have always learned from women. They have learned by watching their mothers, grandmothers, aunts, teachers, coaches, counselors, professors, sisters, and friends. Women have passed onto other women lessons on how to live through stories and examples” (p.37). Edson goes on to say, “More specifically, they have taught us how to recognize, understand, and respect ourselves as rich, complex female beings” (p. 37). Women aspiring to become administrators take great pride when talking about successful female administrators. They make references to them as mentors and their ideals, referring to the relationship with language such as “like a mother to me.”

However, the problem for women is that white males dominate the power positions in education so that women in administrative positions have less security and networking potential than men. “Women who are mentors may themselves be struggling for survival in context where it is simply more difficult for them than for white males to achieve respect, position, and other support,” say Gardiner, Enomoto, and Grogan (2000, p. 107). Just because women are in a position of power does not guarantee they have the same power as their male colleagues.

Moreover, the beginning female administrator may have much more to lose when she aligns herself with management. Edson concurs that with little risk of censure for their desire to leave the teaching ranks, men are encouraged by other teachers and

administrators to move up the career ladder (1988). Without the encouragement of mentors, women hesitate to isolate themselves from their teaching colleagues by seeking leadership.

Duff (1999) summarizes: “Women mentoring women in the workplace is a relatively new phenomenon. Woman-to-woman mentoring encompasses circumstances and rules that are specific to a female style and representative of a female culture” (p. xv). When women mentor women, the women who are mentored are able to be their true selves, growing in confidence, strength, and accomplishment.

Women in Leadership

“Glass ceiling” is a term coined in the 1970s in the United States to describe the invisible artificial barriers, created by attitudinal and organizational prejudices, which block women from senior executive positions. Whether the glass ceiling occurs in the workplace or in politics is essentially a reflection of social and economic gender inequality. (Wirth, 2001, p. 1)

Valian (1999) agrees, saying, “Independent of all other factors, gender appears to play a major role in people’s ability to get ahead. Gender schemas are objectively costly for women. Relative to women, men have a leg up. Men look right for the job” Valian continues, “If you can’t get your hands on the ball, you can’t show what you can do with it” (p. 57). When female achievements are not recognized, it is no fun playing without acknowledgment of one’s contributions. In her discussion of women in all types of leadership, Wilson (2004) stated:

When it comes to women’s leadership, we live in a land of deep resistance, with structural and emotional impediments burned into the cultures of our organizations, into our society, and into the psyches and expectations of both sexes. The problem is layered, as is the solution. (p. xiii)

Wilson goes on to explain in *Why Women Can and Must Help Run the World* that even with women making up nearly half the workforce, the U.S. still only ranks sixty-sixth in women’s political leadership, behind such countries as the Philippines, Turkmenistan, and Singapore. Women occupy 69 seats out of 435 in the House of Representative, and

14 seats in the Senate, and historically there are only 26 women who have served as governors in the United States. It should come as no surprise that women seeking the superintendent position would be told by a school board member, “We’re just not ready for a woman around here” (Blount, 1998, p.156).

Estlund (2003) adds, in her discussion of changes that occurred after Title VII was enacted and more women entered the closely guarded male bastions that upper management and skilled manual trades still remain overwhelmingly male, while clerical and lower level health and child care occupations remain overwhelmingly female. She states:

That pattern is self-reinforcing and hard to break, for when women are a small minority within a workplace or job category, they are much more susceptible to stereotyping, bias, and discrimination (p. 87).

Witmer (2006), in describing women in the superintendency, referred to Bjork’s description of regarding administration as dominated by white males and their orientations, saying Bjork (2003) asserts that: “The U.S. Department of Labor has described the superintendent as the most gender-stratified executive position in the country” (2006, p.10). While the percentage of female superintendents rose from 1992 to 2000, the disparity is still disheartening since approximately 73 percent of teachers are female (2006). Since 50 percent of the graduates of educational administration doctoral programs are women, something about the job or the hiring process is eliminating female candidates.

Family

Challenges for women in the world of work often revolve around balancing work and family commitments. Along with facing discrimination and discouragement in the workplace, women also lack the kind of domestic support that has enabled men to be successful workers. When polling sixty-six subordinates, peers, and superiors of women leaders Heller (1982) found that: “These figures indicate that a greater conflict between family and leadership roles exists for women than for men” (p.156). She goes to state that 58 percent of those polled believed that for a woman to have a career and children is too difficult. While it is possible for women to assume managerial roles, it is difficult for

them to shed family roles. Dana and Bourisaw (2006) agree: “While many women choose to enter the field of education because of a family-friendly calendar, this calendar becomes less family-friendly as individuals are given more responsibility and are promoted” (p. 91). Those positions which require longer hours or extensive travel are by far the more financially rewarding ones, but it is very difficult for women with primary child care responsibilities to take them (Dunn, 1997). Men have much less responsibility outside of work because they perform less of the day to day operations of households than women and are also less likely to work part-time in order to raise children. “Inequities at home reverberate in the work place,” proclaims Valian (1999, p. 19).

Salary

According to Wirth (2001), “Even in occupations dominated by women, men usually occupy the ‘more skilled’ ‘responsible’ and ‘better paid’ positions” (p.13). In the United States, men with the same education as women earn more; and the higher the level of education involved, the greater the salary gap becomes (p.16). Because of the lack of value placed on women’s caring role in society, gender discrimination is perpetuated.

Critten (2001) elaborates on the earnings gap: “In 1993, women working full-time were earning an average of seventy-seven cents for every dollar men earned. In 1997, the gap widened again, as the median weekly earning of full-time working women fell to 75 % of men’s earnings” (p.93). Hicks (2004) tells that her salary at a large suburban high school was much lower than that of the male high school principals because she had no previous administrative experience. She states: “Even though I ran the largest school and earned my PhD the next year, there was no provision for movement on the schedule, especially when the board for several years had offered no increases for administrators” (p.49). She goes on to explain that she was only making a dollar more per day than the athletic director. Such low salaries cause women to hesitate about entering administration.

Ambition

Wilson (2004) states that for men, ambition is an expectation, a virtue; for women it is a kiss of death. She goes on to say that: “The difference is that although men have to

manage their ambition, women have to mask theirs” (p. 53). According to Wilson, the resistance to women as leaders stems from a fear that women would climb up the ladder and away from men and children, defying their maternal mandate. So society limits their choices and provides little support, making it difficult for women to have a career and family. “We are kept in our place by a system refusing to create the means by which women can lead,” she says (p.59).

Wilson adds that when women try to be leaders or gain power, they often try to be like men. The first women leaders had to prove themselves ‘more manly than men’ in order to be accepted as strong leaders. The difference is that men conform to other men, retaining their identity man whereas women often lose the qualities associated with being female in order to blend in with the boys. Pagano (1990) adds that women are led to identify with male interests often against their own; in order to be successful and included many are required to discard their histories. She clarifies further by stating, “It is not that women can’t think-it is simply that we cannot think as women. If we would think, we must think in the voice of the culture in which we are subdued” (1990, p.12).

“Traditionally, our culture sees leadership as men’s work; when it is executed by women (or nontraditionally by men) it is often not acknowledged as leadership at all” (Wilson, 2004, p. 108). Valian (1999) argues that female leaders are often seen as misfits, saying: “The immediate consequence for a woman entering a profession is that those around her, both men and women, perceive her as at least slightly unsuited to that profession, because her gender doesn’t fit in” (p.15).

Women who aspire to leadership may encounter other women who erect barriers to their success. If a “token” woman works in a traditionally male-dominated setting, male colleagues may reward her for denigrating other women and keeping them out. The “token” is not friendly to other women because she identifies herself with men. Wanting to be the only female ruling her territory, she stakes out her space and defends it. Referred to as “Queen Bees,” such women detach and isolate themselves from any pressure to develop or promote other women (Duff, 1999).

Women's Ways of Leading

Witmer declares that, "Most women choose administration for the same reason that men do: more money, more autonomy, more status, and more power" (2006, p.7). She goes on to explain, however, that women's view of power is different from that of men's. Women view power as limitless, tending to empower others with a desire for personal growth, creativity, and a broad range of influence. Women demonstrate their humanity by leading according to egalitarian principles so that everyone is treated more like a peer or a colleague and less like a subordinate or inferior. "Hence, the flow of communication between female leaders and subordinates goes in both directions" (Heller, 1982, p. 17). Women leaders tend to have closely-knit schools, visit more classrooms, be more up to date on curriculum, and be more informed than men. They use a powerful discourse of the ethics of care and deliver an administration that serves all individuals through personal relationships and civic responsibility (Blackmore, 1999).

Smith (2004) reports that Noddings, who is closely identified with the promotion of the ethics of care as an educational goal, describes a feminine approach to ethics and moral education. Noddings's viewpoint is **not** that there are distinctly different approaches to ethical questions and concerns typical of men and women, but she looks to the "feminine view" that is rooted in receptivity, relatedness, and responsiveness. With caring as a moral attitude, a relation of dialogue and exchange promotes reciprocity. Noddings believes the motivation of 'carers' arises either spontaneously or as a reflection of the ideal of caring that is a part of their character.

As explained by Heller (1982), women have special resources in organization and efficiency and are seen as being more attentive to detail than men. They are sticklers for neatness and punctuality and are much more efficient than their male counterparts. Their primary loyalty is to the profession, not the employing organization. After examining teacher attitudes toward women principals, Hudson and Rea (1996), contend that the characteristics traditionally attributed to women are desirable in all school administrators. Eakle (1995) adds, "As education reform and demographic trends reshape administrators' roles, the leadership style many women employ may be the leadership style of the next decade and beyond" (p.1).

The Organizational Structure

“Traditional views, however, maintain that as long as there is an organization, there will be tracks, levels, layers, and some kind of strata,” states Witmer (2006, p.76). Even flat organizations have a structure, a system for who is responsible and accountable to whom. Schools are organizations, and administrators need to be prepared to operate in various structures as they evolve.

Witmer (2006) goes on to say: “Power, authority, and influence are inherent in a hierarchical structure and are important to its operation” (p. 76). Positions in the hierarchy provide each person in it with various sources of power. The principal has authority over everything that happens in the building, but to be effective others must acknowledge his or her authority. Women have a particular problem in this area, as Witmer explains: “As a woman, you need to remember that, in general, expectations for how a person holding power and authority should behave are at odds with expectation for how a woman should behave” (p.79). Witmer goes on to add that if a woman talks in ways expected of a woman, she will be more likely to be liked than respected; if she talks in the ways expected of a man, she is more likely to be respected than liked. The dilemma is that if she enhances her assertiveness she risks undercutting her femininity; if she fits the expectation of being a woman, she takes the risk of undercutting her competence and authority (p.80). Women are often questioned as to ‘who is in charge’ because the questioner assumes the woman does not have the final say.

Organizational Socialization

Field (2007) addresses issues of socialization, writing: “For an organization’s culture to endure it must be transmitted from current organizational members to new members, a process called **organizational socialization**” (p.5). This process has three phases: anticipatory socialization, encounter, and change and acquisition. In the first phase, anticipatory socialization, the person has heard about the organization and further information is given to him or her during the interview phase. During the second phase, the encounter, the person commonly feels overwhelmed, lost, and confused with information. The third phase, change and acquisition, is when the newcomer acquires

and internalizes the culture of the organization, changing his or her beliefs and values. Ortiz (1982) summarizes the issue: “The underlying assumption is that being a member of an organization, engaging in the organizational activities, and fulfilling organizational expectations requires fundamental and continuing personal changes” (p. 2).

Field (2002) goes on by explaining that the physical space and setting for work are the outcomes of the organization’s culture. The actions of the organization have meaning for the organization’s culture, defining what the organization is and what it cares about. A rite of passage marks the transition of persons from one status to another. Members of the culture share language and talk about the problems of the organization and how problems were handled in the past. This shared talk helps to define the members of the organization and how they will deal with future problems. This ritualistic behavior follows a set pattern of doing things the way it has always been done. Ortiz (1982) elaborates:

The structure of educational administration consists of white males occupying line positions, women occupying staff positions, and minorities occupying special projects. The structure shows that white males manage and administer adults, women instruct children, and minorities direct and contain other minorities. (p. 118)

Kanter (1977) states in *Men and Women of the Corporation* that new recruits must be the “right sort of person,” “those who fit in,” their kind” continuing the bureaucratic kinship system. They are expected to be repetitions of the same kind of men who manage to reproduce themselves in the group. “Male administrators employed additional male administrators because they ‘fit’ the mostly male environment where decisions, discussions, and social activities occurred,” Ryland (2005) says (p.155). Kanter (1977) describes this recruitment process by stating, “Men reproduce themselves in a ‘homosexual reproduction’ of their own image” (p.48).

Women and minorities are presented with limited opportunities for socialization into line administrative positions where experience in technical and interpersonal skills is problematic. Critical to both women and minorities, these skills can only be acquired through actual trial-and-error methods confined to specific settings and assignments. Ortiz (1982) says, “It can therefore be said that the organization does not try in an

equitable manner to prepare individuals from the three groups to become superintendents” (p.147).

According to Greenfield (1990) in *Education and Urban Society*, there are three possible responses to organizational socialization. One is custodianship; which means the new member accepts the status quo. Another is content innovation; where the new member makes an effort to change or improve the strategies used by the organization. The last is role innovation; the new member completely redefines the ends to which his or her role in the organization functions.

Good Ole Boy Network

Witmer (2006) explains that “Both personal power and power of position are used in work relationships. An example of personal power is in sharing information with a favored few” (p. 77). She goes on to say that the ‘old boy’s club’ is a reflection of personal power. Power or position can be used in evaluating personnel, determining salary, preferential assignments, and recommendation for promotion. This power plays a large role in a hierarchy when those first in line as supervisors can influence leaders higher up in the chain of command. These friendships with superiors give them a better position because they are favored.

In interviews with women in administration, many respondents commented regarding this ‘ole boy network,’ saying things such as: “Men naturally flock together, they golf together, and they swim together, so they get to know one another” (Coursen, 1975, p. 16). Coursen’s discussion went on to explain how men in lower positions use these occasions to meet with men of power. Often before a position is advertised someone suggests some bright young man for it, and the job of the administrator is already filled before it is publicized. Jacobs (2002) shares her thoughts on joining the ‘boys club’,

Was it really because none of us played golf? Or was it because we felt that the camaraderie shared on the golf course between the Superintendent and male colleagues was “off limits” to us or maybe in fact gave them an advantage, however intangible, that we didn’t have? (p.3)

Real Power

Coursen (1975) summarizes the situation in this way: “Thus the power structure has created a situation where ‘others’ must compete among themselves for advancement where one group can make gains only at the expense of another” (p.19). The real problem is the exclusion of women and minorities from decision-making positions. With the real power in the hands of white males, the “others” must depend on the good will of those in power for advancement. “The status of women and minorities in school administration seems clearly inconsistent with the ideals of democratic, egalitarian society” Coursen says (p.23). This discrimination is not merely repugnant; it is destructive since it narrows the base from which school leaders can be drawn.

Feminist Standpoint Theory

According to Wood (1992) “Feminist standpoint theory analyzes how patriarchy naturalizes male and female divisions, making it seem natural, right, and unremarkable that women are subordinate to men” (p. 61). In patriarchal discourse, women are constructed as belonging in the home, having and raising children, and attending to the domestic needs of the family (Dick & Nadin, 2006). A key claim of feminist standpoint theory is that women’s lives are systematically and structurally different from men’s, and these differences produce different knowledge (Hekman, 1997). “Since women’s lives are distinct from men’s, most knowledge does not reflect their realities. Standpoint theory recognizes, then, that the differences in situations between men and women provide valuable resources for feminist work,” writes Allen (1996, p. 1). This standpoint is achieved through critical reflection on power relations and struggling to construct an oppositional stance. Hartsock believes that feminist standpoint theory privileges the knowledge of the oppressed because it offers possibilities for a just social practice (1997). Growing out of the social location of women’s lives, feminist standpoint theory can, but does not necessarily, arise from being female. Standpoint theory rejects restricting knowledge to only science and admits subjectivity by placing knower and known on the same plane to generate knowledge (Wood, 1992).

Muted Theory

Wood (1992), in describing muted group theory, explains that women's voices are muted in Western society and their experiences are not fully represented in language. She goes on to explain that muted group theory focuses on the language through which power relations are manifested, calling attention to the power of naming and the consequences of using language that does not name experiences. Having one's voice muted is linked directly to whether one belongs to a subordinate group such as women, and muted group theory contends that societies are structured hierarchically so that some groups are dominant and other groups are marginal.

Women in the Organization

According to many scholars stage models of organizational socialization do not represent women's experiences in the organization. Women move through the continuous process being marked as the 'other' and excluded, privileging the organization and marginalizing the individual. Socialization models ignore the imbalance of power as well as hegemony. Research states that when newcomers enter new positions and become integrated into the reality of the organization, they experience conflict and negative messages about their worth to the organization. Newcomers may not want to be transformed into the ideal the organization touts, but if they engage in activities that allow them to address their values and concerns, they incur negative repercussions. Marshall and Mitchell (1991) explain further, "They learn that their personal and professional ethics and morality must be modified to conform to the dominant values in the culture of school administrators" (p. 411).

Researching Women

Researching for information regarding women in administration is difficult, especially women in secondary school administration. The little information that exists is usually in reference to women superintendents with minimal information on the experiences of the female principal or assistant principal. Shakeshaft and Hansen (1986) discuss how the greater part of work in the social sciences has focused on men in school administration. They concur that male samples are generalized to both genders and

measuring male viewpoints is a “consistent” practice.” They emphasize that theories regarding practice must understand female behavior. Shakeshaft (1989) adds that the funding of research, the objects of study, and the use of research are still white male dominated and that reality is being shaped through the “male lens.” She believes that research must get beyond the past and present conditions of women.

Summary

The development of administration has stemmed from bureaucratic centralization based on notions of efficiency. Emphasizing expertise in finance and public relations, the positions of principal and assistant principal were developed to place white males as supervisors with females and minorities as their subordinates, thus establishing the dynamics of administration as one of male dominance where males administer and females teach.

In particular, the position of the assistant principal grew out of the position of a general supervisor assigned to look for the weaknesses of teachers. A confusing position, the AP is touted as the “stepping stone” into administration, especially at the secondary level, and discipline is the primary responsibility of the position. APs are challenged when attempting to receive satisfaction from the position while serving their school principal.

Women trying to break through into secondary school administration face numerous problems. Whether dealing with family obligations or gender stereotyping, women receive little encouragement to take on the challenge of the AP. With the ‘ole boy network’ taking care of their own, women are left without role models or mentors to help facilitate their goals. In a profession dominated by females, the secondary female administrator is constructed as ‘the other’ in an organizational structure white males have created and dominate.

CHAPTER THREE

Methods and Procedures

As stated in Chapter One this research was a qualitative interview study using a semi-structured interview protocol and a survey. Five females who had served as both secondary school principals and assistant principals were interviewed. Each was interviewed twice. The interviews combined a guided approach with a standardized format of certain key questions and a conversational strategy which left other items as topics to be explored at the interviewer's discretion. This allowed the interviewer flexibility to probe certain topics in greater depth or to pose questions of inquiry in new areas that were not originally anticipated during the interview instrument's development. Since the study explores only the experiences of females who have served as assistant secondary school principals and principals, the sample was purposive rather than random.

Beginning the Interview Process

The participants were volunteers. In order to select them, a list of female principals was generated from schools in the Ohio counties of Hamilton, Montgomery, Warren, and Butler. By networking with doctoral students at Miami University who had served as assistant principals and principals, the researcher was able to compose a list of possible participants in the selected counties. This informed network of doctoral students provided beneficial information on the diversity of the districts and the subjects who were potentially willing to be interviewed. The researcher was able to mention a connection with each interviewee rather than randomly calling school districts. This provided good access. The candidates were called by the researcher, but it was not unusual to leave messages and call several times before receiving a response. Once the subjects agreed to be interviewed, the informed consent, questionnaire, and survey were sent by mail to the interviewees' designated addresses. The researcher asked during the initial phone conversation that they have this information completed by the time of the first interview.

Three of the five had their information ready; one of the interviewees sent it by mail after the first interview; one set of materials was collected at the time of the second interview.

Interviewees

Of the five women who volunteered for the study, three were European American and two were African American. Their ages ranged from thirty-five to fifty-eight. Three of the women are presently active as high school principals. One of the candidates retired after thirty five years in education, and another candidate chose to leave her high school principal position for family reasons. Three were not married and two still have children at home; one child was younger than two years of age. Three supervised grades 9-12; two supervised grades 7-12. Only one of the five candidates had her doctorate; two are in a doctoral program; and two have their Masters plus extensive superintendent courses and conference experience. The amount of time the five interviewees spent as classroom teachers ranged from four years to sixteen years. The total number of years they have been in public education ranged from ten years to thirty-five years. The enrollment number for the secondary schools of each of the interviewees ranged from 625 to 2000 students. Their districts were mainly suburban with urban overtones. The number of staff members they supervised ranged according to district size, with some having over one hundred members. Most of the interviewees received their first secondary school administrative position immediately after receiving their license. Several obtained their assistant principal positions without actively seeking the position.

Survey

Prior to their interviews, interviewees were mailed a personal information sheet to fill out. It covered such information as the educational background, administrative career, and future career goals of the participant, see Appendix C. Interviewees had to complete a survey which compared the duties they performed as secondary assistant principals to the duties they performed as secondary school principals. The survey was developed through research of other surveys (see Pietro, 2000) plus input from interviewees. This afforded the researcher an understanding of how each of the duties

was perceived as either major, minor, shared, or not a responsibility during their experience. The survey helped the researcher to analyze how many responsibilities prepared the secondary assistant principal for the duties of the principal. It also imparted knowledge on how consistent districts may be in their assignment of duties to the assistant principal and principal. There were six categories of responsibilities, with a total of forty-four duties listed. The categories covered staff personnel, school and community relations, activities, management, student personnel, and curriculum/instruction. The list was developed using research and guidance from present or past administrators. Once all surveys were collected, the researcher was able to analyze which duties were consistently done by assistant secondary principals and which were done by principals. A cross analysis was done to equate their duties as assistant principals with the duties they performed once they became principals.

Developing the Interview

“We interview people to find out from them those things we cannot directly observe,” according to Patton (2002, p. 340). The time and place of the interviews ranged from a classroom at Miami University to one interviewee’s home for dinner. All interview locations were based on comfort and/or convenience, especially the convenience of the interviewee. The researcher attempted to avoid areas which might be loud or interruptive since the clarity of the tape could be affected. It was the intent of the researcher to limit the amount of time for each interview to one hour, especially for those subjects who were interviewed at their place of work. Three of the interviews were conducted in the interviewee’s school offices, one during a teacher in-service day, others during a regular school day. The length of most of the interviews was approximately an hour; however, one was over two hours. The number of pages for the first interview, once transcribed, ranged from seventeen to twenty six. The second interviews were kept to one hour or less; they averaged fifteen to twenty pages of transcription. This second interview allowed time for corrections and additions to the first interview as well as time for probing deeper into the experiences of the interviewee.

Contacting interviewees for the second round of interviews was done within a week of transcribing the first interview. Again, contact was by phone or face to face, and

confirmations of date and time were sent by email. The researcher took notes during the interviews as well as tape recording the conversation. Tape recording preserved the actual conversation while note taking provided the interviewer with key phrases, major points, and key terms to capture the language. An interview protocol, see Appendix A, was used during the first interview, and the researcher made notations of facial expressions and the surrounding environment. Note taking also provided information for later reflection and was reviewed for clarification when transcribing. The interviews were transcribed and a separate document of researchers' thoughts was written. Four hard copies were made of each interview to be used in analysis; interviews were saved in multiple sites on the computer.

Interviewing

At the beginning of the first interview, the researcher collected the informed consent, questionnaire, and survey and would begin a general conversation. Many of the early questions were ones that had been asked on the survey, such as, "How long were you an assistant secondary principal; how long were you a secondary principal?" This was done to help relax the interviewee, get acquainted, and build rapport and trust. According to Patton (2002) "Rapport means that I respect the people being interviewed, so what they say is important because of who is saying it" (p. 366). The researcher then asked the overarching question and allowed the interviewee to speak descriptively about her experience. When answers opened up new areas of interest or there was a need for further understanding, the researcher would then encourage the interviewee to go further in depth with her answers. There were many times when a response led in a different direction than expected. During this period of time it was up to the discretion and understanding of the study by the researcher as to whether the interviewee continued or was redirected. It was important that certain questions were asked of everyone, but after the first interview there were other experiences which opened up for conversation. In fact, one question was added during the first interview to the interview protocol. This question was to ask the interviewee for suggestions for improving the role of the assistant principal. There were also questions in the second interview that were included to allow

interviewees to respond to questions that had emerged in the first interview with other respondents.

Interview Questions

Questions for the interview were developed around the overarching question: **Describe to what extent the experience of being an assistant secondary principal prepared you for the various aspects of being a building principal.** “It is the responsibility of the evaluator to provide a framework within which people can respond comfortably, accurately, and honestly to these kinds of questions,” says Patton (2002, p. 341). The first question often led into other conversations centered on this experience. The researcher would probe for more explanation, if needed. The next question was to talk about her experiences as a female assistant principal. This question was given to discover how she distinguished herself in the position. Question three asked her to talk about the disciplinarian role of the assistant principal. Since the research states that this is the major duty of the assistant principal, the researcher needed to understand how each viewed this predominate responsibility. The researcher then asked each interviewee what qualities helped and what hindered her development as an educational leader while serving as an assistant principal, followed by the same question about transformative leadership. A definition was given of transformative leadership prior to asking the question (see Definition of Terms, p. 16). From these two questions the conversations would center on opportunities or the lack of development in these leadership roles. The next question asked if she saw men’s experiences in the assistant principalship as different and how. All interviewees had worked with male assistant principals. The final question was added after the first interview. The researcher asked for suggestions to improve the assistant principalship. In the interviewing process the researcher found it difficult to not comment on what was being said, especially when impressed with their answers. As the interview ended, the interviewees were thanked for their time, and the researcher explained the next step of the process. Questions for the second interview were developed after the first interview. After reviewing the transcript, recording observations about interviews and an initial phase of coding, the researcher was able to ascertain which areas of experience would necessitate more information. The second interview

allowed for emerging themes to be probed for increased richness and depth. By cross-case analysis, the researcher could group together answers from different people to common questions. Interviewees were informed that they might be recontacted to clarify or deepen responses and that this would be done by phone or email.

Transcribing the Interviews

“Doing all or some of you own interview transcriptions (instead of having them done by a transcriber), for example, provides an opportunity to get immersed in the data, an experience that usually generates emergent insights” Patton (2002) states (p. 441). Transcribing each taped interview began as soon as possible after the interview. The researcher would listen to the tape one time through and then begin transcribing. Headphones were often used to block out other noises and permit complete concentration. Whereas some researchers may use professionals to transcribe the interview, this researcher felt it was very beneficial to transcribe the interview without help. While transcribing the researcher could reenter the moment and key in on the voice, inflection, and tone of the interviewee, which provided additional understanding of the experience. This was especially helpful when writing the researcher’s reflection on the interview. The researcher listened to small parts of the tape, would stop, transcribe, and begin the tape again. This continued until the end of the tape. The researcher would listen to the whole tape again, stopping to make corrections or fill in missed information. The process of transcribing each interview took a great amount of time, on an average, anywhere from six to ten hours. The researcher read through all of the transcripts, again making corrections. Copies were made of the transcribed tape, and it was labeled and filed. The researcher would then mail a copy to the interviewee for clarification. During second interviews the researcher would allow time for clarification and possible corrections of the first interview. Once the second interview was transcribed and mailed, further clarification was done through email or by phone.

Taking notes during the interview helped in formulating new questions as the interview moved along. Through notes early insights were fueled which helped to facilitate later analysis. Notes also provided a backup in the event the recorder malfunctioned or the tape was accidentally erased. After all interviews, the tape was

checked for problems, notes were read for clarification, and additional observations were documented.

Method of Analysis

Patton (2002) informs us that “In the course of fieldwork, ideas about directions for analysis will occur. Patterns take shape. Possible themes spring to mind. Hypotheses emerge that inform subsequent fieldwork” (p. 436). The researcher found this to be true. By the third interview, while responses were never identical, common themes did begin to emerge with each conversation. There were two primary resources which were used to organize the data: the questions designed prior to fieldwork and the insights gained during data collection.

Cross-case Analysis

Beginning with a cross-case analysis, the researcher grouped together answers from different interviewees to common questions, and recurring words or themes were identified. The researcher was able to do this by reading through field notes or interviews and making comments in the margins to determine what was significant. Answers to each question were grouped together to compare interviewees responses. From there all descriptive words were grouped together for charting categories. For example, words describing mentors, or discipline, or educational leadership were listed. The researcher would then analyze each of the lists and identify similarities or differences.

Memo writing began immediately following the first interview. Memos were written to catch thoughts and make comparisons and connections. They provided questions and directions to pursue. By writing memos, the researcher was able to actively engage in the material, develop ideas, and fine-tune subsequent data gathering. Memos enabled the researcher to flag incomplete categories and gaps in the analysis. This was the first cut at organizing the data into topics and files, which were named and labeled. Storyline memo writing was also done to tell the interviewees’ stories. This gave the researcher an opportunity to interpret the concepts and their linkage, leading closer to a central theme. All memo writing was dated and referenced.

Clustering

A shorthand technique for getting started was clustering the central ideas, categories, or processes. These were written and circled with smaller circles drawn like spokes on a wheel to show the defining properties, relationships, and relative significance of the themes. This procedure offered a diagram of relationships similar to conceptual or situational mapping, see Appendix D. Clustering the data provided another means of managing the large amount of data. Other drawings or diagrams were used to break down the data and then rebuild for understanding. For example, a ladder was drawn to represent the hierarchy of a school organization. With the bottom of the ladder being the teacher and the top being the superintendent, the researcher analyzed how moving into administration may differ for males and females in elementary and secondary schools.

Formal Coding

The next reading through the data started the formal coding in a systematic way, followed by several more readings until all the interviews were indexed and coded. Colored highlighting pens were used to distinguish patterns and themes. In the development of codes and categories, the researcher had to determine what responses fit together. The researcher looked for recurring regularities in the data, which revealed patterns that were then sorted into categories.

The first criterion looked at was whether data held together in a meaningful way or displayed internal homogeneity. The second criterion was the extent to which differences in categories were clear. During analysis the researcher worked back and forth between the data and classification system to verify the accuracy of these categories and the placement of the data into them. If several different classifications emerged, priorities were established to determine which were more important. The researcher prioritized according to credibility, uniqueness, heuristic value, and feasibility.

Divergence, or ‘fleshing out the patterns or categories,’ was done by building on information already known, making connections among different items, and proposing new information that should fit and verify its existence. Administrators, role models, mentors, and the ‘good ole boy network’ continued to cross over in analysis. It was difficult at times to distinguish the differences in these categories. Closure came once

sources of information had been exhausted and reached saturation. Grounded theory emphasizes immersion in data so that embedded meanings and relationships can emerge while the researcher is open to the data. In order to have substantive significance regarding data, it was important during the analysis that the evidence was solid, coherent, and consistent. To be able to execute the analysis, it was relevant to continue to ask, “What does this mean? What does this tell me about the nature of the phenomenon of interest?” when examining the interviews.

Line by Line

Variations of open coding were used such as line by line, sentence by sentence, or paragraph by paragraph. While the researcher had begun to distinguish themes early during the interviews, the interpretation of the data necessitated going beyond interview statements to attach significance to what was found; often this was done by doing a microanalysis or line by line analysis to find relationships among categories. “Grounded theory coding consists of at least two main phases: 1) an initial phase involving naming each word, line, or segment of data followed by 2) a focused, selective phase that uses the most significant or frequent initial codes to sort, synthesize, integrate, and organize large amounts of data,” according to Charmaz (2002, p.46). By breaking the data into discrete parts, closely examining, and comparing each interviewee’s experience, the researcher analyzed the data for differences and similarities. Comparisons were made of how each interviewee entered administration, their experiences as administrators, and if they were still administrators. This examination revealed phenomena of similar and different events for each participant.

Similar words or phrases were highlighted in each interview. These phrases were then titled and put into categories. For example, “discipline” became a title and all words and phrases on the subject of discipline were placed under that title. Occasionally, there were phrases or words that branched out from one category and the researcher needed to determine another category by relating categories to their subcategories. This is known as axial coding. When working with the category of mentorship, it was important to branch out from mentorship with the mentor and mentee.

Comparative Analysis

While line by line coding was used to interpret the participants' tacit meanings, a comparative study of incidents was also necessary. Here the researcher compared incident with incident as ideas progressed to conceptualize the incidents and identify properties of the emerging concept. For instance, each of the interviewees responded to how she dealt with student discipline at the secondary level. When comparing incidents, the analyst would look for the similarities and/or differences between phrases and actions of the respondents. Focused coding enabled the analyst to sift through large amounts of data, breaking it into manageable amounts by moving across interviews to compare experiences, actions, and interpretations. Theoretical coding followed the focused coding to specify possible relationships between categories; this permitted the analyst to hone the work with a sharp analytic edge. By engaging in theoretical sampling, gaps were predicted for needed data in order to saturate categories. Theoretical sampling illuminated the categories by seeking statements and events on how a process developed. Second interviews allowed for the conducting of further theoretical sampling by focusing on the theoretical categories that emerged in the first interviews. This gave the analyst an opportunity to elaborate on the categories. As a result of increasing the sensitivity to theory development, a comparative analysis of the properties and dimensions of the data was completed.

The ongoing responsibility of the analyst was making sense of the findings, offering explanations, drawing conclusions, making inferences, considering meanings, and imposing order. The analyst would often step back and critically analyze the situation, think abstractly, be sensitive to the words and actions of the respondents, recognize bias, and be flexible, while having a sense of absorption and devotion to the work process. It was important for the researcher to continually think about what was relevant and also be aware of what lurked in the background of the analysis. She continually asked "What is going on and was it vital?" in order to establish a grounded theory. "Categories were organized around the central explanatory concept" (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 161).

Biases of the Researcher

It is imperative for this researcher to acknowledge that any biases or predispositions to this research and analysis may have been affected by the researcher's orientation to feminist research and by her experience as an assistant secondary principal. Where statements made by respondents triggered the past administrative history of the researcher, the researcher was conscious of where empathy may have occurred and monitored her responses to those themes. It was the intent of the researcher to inductively look at multiple ways of organizing the data to allow for different findings. To the extent of the researcher's capabilities, all logical possibilities were pursued and an 'audit trail' was utilized to verify fieldwork and confirm the data collected in order to minimize bias while maximizing accuracy.

Concluding Statement

This chapter has explained the methods and procedures for gathering data and analyzing this qualitative interview study of the secondary female assistant principal and how that position has served her as a principal. Chapter Four presents the stories of how the interviewees entered into administration and some of the experiences they had as assistant principals and principals at the secondary level.

CHAPTER FOUR

Findings: Background and Experiences of the Interviewees

The following descriptions are meant to take the reader into the background and experiences of the interviewees as they became assistant principals and principals. This description does not judge whether what occurred was good, bad, or any other interpretive judgment. It is simply used to introduce the five participants so readers can understand how they became involved in administration and the knowledge and interpretation they gained from those experiences.

Deidre's Story

Deidre, a European American in her early thirties, was employed in the field of secondary education for ten years. She spent four years in two different schools as a mathematics teacher before moving into school administration in another district. Her experience as an assistant principal and as a principal was in the same small suburban school district of only 650 students. Deidre had attended classes in administration with her principal, the other assistant principal, and the superintendent. In fact, her superintendent was one of her instructors. She was approached by both the superintendent and the high school principal, a year before the position was open, to become their second AP. Entering into administration after being offered the position by the superintendent and the high school principal, she became an administrator in the year 2000, serving as an AP for three years, and then as a principal for three years. Within the year 2000, Deidre also began her doctoral program and was introduced to her future husband. She stated, "I was definitely on the "fast track" for my career." Deidre is presently a doctoral candidate, a consultant for High Schools That Work, and a young mother.

Deidre was selected to supervise the junior high in her first year as an AP in the district since the secondary building included grades 7 through 12 and she was the lowest "man" on the totem pole,. "I guess at the time I just looked at it as you just pay your dues," She adds, "I think because I had a good relationship with my principal, if I got swamped he'd come in and spend a couple hours doing discipline."

Early in her first year as an AP, Deidre had a “baptism with fire” experience. Deidre was left to handle the building on her own while the principal and other assistant principal attended a conference. She had to discipline two female students for fighting, and when the parents of the girls came in to pick up their daughters, the mothers also fought. This was definitely something she had not anticipated, nor was she prepared for it. The same day there was a gas leak in the building, and the fire department and police had to be summoned to the building. She recalls that each year her job responsibilities were different, but this was definitely a day of learning.

Her first year as an AP, Deidre had a good rapport with the other assistant but worked with him for just one year. She believes male administrators have a different experience when it comes to earning respect than females do. This AP knew the ropes; people trusted him and they would often go to him for advice. She never had the opportunity to start with any assistant that was on equal footing with her in regard to the amount of experience.

Deidre feels that the principal selected all the APs with the understanding that they would work well together. The leadership style of her principal was that “his door was always open.” The second AP that she worked with, a female, had previously been an administrator and had her doctorate. They were able to work together well as a team although there was a difference in how the principal interacted with the two of them. The other AP was given the more difficult assignments and greater authority in some areas of educational and managerial responsibilities. Deidre understood why the interaction was different believing the education and experience of the second AP made her a better choice by the principal for the tasks.

While Deidre was an AP, the principal and AP’s worked as a team, often sitting down together to accomplish the many tasks of building operations. She acknowledges, “We kind of took turns with strengths and weaknesses and who could do what.” She was often asked to give input regarding building matters, and she was grateful for the opportunity but adds that her input was not always acted upon.

Deidre worked on curriculum as an AP and stated that she was assigned this task because of a “man” power shortage rather than because she was the best person for the

job. She also did some staff development, opened faculty meetings, managed the Schools that Work reform initiative, and developed a school improvement plan. She added,

That either means one of two things. I was the person that was the easiest to get out of the building or it means I was the person they wanted on the blue print writing team to help have the vision for where we were going to move the school, or possibly, some combination of both.

While an AP, her first superintendent included her in district meetings, whereas her second superintendent wasn't at all interested in having APs there.

She always tried to give good suggestions and positive comments to teachers during evaluations before stating areas that needed improvement. This she believed would be a way of connecting with them and showing that she did know something about teaching. She attended professional development meetings with teachers, which opened the doors for trust and communication. She believes the things that hindered her growth as an educational leader included the time she had to spend on discipline and managing facilities. Within the first school year, Deidre was able to prove she was a competent leader. She stated: "I think that was something I had to earn my way into." Deidre believes that working with the building leadership team or the district leadership team gave her the opportunity to be a transformative leader. These activities gave her the chance to use creativity, empowerment, problem solving, and synergy. Those things, she believes, were more innovative than other parts of her job. The day to day things that she had to do to run the building (i.e. discipline referrals, unnecessary teacher observations) were the things that hindered her. She believed it was also very creative as an administrator to serve on the bargaining team. "We did the win-win bargaining one year and the superintendent asked me to be the one administrator," she explained.

One area Deidre claims she was not prepared for as an AP, at her building or district level, was finances. She confided that neither the district nor her master's program had educated her with enough knowledge for managing school finances. She stated, "Areas that stand out as being unprepared would be anything relating to the financial operations of the building." Also, she stated that the difficult personnel issues (i.e. termination of employees) were not given to her as an AP. Deidre believes she was given the easy issues while an AP but was not insulted by this. She felt lucky, at 28 years

old, to be in administration and was not offended when given the ‘no brainers’ as the assistant.

Deidre stated that while she was an assistant principal and principal she faced numerous challenges, not just because of her gender but also because of her age. These challenges worked together, making the role of disciplinarian difficult at times. “I would have senior boys say to me, ‘Oh, I thought you were one of the students,’ you know, when I was walking down the hall,” she explained. She feels that when the person sitting across the desk is female and doesn’t look much different in age from the students she has more problems than a larger, older male sitting at the desk would have. She knew she would never be able to use intimidation with the students. Deidre believes the defining aspect of the AP is discipline but adds that discipline was more about counseling the students than disciplining the students. She didn’t believe she changed in her role as an AP, but the attitudes of people changed regarding her, as time proved her to be a polite, fair, and professional leader.

When the former principal decided to move to a larger district, taking the other assistant principal with him, Deidre was given the position of the high school principal. The superintendent selected her for the responsibility of finding her replacement. Deidre organized an interviewing committee of teachers, counselors, and community members and they selected a young female with no previous experience. Because the AP and principal were both new to the role, a former male administrator was brought in as the other AP. Deidre explained this selection by saying, “There wasn’t a strong male candidate in the pool, so that was when the superintendent found a connection and brought this other guy in.”

During Deidre’s third year as principal, she missed the first six months of the school year due to being put on bed rest for her pregnancy. This was the same year a new superintendent was hired for the district. The former superintendent had served as a mentor and a mother/grandmother figure for Deidre. The new superintendent (also female) was cordial but was very critical of everything Deidre had previously done as the high school principal. Since there had been reductions in the budget, the only AP in the building was the young female. The superintendent hired a former male high school principal to come in and assist the one AP during Deidre’s maternity leave. This person

was often seen leaving the building by 3:00 p.m. to make his golf game. Deidre explained by saying, “He was only there to do the superintendent a favor.” The new superintendent demanded that Deidre make many modifications at the high school once she returned. She stated, “She gave me a list of like a gazillion things that had to be done when I came back to school in January.” The superintendent put up many barriers to prevent Deidre from creating an orderly building. Deidre’s assistant principal commented, “We had a superintendent who thought she was running the high school.” Beginning in January, Deidre was working many hours without eating and without sleeping; she had no time with her new baby and family. While her mother helped with the baby and her husband was strongly supportive throughout her administrative career, at the end of the year, Deidre decided to resign her position as principal.

The replacements for Deidre and for her AP were both male former football coaches who had little experience. According to Deidre the new superintendent had hoped to bring in old colleagues to take over as principal and assistant principal, but they didn’t want the jobs. When talking to the present football coach Deidre was told by him, “Isn’t it interesting, the women leave and we do well in football.” Others describe the atmosphere as being like “Marshal Law” but added that people seem to like it. Recently, in a conversation with the present principal, Deidre inquired about graduation. The new principal’s response was, “Well, we watched the game film (referring to previous films of graduation) and went from there.”

Nora’s Story

Nora, an African American in her late fifties, has been an educator for thirty-five years, sixteen as an English teacher in the same district in which she received her first administrative position. Being a single mother did not afford her the opportunity to pursue administrative positions until later in her career. She stated, “I guess I saw it as secondary to motherhood. All my career decisions were secondary to raising my son. As a principal, I was grateful I was not a mother and wife.” While renewing her teaching certification, she decided to take administrative classes to add to her expertise; she became an assistant principal four years after receiving her administrative license, as a

midyear appointment, when the previous AP became ill. She left this position at the end of the school year because the administration didn't offer her the permanent position, even though she had been highly recommended by the previous AP. She stated: "There was this first position where definitely a 'good ole boy' network was in place. They just didn't seem eager for me to have a position, so I thought, why would I want to work there, they didn't want me?" She went to another district, where she stayed for two years as an AP, then returned to become the associate principal in the first district for three years. She served as a principal for two years in a different, smaller district, in a building of approximately 750 students. Since her retirement Nora has served as a substitute administrator and teaches classes at a university.

The first position in which Nora served as an AP primarily involved discipline. She was in charge of the freshman class, where her duties were mainly processing referrals for discipline and supervising student events. Nora added: "There were no responsibilities, say for budget kinds of things, which would be a big part of being a principal." When she became an AP in the second district, she was given additional responsibilities such as: maintenance requests, custodians, and overseeing educational departments. In this district the principal was a principal leader and mentored her to a certain degree. She returned to her first district to become an associate principal with the promise of possibly advancing into the high school principal position. She was often given the AP responsibilities but was never given the opportunity to function in a leadership position.

Nora understood that performing the role of disciplinarian was part of her job as AP. She tried to be efficient in terms of processing her referrals and always included an element of care. She believed as a woman, "I probably did feel that I needed to prove myself or be above reproach or above criticism, in terms of how I did the job."

She described her style of discipline as the "black mother." Nora explained this by stating: "That was just kind of my discipline approach. Not a lot of compassion there because a black mother is not going to go, 'Oh, its okay honey,' you know."

To Nora, playing the "black mother" role was more theatrics than anything since she is not a loud, boisterous person.

During the time she was an AP in the two districts, Nora was given the opportunity to do tasks other than discipline. For example she was allowed to develop a school improvement plan, do scheduling, and plan professional development workshops. Nora believes these responsibilities afforded her the ability to be an educational leader, but the discipline load kept her from doing more in these areas. She explained: “You didn’t feel like you could step away, even to attend conferences or workshops for your own professional development.” When serving as an AP for the second district, she believes that because the principal was willing to talk about whatever happened, she was able to function as a transformative leader. She felt she could step out as a leader and take risks because she had a safety net.

Nora feels that the fact that she is a woman definitely shaped her experience. Nora sees men as having different experiences as administrators than women because they get more help, especially from secretaries (usually female). She doesn’t believe men are hassled by secretaries as females are. She explained: “It was just this constant friction, where if this were a man, I think, she wouldn’t have given him as much grief.” She feels that a lot more leeway is given to men.

Unlike many APs, Nora was proud to be an AP. She sees the position as a leadership position and thinks that it is one of the hardest positions in a school. In regards to the salaries of the assistant principal and principal, Nora said, “The salary is ridiculous when you compare the two. I think it is an injustice what assistant principals get paid versus what principals get paid. The principal doesn’t touch the kids, the assistants do.”

When the high school principal position became available in her district, Nora immediately applied. The interview committee recommended Nora for the position, but the superintendent asked for two names from the committee. The other name the committee gave the superintendent was a former, retired male principal. The superintendent selected the male principal. Nora explained, “Women don’t get the option of “double dipping” because men take care of each other.” Nora applied in another district, where she knew and trusted the superintendent who was soon to retire. She received the position of high school principal, replacing the person who was moving into

this superintendent's position. Her first year as principal was a transition year for the new superintendent.

Once Nora became a principal, she believed communication was the key to having a good relationship with APs. The principal needs to support the assistant and help him or her, but when Nora attempted to do this with her own assistant it was very difficult. He resented her being in a position he had desired. She knows people who have served as APs and stayed in the position for their whole career. She sees them as being very successful and content in what they are doing. She described one such person, "He was just a kind of laid back kind of person. He was comfortable as a support person, a number two guy."

Being an AP did not prepare her for relating to her superintendent. Nora explained that the relationship between the principal and the superintendent is something an AP does not have a chance to see. The superintendent may or may not let go of the reins to the high school. She described her new superintendent as an overseer who constantly criticized her. Since he had previously been the high school principal, he would come into the building, talk to teachers and undo tasks that Nora had mandated. It was not unusual for Nora to be conducting a staff meeting and have teachers correct her, stating that the superintendent had directed differently. He would also come into her office, get into the files, and intimidate her over her organization of the office. When she remained calm, he would become more intimidating, hoping to break her down. She stated, "I won't be that emotional female and give him that kind of satisfaction." She felt isolated and could not see any way out of the situation.

She began to experience health problems as a principal, but her superintendent never offered her time off to regain her health. When Nora's parents passed away, the superintendent allowed her to take just three and a half days off work. With the pressure of always having to be on the job, Nora felt that the only opportunity to recover was to get out. She explained, "I saw myself trapped with no husband to fall back on." She studied her finances and her quality of life and decided her only healthy option was to retire. When she informed her superintendent of this decision, he responded with, "Well, can I have your letter of resignation so I can take it to the March board meeting?" She thought to herself, "What an ass!"

Nora continues to be involved in education. She serves as a member of her local school board and attends numerous workshops and conferences as a school board member. She is also studying for her doctorate in administration and recently received her superintendent's license. However, she says, "I don't aspire to be a superintendent." She also stated she didn't aspire to be a principal when she began her administrative classes, but she knows she will always be interested in public education, even with all its headaches.

Lavern's Story

Lavern, a European American in her mid- fifties, was a music teacher for thirteen years during the time her three sons were young. She stated, "I never would have gone into administration when my children were younger." She then went on to serve as an AP for five years and a middle school principal for four years in the same school district, where she had taught. By this time, her sons were older and either accompanied her to school activities or were old enough to be left alone. Lavern was a single mother, but stated because her sons were students in the same school district she was an administrator in, it was never a problem. She obtained her first administrative position while working for her administrative licensure. During her administrative internship, early in the school year the AP was asked to leave and Lavern was asked to step into the position. Because she knew the time commitments of being a principal, she remained in the position of an AP until she finished her doctoral program. Once she was finished with her doctorate, she decided to apply for the middle school principal position. The high school principal position came open the next year and Lavern began the application process when she was told by administration not to apply. While she enjoyed working with middle school children for her four years, her greatest desire was to be back in the high school. She went on to look for a high school principal position in another district because, as she said: "I knew my love was at high schools and when this opened up and I had met the superintendent through my doctoral program; I thought I would love to work for somebody like that." She is presently in her second year as a high school principal in another suburban district of approximately 1400 students.

When asked about her experiences as an AP, Lavern stated that she believes it is an amazing training ground. She described her experience as a ‘mini school’ where she was in charge of a certain number of teachers and students, a school within a school. She added that if you have a good relationship with your principal, there are a lot of important conversations you have off the record. She could see the time commitments one has as an AP, knowing that as a principal the time demands are even greater. She explained:

You see the amount of time that is involved in football games and basketball games. Then you also have to show up for soccer and all the minor sports. The music people expect you to be at their events and the drama productions and parent meetings.

When talking about her role models, Lavern said she picked up things she would do and things she would **not** do from other principals. For example, one particular principal would make decisions on the run in the hallway, and he would say “yes” to anybody. She stated: “I learned to **not** make decisions when I was flying through the hallway.” Lavern also learned from other principals not to take advantage of people’s time by thinking that what she was doing was more important than anyone else’s time. She designed a discipline program to ensure that discipline was done on a daily and timely basis because teachers expect this. She believes it is especially important for an AP to be efficient in processing referrals for teachers. She learned from her principal to work as a team member and to seek other opinions when making important decisions. Lavern praised an AP for helping her learn how to work with students as a disciplinarian. She learned to make phone calls by watching and listening to him. She went on to explain that he was a no nonsense type of person, who all the while used an element of care.

Lavern, like Nora, did not set out to become a principal. She started classes in a leadership program to renew her licensure. She loved it and realized she wanted to become an administrator. She goes on to say, “I didn’t set out to become a high school principal or any kind of principal. I got into the leadership program and started thinking probably the same thing you did: I can do this!”

Lavern loved being an AP and tried really hard to do a good job of disciplining students while helping them keep their dignity at all times. She believes the students

always knew she liked them and cared about them, but they also knew she wasn't going to let them misbehave.

Lavern believes that parents are often the worst obstacle to understanding the need for students to behave. The students who were the worst about understanding the consequences of their actions had parents who would go on a shrieking contest with her. She explained, "You knew in your heart that somewhere down the road that child was going to be held accountable by a judge or somebody and momma couldn't go in there shrieking." She feels she could affect change with the children, but it was impossible to change "shrieking" parents. Lavern stated that she does not scare easily and was never intimidated physically by any of the students. She has never been scared of children and recalls that she broke up a lot of fights. She felt it was her job as the disciplinarian not to look away, and she was not about to wait for a man to come along to take care of things. She goes on to explain: "I never let security do what I thought I could do myself because I think that is part of the aura that a woman has to put on if she is going to be a disciplinarian." She added that even if a female administrator is shaking inside she has to give the impression that she is not. She was not going to give into violence and believes it is important to establish credibility.

As an assistant principal and educational leader, Lavern worked on curriculum committees, grade point issues, and the weighting of classes. She learned how important teacher evaluations were to administrators. She believes administrators need to get into the classrooms in order to know what is going on. She thought observing teachers helped her talk to parents, saying, "You can't talk to parents about the teacher if you've never seen the teacher work." She feels that teachers understand that without the APs evaluations wouldn't get done. Teachers know they need APs, and that makes for a good relationship.

Lavern is now in a district where she greatly admires her superintendent and believes it is important to work for somebody that she admires and respects. She has not always respected her superintendent, however. She said, "I won't be a part of the 'good ole boy' network and I was up against that at the other school district. Nothing I did was valued or appreciated." She believes that there is a glass ceiling that women come up against in high school and middle school administration. If a woman is working in a

district that has a 'good ole boy' network, she is never quite accepted at the level that men are. There is always something they are criticizing women for, and it is very hard. She stated, "You know it's that same saying, "Where a man is 'forceful', a woman is a 'bitch'!" Lavern feels that if a woman wants to compete for positions in really good schools, having a doctorate is a great advantage.

Lavern expressed the view that it was hard to leave her former district because it was so beautifully diverse in population. She likes a mix of cultures in a district. She also misses the strong professional and personal friendships she developed. She believes that the district where she presently works is so 'lily white' that the children are out of touch with many aspects of the world. She stated, "Maybe that's part of my mission, to help them get in touch. You have to bloom where you are planted but I really loved the kids in my other district and the challenges working there brought me."

When asked about her future plans, Lavern stated she is right where she wants to be. She believes it would be very powerful if there was more time for women administrators to come together and dialog regarding big ideas for how to affect the profession. She definitely misses the opportunities she was given in her doctoral program to dialog with all the other administrators in her classes. She believes there will continue to be more women in leadership positions in schools, and men need a greater understanding of how to deal with them and with this change. She went on to explain:

I think that to a certain extent, the way to the future is for men to understand that they will be working with women. There are some men who are just good at it, like my superintendent, and some who are not!

Betty's Story

Betty, a European American in her early forties, was a biology and science teacher for twelve years and is presently in her first year as a principal in a small suburban high school of approximately 625 students. Prior to becoming a principal, Betty had been an AP for nine years, seven years in one district and two years in another. Betty is single and obtained her first leadership role in the Army Reserves as a platoon leader. She was a member of a military police company when she injured her knee with a

half year left before graduation from college. Until she became injured, she was planning to have two vocations to work within when, due to her medical disqualification from the military, education became the chosen career. When talking about her career in the military she explained how the experience gave her self discipline, self confidence, and the ability to make rapid decisions, all of which has served her well in administration. As Betty explained:

I would say within a year after completion of my masters I got serious about moving into administration. I taught for twelve years because I wanted to make sure the length of time in the classroom would validate my experiences just a little bit more, in terms of moving and becoming a more effective administrator.

Betty had already begun her teaching assignment for the year when she was offered her first administrative position in a different school district. She regrets that she had to leave the students she had already started the school year with.

As an AP, Betty was responsible for the discipline and attendance of approximately 1000 students. She felt fortunate to have this opportunity to work with the students and the discipline program. She stated that this honed her public relations skills with parents. She was given the opportunity to take the role of the associate principal within a few years; in that position she did the master scheduling, student registration and curriculum reviews. Betty believes these responsibilities helped prepare her for a principal's position. She went on to explain that: "The one thing I wish I had more of would probably be the financial piece. In both my assistant principal positions that was never an appointed function. So, it was always something that just the building principal dealt with."

Uniquely, in both places Betty served as an AP, she was the only female administrator in the high school. While there were several female administrators in other buildings (e.g., a high school principal, an elementary principal, and a superintendent) none of these people served as mentors to her. She added, though, that the male principals in each district were very approachable in terms of making sure she knew and understood what was going on in the buildings. They freely advised and encouraged her to move forward to the next step as an administrator. For example, Betty stated, when describing one of her principals, "I always felt that each time I would come

back, he would have that little pep talk of ‘Don’t be discouraged with this; it’s all about different things’. So in that way, he was a mentor.”

As an administrator Betty was never concerned for her safety. She found that when she asked students to do something, they complied. As she put it: “You will run into people who have an issue with taking direction from a female and it’s maybe some authoritative issues that they have. Typically, this was not with students but with certain male parents.” She explained that when people see her and have conversations with her she is not what they expect. She is not the ‘typical’ push-over female. She claimed that she is very direct and no nonsense while at the same time letting students and parents know that she cares about their best interests and that she is going to take time to listen.

Discipline consumed, on a daily basis, eighty to ninety percent of Betty’s day. She feels it was a negative thing; however, it was an experience where she developed relationships with many of the students and parents. It was a necessary negative experience, but she believes that during those transactions she developed the opportunity to counsel those students and help them to focus on changing their behavior. She stated:

I often found that because of my personality or by virtue of the position I became what we called the sixth counselor for the building. There would be kids who actually preferred to see me, opposed to going to an assigned counselor.

Some parents from her former district still call her for advice on their children. For Betty, this is a very positive thing because her goal has always been to help.

As an AP, it was Betty’s responsibility to evaluate fifteen to sixteen teachers four times a year. She recommended staff for non-renewal and believes that communication was the key. Her strategy was to offer suggestions for improvement, resources, and build rapport through conversation. She feels it was her obligation as a leader. She added: “If I can share this with them, if I can offer strategies, if I can help coach them through some things, then that’s my role as a leader.” She found that a staff is far more at peace and that one accomplishes far more if the administrator is willing to work with them instead of against them. This helps the AP get a lot more done than she would otherwise.

Betty feels it is her responsibility to mentor her AP, but her present situation is unique. She and her AP taught together in another district, and he has been an AP for approximately nine years. Since he is an experienced administrator, she does not need to

do a lot of mentoring. She stated: “In terms of our styles and our philosophies we are very similar. He knows what he is doing, and I have a confidence that he can take care of anything.”

Betty thinks that men have a faster track as administrators than women do in terms of moving into a principal’s position, but as far as roles and responsibilities are concerned, they are the same for men and women. She explains that being an AP for nine years was a necessary step because she had an opportunity to learn and grow although she believes she stayed too long in AP positions. She went on to say,

I stayed too long and I didn’t get the advancement. I thought it began to impact, at least for the last two years, my role as an assistant and how I felt. Had I been a male I wouldn’t have still been there.

Betty believes that for some people being a ‘lifer,’ or career AP, is a natural niche. She thinks that this is where they can deliver the most. If they’re successful and happy and the organization is happy, then this is a ‘good fit’. However, she doesn’t believe three years in the classroom is enough time to teach before going into administration. She explained, “I no more feel they’re ready than the man in the moon but the requirement says they are and they feel they’re ready, so they move.” Betty feels that one should move into new positions when she is ready to and when she is happy.

As for her, she wanted to be in the classroom for a period of time, and she wanted to remain an AP for a while. Even so, she stayed as an assistant longer than she anticipated. As she pursued the position of principal there were often determining factors over which she had no control. She described one situation she encountered when an inappropriate question was given to her during an interview, “What are you going to do when a large male student is in your face, saying stuff?” She explained that this was her opportunity to demonstrate that she had the ability to work with strong personalities and responded by saying, “It doesn’t matter the size of the person, discipline is discipline.” She said she is ready to move up into a central office position and hopes that it will not take as long as it took her to become a principal. Her approach is to continue to be challenged once she has mastered something. She would like to further her education by entering a doctoral program, but knows that only when the time is appropriate will she commit to her next challenge.

Wanda's Story

Wanda, an African American in her early fifties, is presently in her fourth year as a high school principal in the same district in which she was an assistant principal for two years and an English teacher for middle school and high school. When asked how long she has been in education, she responded that it has been “many years” (estimated by interviewer, around 20 years). She has two master degrees, is licensed as an elementary and secondary principal, and has her assistant superintendent’s licensure. She is the principal of a suburban school of approximately 1200 students, grades nine through twelve. When she was an AP, her title was “assistant principal,” but officially she was the principal of the ninth grade academy. The principal and other APs did most of the management of the building. She explained, “Where I learned just the elements of being the principal and bringing a peace and calm to the organization that was in a little bit of chaos.” Wanda stated that the teachers and students in the building saw her as the ninth grade principal, and what she did or said really didn’t mean anything except to the ninth grade teachers and students.

When talking about her work in the ninth grade academy, Wanda explained that she was a strong leader of the ninth grade teachers. She said they did everything as a team of fifteen people. They had shirts, school spirit was high, and she organized the ninth grade testing. Everything was geared toward excellence. The teachers viewed the academy favorably and believed Wanda was doing a great job as a leader.

When the principal had to leave his position before the school year ended, Wanda was the person who organized the vision of the building for the remainder of the year. She put the plan in place so they would have effective management. She was part of the interviewing committee that searched for the new principal, but the administration and teachers decided that Wanda should become the high school principal. The superintendent asked her, “What would it take for you to be the principal of the building?” Because it was such a great responsibility and she had two children at home, Wanda said she talked to her husband and prayed over it. Her youngest child was only a toddler and her eldest was just beginning high school. With a strong family background,

of a father who was all about business and a grandfather, who had been a history teacher and principal, Wanda decided to take the position.

Since she had been a teacher and administrator in the district for some time, when she stepped into the role of the principal it was relatively easy because the students already knew her. She believes it is extremely important for a principal to know the names of the students. She feels teachers have a major problem when they don't know the students' names. To illustrate her opinion, she said:

Reducing anonymity is powerful. When a teacher is doing hall duty and they call on a student, the student response is, "You don't know me; you don't even know my name; so why are you talking to me?" Where I can come around the corner and say "Hey, Shawn, come here!" It's different, very different.

One thing Wanda is very grateful for is her mentors. She had one older gentleman as a mentor who she says was like 'Father Wisdom.' He had done everything in administration and trained her in the wisdom of how to interact with people. He showed her how to read situations and take the pulse of what is going on. This was a valuable experience for her. She also had very strong women who guided her.

When asked about discipline, Wanda responded that her students found her very approachable and she knew her students and their parents. She knew those things to say to students to let them know how disappointed she is in them. She reminded them of how she was always there to help them and to remember what she had taught them about whose opinion they should value. She stated, "I cannot control them, but I try to get them to see how they should behave." She added that first one has to really mean something to them before this can work. One has to know how to get them to want to be good citizens.

Wanda developed many programs and courses as the ninth grade principal. She had programs for 'At Risk' students, she planned open houses to bridge the communication gap with parents, and she planned retreats for students and staff to develop their vision together.

As the high school principal, Wanda gave her teachers a survey to evaluate her performance. She said, "I think it was the best thing I could have done. Then I gave them the results and we talked about it." Overwhelmingly, the survey showed she had high expectations, was a strong instructional leader, and helped teachers develop

professionally. She believes it was a really good survey, and it has helped her to improve as an administrator.

Wanda takes great pride in the Ambassador Program she has developed for her high school students. She wanted students to become role models for other students and the ambassadors begin by helping with freshman orientation. They do morning announcements, summer reading programs, and give tours. Wanda has high expectations for her student council, also. When given the opportunity not to wear the school uniform for the day, the students chose to have a “Dress to Impress Day.” When describing the day she says, “You should have seen my babies come here. They had on suits and ties. They were dressed up like they had a career going to a job. They took it seriously.”

Wanda believes that men become APs more easily than women do because women have the baggage of family and children. She added that part of the reason she could not become an administrator sooner was because she did not want to be away from her children. She also feels men have different experiences than women because they react differently to things. She believes that the ‘good ole boy’ network is still there for what it is worth; but she feels it all depends on the individual and the experiences he or she brings to the situation.

Wanda is uncertain when discussing people’s reactions to her. She is not sure if it is because she is a strong person, a woman, or because she is an African American woman. She said that some of her issues with white males are racial, some of her issues with staff are due to their incompetence or lack of strength, and her issues with parents are often due to their own frustration with what to do with their child. When asked about being a transformative leader, Wanda explained she knows about this style of leadership and she likes to learn. She is presently taking three classes and hopes to soon have her superintendent license. She believes if one does not know the direction she needs to take then she really does not know where she is going. She will not confess to what she may want to pursue as a career in the future, but one thing is certain: she will do it her way.

Summary

To summarize, the researcher presented the striking aspects of these women's career paths to highlight their entrance into and involvement in administration. The participants were teachers in math, science, English, or music and are licensed to be elementary and secondary principals, supervisors, assistant superintendents, and/or superintendents. The majority of the participants were teachers for at least ten years before entering into administration. Several delayed this step because of family obligations and wanting to stay in the classroom. Some were initially unable to obtain administrative positions, believing this was due to their gender. Only one became an AP and principal early in her career but has since left administration after the birth of her child. Three of the participants moved into administration in the same districts they had taught in but not all were able to advance into the high school principal's position in those districts. Some were prohibited by the central office administration from seeking the positions they desired. Two stepped into the AP position as mid year appointments. Each of the participants experienced the 'ole boy network', where some had more difficulty than others "fitting in" or being accepted as valuable members of the administrative team. They agreed that serving as APs was a tremendous learning experience, but discipline monopolized their time, often making it difficult to be educational leaders. None of the participants were intimidated or threatened as the disciplinarian of a high school environment. Most expressed their deliberate attempts to not appear as a "typical" or "emotional" female. They were very much aware of how important it was to establish their credibility as a strong female leader. Having mentors, role models, or critical friends was an important piece to advancement in their careers and without this support, advancement was often hindered. Once the participants were principals, some experienced difficulty with the superintendents they served under. They all agreed the political piece of the superintendent and principal relationship is not something one sees as an AP. All believed it was their responsibility to support and mentor their APs. Presently, two of the participants are finishing their doctorates in educational administration and the others are serving as high school principals.

The researcher believed it was important to present the data in such a way that the reader could engage in the lived experiences of the participants before encountering further findings in Chapter Five. By showing how each of the participants entered into administration, how her experiences affected her role performance, how being an assistant principal evolved into being a principal, and how “the stepping stones or stumbling blocks” affected her future, the researcher laid a foundation for better understanding of the data in Chapter Five as it describes the discovery of a grounded theory about female APs and their experiences.

CHAPTER FIVE

Findings: The Grounded Theory That Emerged

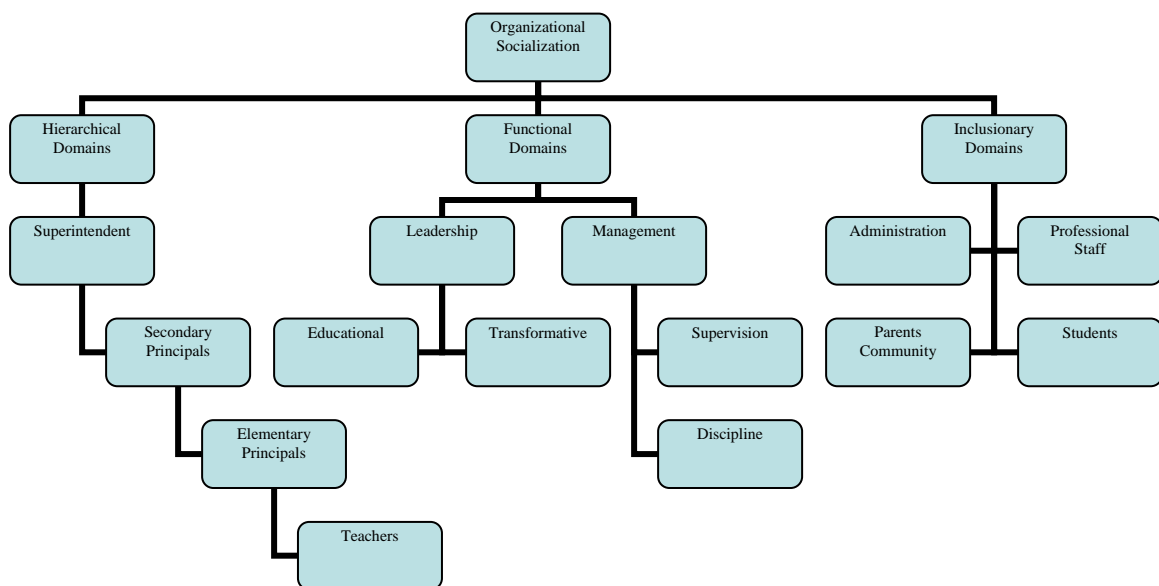
This study attempted to discover a theory which would provide insight into identifying the ‘stepping stones’ or ‘stumbling blocks’ encountered by the secondary female assistant principal aspiring to become a principal. The overarching question of this study was: **To what extent does the experience of the female assistant principal prepare her for the various aspects of being a building principal?** The data for this research was collected using a semi-structured interview protocol and a survey. The interview group consisted of five present or past female secondary principals who had been secondary assistant principals. Each was interviewed twice. This data contributed to the development of a grounded theory about female APs.

Overview of the Grounded Theory

In the development of the grounded theory, the researcher performed an extensive analysis of the data which began with a survey comparing the responsibilities of the secondary AP and principal. As interviews were transcribed and data was organized, recurring themes emerged. Memo writing provided additional ideas for comparing and contrasting while the researcher defined the properties and relationships of the categories. Continually asking “What does this mean?” the researcher had to learn to let the data speak for itself. Sorting through the data, placing the data into categories and subcategories, finding the relationships among concepts, and constantly defining what it is and what it is not was time consuming but necessary. By using literature in the field and remembering how the interviewees saw the events, the researcher could see how the data upon which the grounded theory was based suggests that “organizational socialization” is a comprehensive process the female AP must go through before she ‘steps up’ to the role of the principal. Organizational socialization, simply stated, is the process by which one learns “the ropes” of a particular organizational role (Greenfield, 1990). The secondary female AP must understand the functional domains of the role, which are determined by the organization, as the various tasks she will need to perform in

her role as the AP. The functional domains include leadership and managerial responsibilities. The inclusionary domains involve acquiring and demonstrating appropriate conformity to the social roles, norms, and values of the organization. These roles, norms, and values differ, depending on the culture of the organization but may be determined by school administrators, the professional staff, the parents and people of the community, and the students. The female AP enters the hierarchical domains at the lowest administrative rank in secondary schools. APs are at the bottom of the administrative ladder, and their degree of acceptance and admittance into the hierarchy of administrators is determined by those who rank higher, including the principal, assistant superintendent, and superintendent.

Figure 5.1 presents the framework for the theory. Figure 5.1 Stepping Stones/Stumbling Blocks Categories and Sub-Categories of Socialization for the Female Assistant Principal



This chapter will describe and explain how the five participants responded to the domains of organizational socialization and how being an AP was a ‘stepping stone’ or ‘stumbling block’ to serving as a principal.

The Contribution of the Survey to the Theory

Each of the five participants completed a survey which described her responsibilities as an AP as well as the responsibilities she had as a principal. (See

Appendix C.) The survey provided a starting point for the discovery of the grounded theory by permitting a comparison of their duties in each position. The six categories of responsibilities were: staff personnel, school community relations, student activities, student personnel, management, and curriculum/instruction. Each participant ranked the responsibilities for both positions as major (5), equally shared (3), minor (1), or no responsibility (0). There are forty-four responsibilities in the functional domain categorized as leadership tasks or managerial tasks. Leadership tasks are educational or representational responsibilities. Management tasks are the responsibilities of supervision and discipline. The categories of staff personnel, student activities, student personnel, and school management are management tasks. The categories of school community relations and curriculum/instruction are leadership tasks. The averages for each category were calculated and a scale was developed for ranking the categories. Those averages between **.5-0** were placed under “no responsibility”, from **2.5 to .6** were categorized as “minor responsibilities”, from **3.5 to 2.6** were put under “shared responsibility”, and averages from **5.0 to 3.6** were categorized as “major responsibilities.” Table 5.1 shows the average of the five interviewees for staff personnel.

Table 5.1 Survey Responses for Staff Personnel

	<u>Principal</u>	<u>Asst. Principal</u>
Supervision and evaluation of classified staff	4.2	2.4
Supervision and evaluation of certified staff	4.2	3.0
Teacher duty schedule	3.0	2.4
Substitute teachers	1.0	1.0
Student teachers	2.6	0.4
Recommending staff	3.4	2.0
Hiring staff	4.6	1.8
Updating teacher handbook	3.4	3.2
Administrative meetings	5.0	2.0
Building leadership meetings	4.6	1.8
Department chair/team leader meetings	4.2	1.2

The findings suggest that for the principals the supervision and evaluation of the classified staff is a major responsibility, whereas for APs this responsibility was minor. As for the supervision and evaluation of certified staff, for principals the responsibility is

major and the AP shares this task. For both principals and APs, the responsibility for obtaining substitutes is minor. One possible explanation is that in many districts finding substitute teachers is a central office responsibility. Student teachers are often the responsibility of the central office, and principals may share responsibility for informing staff of the possibility of having a student teacher. Recommending staff was shared by principals, but minor for APs. Hiring staff is a major responsibility for a principal, but very minor for the AP. The updating of the teacher handbook is equally shared. Administrative meetings are a major task for a principal but minor for the AP; the same holds for building leadership meetings and department chair meetings. Table 5.2 shows the results of student activities.

Table 5.2 Survey Responses for Student Activities

	<u>Principal</u>	<u>Asst. Principal</u>
Arrange student athletic events	0.2	0.0
Supervise student athletic events	3.4	3.4
Supervise student activity accounts	2.6	0.4

The survey results suggest that for student activities, the supervision of the athletic events is a shared responsibility. The arranging of student athletic events is not a responsibility of the principal or the AP. A possible explanation is that student athletic events are planned by the athletic director of the district, and the student activity accounts are often the responsibility of the athletic director or class advisor. The principal has minor responsibilities for activity accounts, but the AP is not involved. Table 5.3 shows student personnel.

Table 5.3 Survey Responses for Student Personnel

	<u>Principal</u>	<u>Asst. Principal</u>
Student discipline (minor infractions)	1.8	5.0
Student discipline (major infractions)	4.2	4.6
Student attendance	2.6	2.6
Student orientation	2.6	2.6
Hallway supervision	2.6	4.6
Cafeteria supervision	3.0	4.4
Maintaining student records	1.6	4.2
Updating student handbook	3.4	4.8

The findings suggest that dealing with the minor infractions of student discipline is a major task of the AP and a minor one for the principal. However, dealing with major infractions is major for both. This may indicate that the principal only deals with those infractions that are considered serious. Examples of minor infractions might be dress code violations, tardiness, chewing gum, or failure to bring class supplies. Whereas, major infractions could possibly be fighting, disruption of class, use of profanity or drugs, those type of infractions which may warrant removal of the student from school grounds. Handling student attendance and orientation is equally shared. Hallway and cafeteria supervision may occasionally be shared with the principal, but is a major responsibility for the AP. A possible explanation is that the principal has the authority to designate who is assigned to do these tasks or the principal is in high demand in other areas during these times. Maintaining student records and updating the student handbook is a major task for the AP's, but minor for the principal. Table 5.4 displays school management responsibilities.

Table 5.4 Survey Responses for School Management

	<u>Principal</u>	<u>Asst. Principal</u>
School budget	3.2	0.2
Supervision of building expenditures	4.2	0.0
Scheduling facilities for outside groups	1.4	1.0
Emergency safety management	3.2	2.0
Supervision of building construction	0.8	0.0
Supervision of maintenance/custodial staff	2.6	1.0
School calendars	2.0	0.8
Student transportation	0.6	0.2

The results for school management suggest that budget and building expenditures are shared responsibilities for principals, but not existent for APs. Scheduling facilities is minor for both, while emergency safety is equally shared as a principal but minor for the AP. Neither principals nor APs participate in supervising building construction. This task is usually for a superintendent or an appointed central office administrator. Supervision of maintenance or custodial employees is shared as a principal and a minor responsibility for the AP. Many districts have created positions for this task, and this supervisor often oversees bus drivers, cooks, custodians, and maintenance workers. School calendars are a minor responsibility or non-existent for principals and APs, as

well as student transportation. This could possibly be a task done by a district appointed committee or central office personnel. Table 5.5 shows comparative responsibilities for school community relations.

Table 5.5 Survey Responses for School Community Relations

	<u>Principal</u>	<u>Asst. Principal</u>
Administrative representation in community	4.2	2.0
Administrative representation at school functions	3.8	2.4
News and press releases	2.4	0.8
Liaison to school board	3.0	1.2

These findings suggest that representation in the community is a major responsibility of the principal, but it is minor for the AP. Representation at school functions is also major for the principal, but minor for the AP. A possible explanation is that the principal is considered the overseer of the building and would be expected to represent the building. News and press releases are minor for the principal and not important for the AP. A possible reason for this is that school news or press releases are the responsibility of the superintendent of the district or a public relations expert in the central office. The principal acts as a liaison to the school board, but the AP has minor contact with the school board. How much the AP acts as a liaison would possibly be determined by the principal. Table 5.6 shows the findings for curriculum and instruction.

Table 5.6 Survey Responses for Curriculum and Instruction

	<u>Principal</u>	<u>Asst. Principal</u>
Teacher in-service programs	4.2	1.8
Supervision of federal programs	2.6	0.6
Building curriculum	3.4	2.0
District curriculum	2.4	1.2
Textbook selection	3.0	0.6
Home education	0.4	0.2
Alternative education programs	1.8	0.6
Creation of master schedule	4.2	2.0
Student scheduling	2.2	2.2
Grants/school reform initiatives	3.6	1.4

The survey results suggest that teacher in-service programs are a major responsibility of the principal with minor involvement of the AP. Supervision of federal

programs is shared for the principal and non-existent for the AP. A possible explanation is that federal programs are the responsibility of the superintendent or other central office personnel. Building curriculum is shared by the principal and minor for the AP, with the principal playing a more important role. District curriculum is minor for the principal and minor for the AP; again this is probably a responsibility of the central office. Textbook selection is shared by the principal with others, but APs are not involved. Many districts have special committees for textbook selection made up of teachers in the subject area. The principal and AP are not involved in home education, and alternative education is minor for the principal and non-existent as an AP. Home education is usually a task for central office personnel, and alternative education programs usually have their own administrators. The creation of the master schedule is a major responsibility for the principal but minor for the AP. Student scheduling is minor for both. Student scheduling is often considered the responsibility of the guidance counselors. Grants and school reform initiatives are a major responsibility for a principal but minor for the AP. Unless appointed or volunteered, APs are seldom involved with grant writing.

Summary of Survey Results

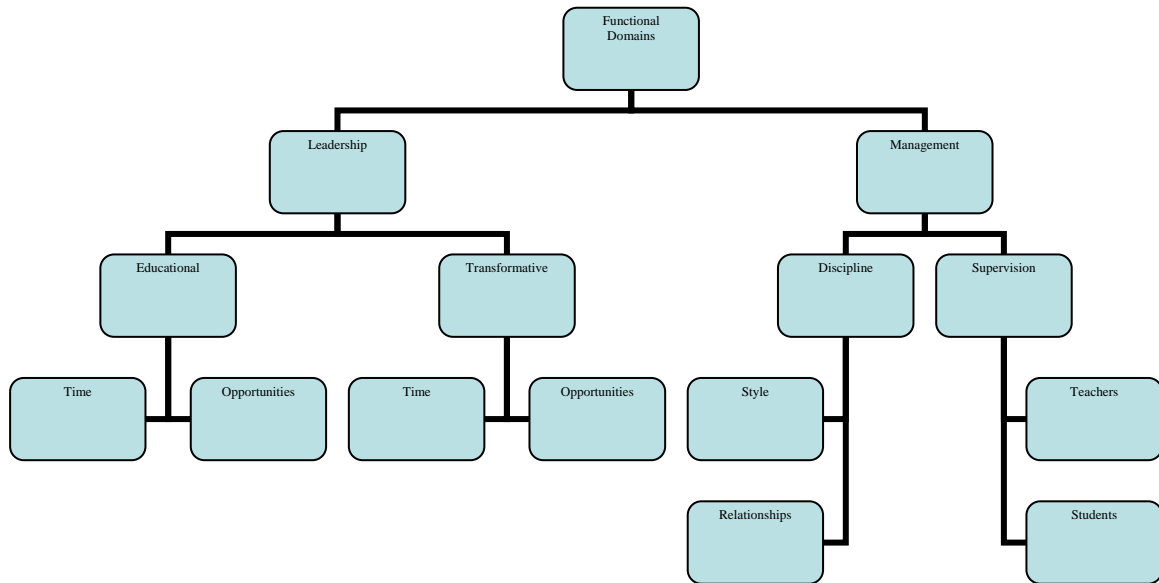
In summary, Table 5.1, Staff Personnel, shows that the principal has the major responsibilities for supervision, evaluation, and hiring of classified staff and certified staff. The assistant principal has no major responsibilities in this category. The Student Activities, Table 5.2, suggests that the supervision of student athletic events is shared between the principal and APs. Student Personnel, Table 5.3, indicates that the assistant principal has the major responsibility for student discipline (major and minor infractions), hallway supervision, cafeteria supervision, student records, and the student handbook. The principal has major responsibility for major student discipline infractions (e.g., suspensions, expulsions) but only has shared or minor responsibility in any of the other areas. Under School Management, Table 5.4, the principal shares the school budget, has a major responsibility in the supervision of building expenditures, and shares safety management. She has a minor responsibility for the supervision of maintenance/custodial

staff and developing school calendars. The APs have a minor responsibility for scheduling facilities, handling safety management, and supervising maintenance/custodial staff. In the leadership area of School/Community Relations, Table 5.5, shows that the principal has the major responsibility for representing the school at community functions and shares representation at school functions, but has a minor responsibility for news and press releases. The APs have minor responsibility in community representation, school functions, and acting as liaison to board. The last Table, 5.6, Curriculum/Instruction, shows that the principal has a major responsibility for in-service programs and the master schedule but shares building curriculum, grants/reform initiatives, and textbook selection with others. Other responsibilities were minor. The APs have a minor responsibility in all areas of this category. The survey suggests that in the areas of dealing with staff, major discipline issues, school budgets, teacher instruction, and scheduling, the principal has the major responsibility. In the areas of handling minor discipline issues, supervision of students, student records and the handbook the assistant principal has most of the responsibility. Being an educational leader is not part of the AP's responsibility. The next section will develop further the understanding of the functional domains within the sub-categories of leadership, management, as experienced by female APs.

Frustrations of APs: The Functional Domains

The categories for the functional, inclusionary, and hierarchical domains were discovered when the researcher grouped together answers from common interview questions. Recurring words and themes were identified, memos were written, and central ideas and categories were clustered together to reveal similar or different relationships. By grouping together answers to interview questions, the interviewer was able to analyze the situation, make inferences, and consider meanings to provide order for the findings. Figure 5.2 depicts the functional domain of the female AP

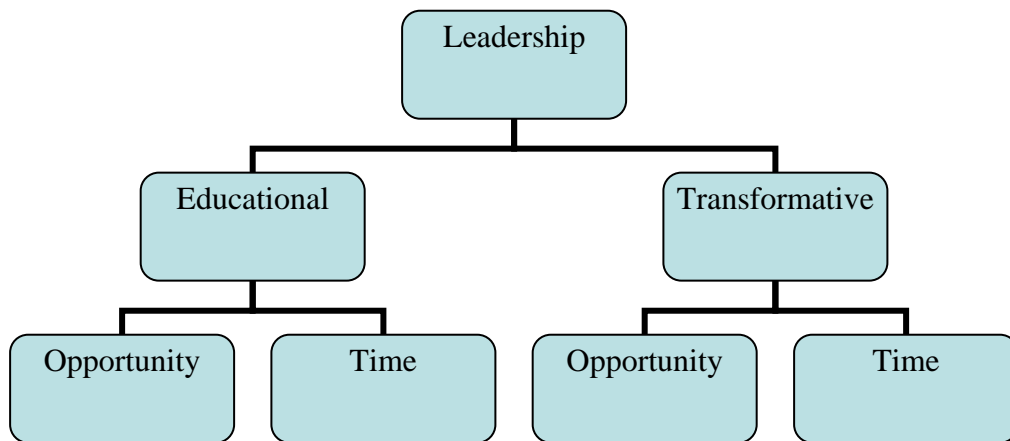
Figure 5.2 The Functional Domains Sub-Categories of the Female Assistant Principal



Leadership and the Female AP

Figure 5.3 shows the framework for leadership.

Figure 5.3 Leadership Sub-Categories for the Female Assistant Principal



Sub-categories for leadership evolved when the interviewees were asked the question about how the experiences and duties of an AP prepared them to be leaders.

When asked: “Does the female assistant principal perform any duties which develop the qualities needed as an educational leader?” the responses centered on two themes. The first was: how often the principal gave them the opportunity to perform as educational leaders. The second was the extent to which their duties (i.e. discipline and supervision) allowed time for educational leadership qualities to develop. All interviewees listed areas they were involved in which they believed developed their educational leadership qualities. Opportunities to act as educational leaders were provided by such responsibilities as: developing school improvement plans, running professional workshops, writing evacuation plans, scheduling, serving on curriculum committees, participation in textbook selection, and planning testing. What hindered their development as educational leaders was the amount of time it took to perform their other duties as APs, especially discipline. The interviewees believed they could not take time out for professional development because of the huge responsibility of managing discipline. Moreover, controlling their time was difficult when they were often taken advantage of by others. For example, Lavern complained, “The principal gives you the work he doesn’t want to do, the teachers send you students they can’t control, and the parents feel they can talk to you anyway they want.” Betty voiced a similar concern: “The adult issues consumed the rest of your time, staff always has issues.”

When asked: “Do female assistant principals have experiences that prepare them to become transformative leaders?” again the responses centered on how much opportunity the principal gave them and how much time they had to be transformative leaders. Nora saw her opportunities to be transformative as dependent on the principal: “My transformative leadership was there in my second position as an assistant principal when the principal was willing to talk about whatever happened and there were all kinds of resources available to help me with difficult situations.” However, being a transformative leader meant different things to each of the participants. Some believed the opportunity to ask teachers their opinions and include teachers in the decision making process was transformative. Others believed that having the opportunity to serve on the negotiation team involved transformative leadership. Betty spoke of transformative leadership as the opportunity to learn:

Almost all my experiences helped me become a transformative leader because whether it was a positive or negative thing, there was something to be learned from it. It's all learning experiences because you learned something from everything you do or don't do.

They all agreed that what prevented them from being transformative leaders was the day to day things they had to do to run the building. These were things that they believed really didn't need to be done by them, but it took a great deal of time to complete them.

When asked about being a female assistant principal at the secondary level, the interviewees commented that they were proud to be APs and flattered that they were given the opportunity. They stated that as far as the students were concerned, the AP was the principal. It was a valuable training ground, and they embraced the position. They talked about being able to watch the principal and decide what they would do and what they would not do, knowing always that they were not the primary leader in the building. Some of the interviewees believed that the AP has one of the hardest positions in administration, but that it is a genuine opening to work with the public. Betty, for instance, described how she grew through the position:

Working with the kids in discipline hones your public relations skills with the parents. Being able to do the discipline with dignity by identifying and isolating behavior and not the human being and then bringing the student back to be productive and successful is a great experience.

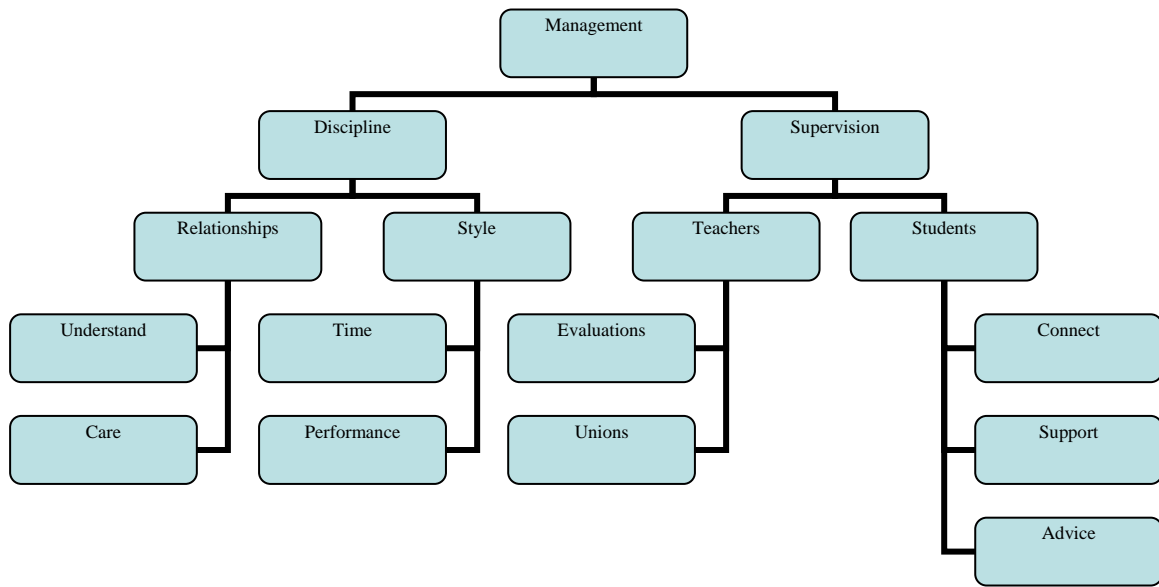
However, these women also discussed the stigma of being an assistant principal and how many people equate AP with "loser." One interviewee discussed how this attitude affected her work and how she felt about herself as an AP. They all believed that working as an AP was a time to pay their dues and a time to be put into situations that tested their character and integrity, while making the principal look good. They considered the job a supporting role at a very basic level. Betty began to feel the negative aspects of the role toward the end of her stint as AP. She said: "I stayed too long. The number of times I didn't get the advancement I thought it began to impact, at least for the last two years, my role as an assistant principal." Lavern spoke of the lowly nature of the job: "In your heart you have really sought leadership, and you know that you are just

in a bottom level leadership position, and you want to get to where you can effect change.”

Management and the Female AP

Figure 5.4 shows the framework for the category of management.

Figure 5.4 Management Sub-Categories for the Female Assistant Principal



The category of management has two sub-categories, discipline and supervision. The question on discipline was directed to the interviewees as: “Does the focus of the female assistant principal on discipline help or hinder performance once the assistant principal becomes a principal?” When asked this question, the participants gave the responses that fell into two areas: their style of discipline and the relationships they built with students during discipline conferences.

The participants discussed their style of discipline in two ways; first they explained how they performed or the style they perfected to get the task done. Then they told how they organized the discipline program and their time. They contended that their major responsibility as an assistant principal was discipline and that they were never afraid to do the job of discipline. All the interviewees agreed they were not able to physically intimidate others to discipline them. They did not yell, scream, or threaten

students. They described their styles with words like: “mediator,” “counselor,” “building relationships,” “respectful,” “trust,” and “listening to students.” They called themselves “approachable,” while making sure that students understood the expectations and what would happen if they did not adhere to their requests. For example, Nora explained: “The discipline was the hardest thing to do because I wanted to be more compassionate. I wanted to make exceptions, but I felt I needed to follow the rules in order to be perceived correctly.” Betty spoke of the importance of calm: “Whether I’m going to have a reaction or non-reaction, typically for me it’s staying calm with the kids and talking through it. I’m talking about choices.”

When discussing their discipline program and time, they said they believed it was important to do discipline in a timely fashion so that students and teachers understood and trusted the process. Efficient record keeping was very crucial to the students, teachers, and APs. Many of the interviewees saw twenty-five to fifty students a day. Students needed to understand the consequences of their actions, and the teachers needed to have immediate support. Deidre described the time-consuming nature of the job: “A lot of my day was consumed with assigning detention, suspending kids, and investigating whose cell phone was stolen by whom, just those sorts of things that eat up your time.” Lavern spoke of a different aspect of time: “I learned what teachers needed from me, which was to do discipline in a timely fashion. There was always time in there for the students to explain to me what in the world happened.”

A great amount of the discussion around discipline was centered on talking about building relationships. The participants discussed relationships with the students and their parents. Discipline was considered to be a negative but necessary evil which always involved an element of care. The participants explained how some students were repeat offenders and would have to be seen throughout the school year. One interviewee fondly referred to this group as “the frequent flyer” bunch. For students to know they were cared for and understood, it was important for the AP to build relationships with them. Lavern explained it in this way: “Sometimes you just had to say, ‘Hey, I love you to death but what in the world were you thinking?’ This way they continue to feel we have a connection.” Wanda stated: “I knew those little things that I could say that would get

them in their gut. If you can get to them so they know this is really disappointing to me.” She went on to add: “Discipline is close to ‘disciple’ and what do disciples do?”

Management includes supervision, supervision of students and teachers. As shown in the surveys, supervision of students was a major responsibility of the APs. There was supervision of hallways, cafeterias, and athletic events. The interviewees discussed these times of supervision as not only time consuming and tedious but also as times to connect with the students, parents, and community. They talked about supervision areas as places to become better acquainted with the school community. As a principal Lavern explained how she still connects with her students: “I make it a point to just get to the cafeteria and walk around the tables and say ‘hi’ because if you don’t make a point, you don’t see the children. I’ve got to do that.” Wanda said of supervision of the cafeteria:

During lunch time when I get to be out there with the students, I talk to them and I push the barrel for clean-up. If I’m the top dog and I do it, I think that other people may clean up, too.

The interviewees talked about their relationships with the parents and how parents rely on their support and advice to direct them to resources for their children, in particular the students who were seen most often. Attending athletic events or student performances gave the APs an opportunity to show students, parents, and the community their interest in the students and school community outside the realm of just discipline.

When asked about supervision of teachers, the responses centered on teacher evaluations and working with the teachers’ union. Several of the interviewees had established respect for their teaching skill because they had worked in the same building as teachers but added that holding adults to high standards is the hardest part of the job, especially when nurturing was not possible and these adults needed to change. Lavern explained evaluations: “I didn’t have any problems. The teachers have always worked well with the assistant principals because they know they need them and it’s a good relationship. We can benefit one another.... My standard is, would I want my own child to be in this teacher’s classroom?” Deidre said: “Even my veteran teachers, if I could give them one good suggestion out of the observation, then I think that opened up

conversations.” Betty commented: “I think as a leader having had the experiences that I’ve had its kind of my obligation to share.”

Many of interviewees had belonged to the teachers’ union during their teaching career and felt they worked well with the teachers’ union. This experience was helpful since some had the practice of recommending termination of employees as APs of the school, but it was the responsibility of the principal and superintendent to make the final decision. When speaking about the teachers’ union, the following comments were made. Lavern said: “I tell the union rep I’m meeting with such and such teacher. I don’t have anything to hide and I figure having another set of ears in there is needed.” Wanda observed:

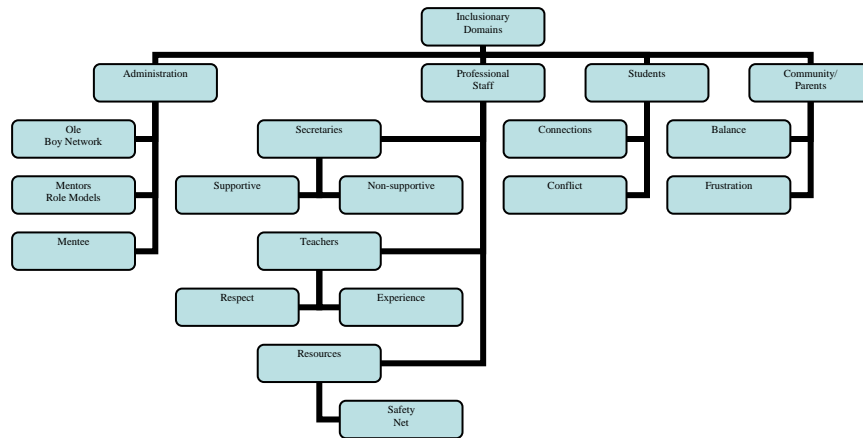
I’m not afraid of the union, just tell me what I have to do and I will do it because I have to work with you. They are not always working in the best interest of kids; it’s just to follow the agreement. A lot of issues could be done by talking about it but they come in the form of grievances.

Nora agreed with them: “I didn’t personally have many union issues. That’s one of the pluses of being an assistant because the union issues went to the principal.”

The Inclusionary Domains

The next section will explain the category of inclusionary domain. Figure 5.5 shows the framework for the inclusionary domain.

Figure 5.5 The Inclusionary Domain Sub-Categories for the Female Assistant Principal

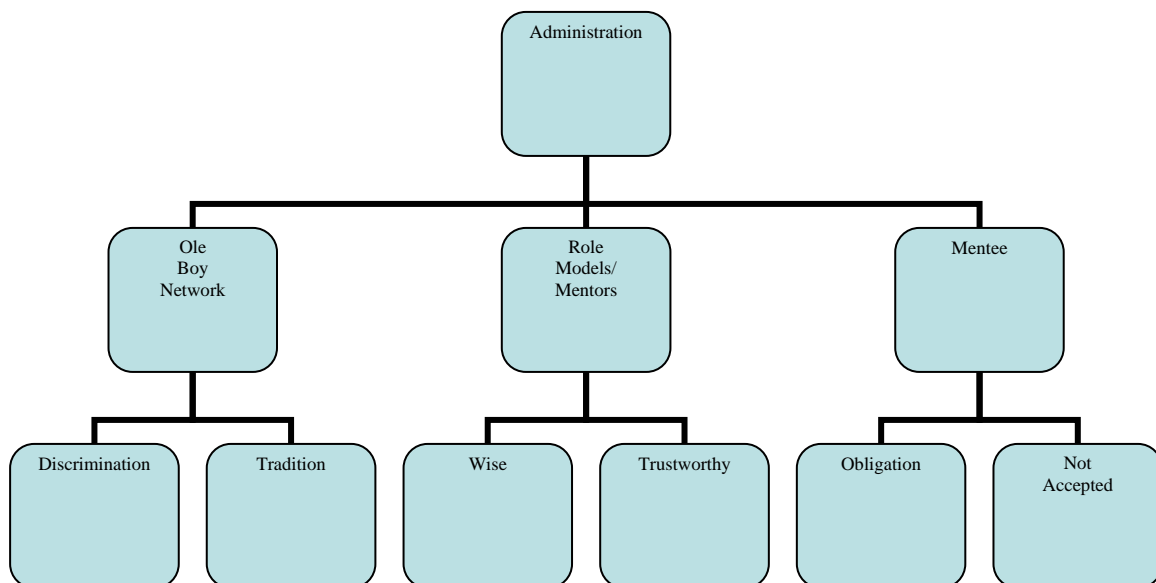


The inclusionary domain involves the conformity by the female AP to the social roles, norms, and values of the organization. Through the analysis of data it was determined there are four groups in this sub-category: the administration, the professional staff, the students, and the community/parents, which may support or hinder the AP's ability to understand and/or conform to these social roles, norms, and values.

Administration

The first category is administration, with sub-categories of 'old boy network', role-models/ mentors, and mentees. Figure 5.6 shows the framework for administration.

Figure 5.6 Administration and The Female Assistant Principal



When asked the question: “Do female principals perceive their experience as APs differently from male principals?” the interviewees responses were directed to the areas of the: ‘ole boy network’, role models/ mentors, and mentees.

As defined in Chapter One the ‘ole boy network’ traditionally operated in educational administration whereby men with like values and norms were established in power, and women received little or no opportunity to participate. When discussing the “ole boy network,” the interviewees commented on how men were treated differently than women. Men are **not** held accountable because they are the “chosen ones.” They had observed male administrators discard discipline referrals at the end of each semester, turn in reports late, and operate in a disorganized manner. Secretaries or other female administrators often helped such men. Moreover, as women the interviewees believed they were definitely discriminated against when seeking positions at the secondary level. For instance, Nora said: “Yes, I think there is a different standard because it is a ‘man’s world’ more at the secondary level than it is in elementary.” Deidre had a similar opinion: “For my replacement, she definitely wanted someone with experience, she definitely wanted someone older; and she thought she needed a man at the high school. I think she got the height and gender, but not the experience.” Betty agreed: “They want to see a six foot, charismatic male because that is a ‘traditional’ leader role and most people see that as a leader.” These women described how they were excluded, how they were treated, and how they coped with the situation. Lavern said: “I think education is a bastion where the ‘old boy network’ is still in play. I got my doctorate so that I could compete with men for high school jobs. I won’t be a part of that ‘old boy network’.” Nora talked about how she was inspired to learn how to play golf in order to be included at administrative retreats: “They did have this ‘good ole boy’ thing at administrative retreats where they would go off and play golf. That is what inspired me to play golf. They were a little bit surprised, but they included us because they had to then.” When asked about the ‘ole boy network,’ Wanda summed it up by saying: “It’s still there for what it’s worth, I suppose.”

Some of the interviewees had role models/mentors while APs; others found support people, role models, or mentors as they advanced into the principal’s role. A few

were fortunate to have friends in administration in other school districts. Role models/mentors, males and females, were those people who taught them the expectations of being an AP or principal because they had had the experiences themselves. These people provided someone they could trust to teach and advise them on the social roles, norms, and values of the school organization. When they talked about these role models/mentors, they spoke of people who were wise in the ways of how to read people, were very approachable, and had shared a common experience. Some of the interviewees were fortunate to have their principals as mentors, principals who were inclusive and invited them into the position. These principals communicated with them and were team players. Some had role models who knew the district, the people, and the situation they were up against. The interviewees talked about what this meant to them as they became administrators. For example, Nora said: “I always had a female mentor, you need to have a woman just in case we get some touchy issues. She helped me and remained as someone I could talk to.” Deidre said, referring to her principal: “He would always give me his perspective on what needed to happen, what shouldn’t, and what else he knew that I needed to know to make a better decision. He was very involved in the mentoring piece.” Lavern had a different experience: “I had a critical friend throughout the process. I could tell her things and she could see the people and she could experience the things I was telling her.” Wanda said: “Women, that was the softer side, see I had to learn that side. I had to learn to do the women’s style but had to balance keeping that with ‘I mean business.’”

The interviewees also explained how they were mentors to their APs (mentees). They believe it is important for their APs to know everything they know in case they have to step into the position. They saw it as an obligation as the principal to develop them and give them responsibilities. For example, Wanda said this about her own mentoring: “I guess because our communities are so closely involved in school, they need to know, especially the politics. They represent the school in a number of things and they need to get a piece of it all.” Wanda went on to add that she was also a mentor to two of her teachers who were working on their administrative licenses. She discussed how she worked with them on their goals, helping them to develop projects for the building. Two of the interviewees referred to mentorship as similar to their role as a teacher.

Deidre said: “Based on my experience it seems like the right thing to do. That’s what teachers do; help move kids from where they are to college. As a principal, I’m helping my assistant.” Nora agreed: “I always felt you should help people self actualize to whatever potential they have. Maybe that comes from the classroom kind of thing; you help kids grow.”

They also told how being a mentor to their AP was not always something that was readily accepted. Lavern’s and Nora’s AP’s created problems for them because they had desired the principal position. Nora had this to say about her AP: “I did have an assistant, and he was working against me. It was a male, an African American male; he was angry because he hadn’t gotten the job.” Lavern elaborated even more by saying:

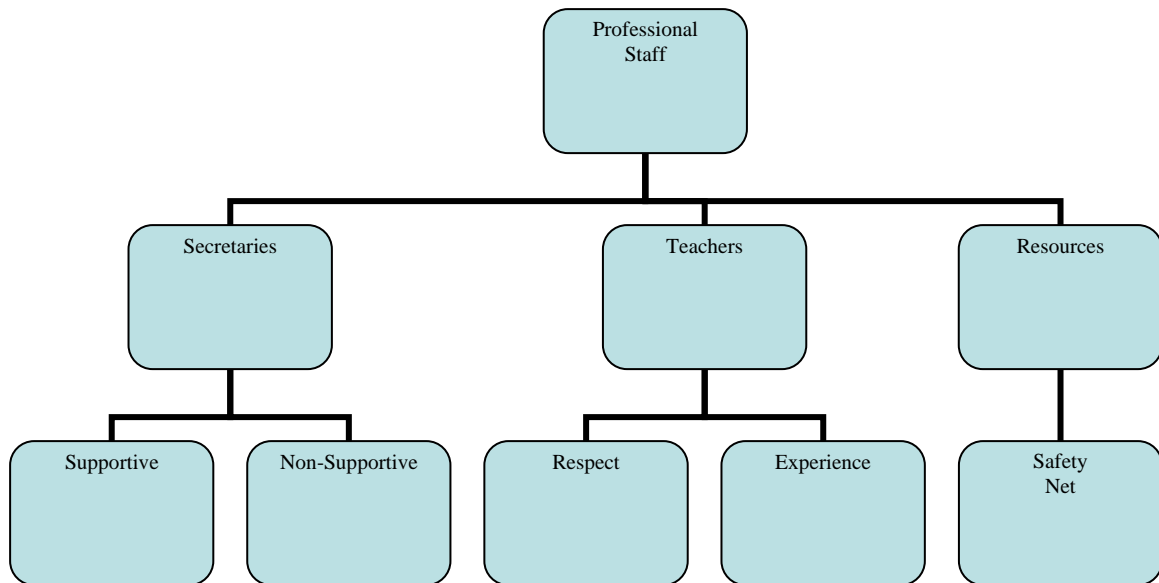
Sometimes he’s very abrupt with parents, and the way he works with teachers is important to me because he wants to put the hammer down too quickly. I think he would be happy to be my hatchet man, and I don’t want that. There is no place for that in a school. Teachers have to see us as having the same basic outlook.

Professional Staff

In the sub-category of professional staff, the interviewees discussed secretaries for the building administrators, teachers and resources.

Figure 5.7 shows the framework for professional staff.

Figure 5.7 Professional Staff and the Female Assistant Principal



There were secretaries who were supportive and there were secretaries that were not supportive. Several interviewees discussed how secretaries (all females) were not willing to give them the same amount of help they gave the male administrators. One interviewee believed secretaries know they're going to outlast the administrators. Nora complained:

I've had horrible secretaries, and I've had one really good secretary in my experience. They can be assets, but they can be very bitchy and not helpful if they don't like you as a person. I think they will push the limit more with a woman than they will with a man.

Referring to a conversation she had with her first secretary, Lavern said: "You can't yell at these kids when they come in, you know, that's my job. You have to create a really warm and friendly office and be that person out there who cares about them."

There were numerous resources for some of the interviewees, such as school psychologists, counselors, and police officers who were willing to help with difficult situations with students and/or parents. These people gave them the support to be leaders in their buildings because they provided a safety net. Nora said:

Knowing that if you can't quite decide what to do, there is someone you can go to and ask and they would be ready to discuss it with you and help you. I had

resources at hand to help me if I didn't know what to do. Those things all helped because you had a chance, you could step out.

Teacher support was generally earned through mutual respect. Remembering what it felt like to be a teacher and their own experiences in the classroom gave the interviewees the right to advise teachers on what good instruction looks like. The teachers knew they had 'walked the talk' and knew their expectations and values. Wanda said:

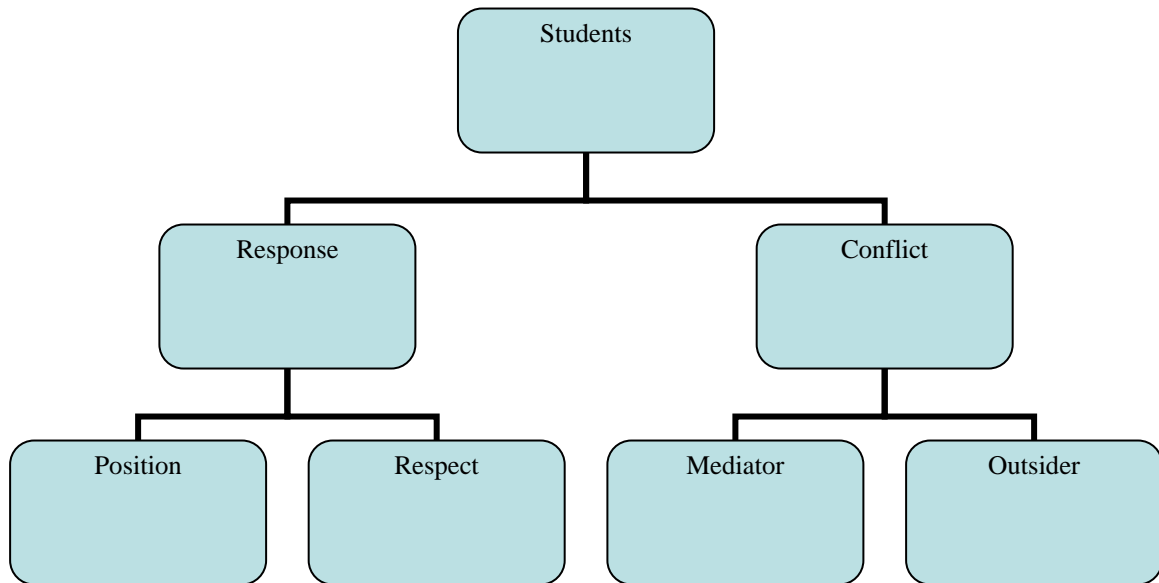
After a lot of people left, I had to make sure I rebuilt the trust. I started going to the room and working with people and just having conversations with them and using our data more. We started doing celebrations more where we recognize teachers at staff meetings.

Betty described supportive teachers: "I have many staff members in the building born, raised, and lived here forever. The communication of traditions or the communication of this is so and so; they have been very willing to do that for me."

Students

Figure 5.8 shows the framework for students.

Figure 5.8 Students and the Female Assistant Principal



The interviewees explained the students responded not just to the position of the AP but also to how well they were respected. The interviewees saw themselves as advocates for the students and valued the relationships they built together. They talked about the special connections they made with students and how important it was to bring the “problem” student back into the school environment as a productive and successful citizen. Nora elaborated on this point, saying:

I think, as far as kids are concerned, you’re the principal. I mean, you see them out, it’s ‘oh, mom, this is my principal.’ They don’t go ‘this is my assistant principal’ because the person they have contact with is “a” principal. They kind of drop the assistant, so they see you as the principal, one of many principals. Betty valued her experience with discipline: “One of the things I really feel fortunate in and prepared me well was working with kids and working with the discipline piece.” Lavern described her role this way:

Well, kids always knew that if I was their assistant principal, they would be in to see me. They know, they’re not going to work their way around this. They

would know that I would be straightforward with them, but you have to let them know you care about them.

Finally, Wanda had this to say about discipline:

Once again, understanding means being sensitive to the people around you and what's going on in the world. How do you really work with students now to prepare them for the future because a part of our mission statement at the high school is to create and produce good citizens? So, everything I do is about respect.

The interviewees struggled with the tension between the expectations of the staff and the needs of students. It was conflicting as AP or principal to deliver a consequence as the outsider, who could often see both sides of a situation which was personal to the teacher and student. Deidre described the dilemma this way:

What can I do as a principal and assistant principal to work with this teacher?

But, at the same time, you have to work with the kid. You're a mediator. I'm less of a disciplinarian and more of a mediator trying to get these people to get along with one another.

Nora put her views about overturning a teacher's discipline decision this way:

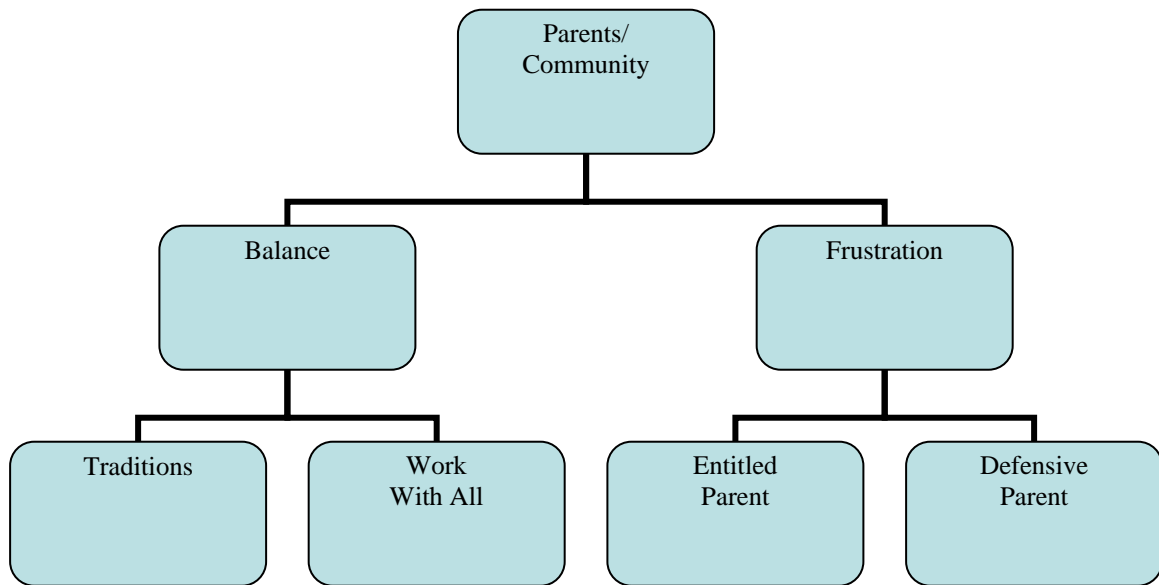
I never took that personally, you had to follow the law anyway, and you had to do it. It was more important to follow what was written because the teachers saw that as wishy, washy or weak. Sometimes I would try to work the system in that way, you know, I want you to overturn this because I don't want this kid to get that.

Finally, Lavern expressed a somewhat different view: "Don't just assume that teachers know what's on your mind. If I was going to do something creative with discipline, I would always check with the teacher first."

Parents and Community

Figure 5.9 Shows the framework for the APs relations with parents and the community.

Figure 5.9 Parents and Community and the Female Assistant Principal



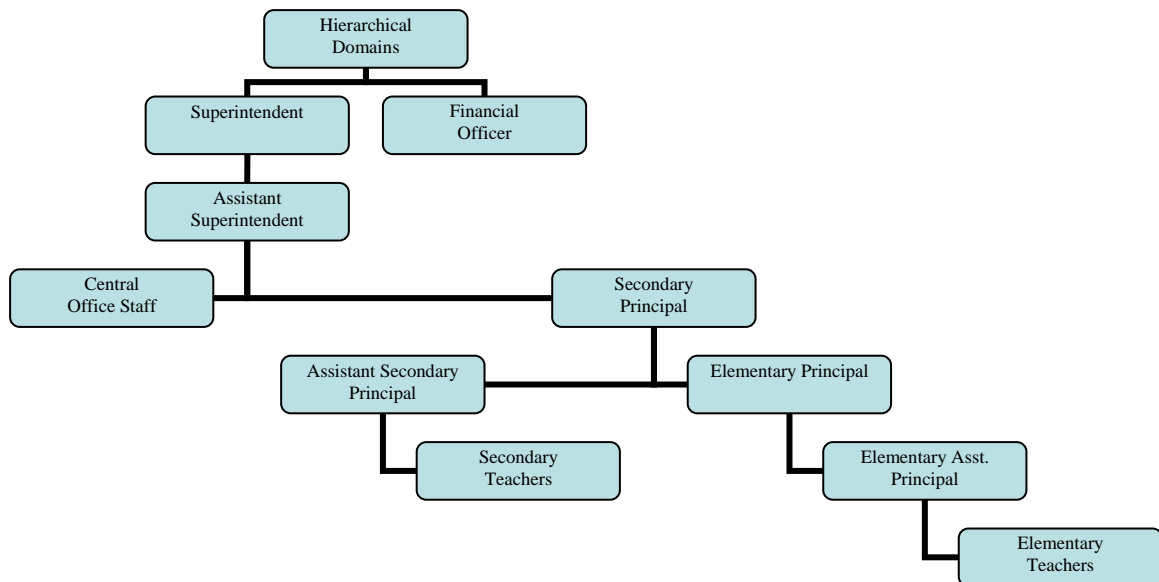
In order to build rapport with parents and the community, the interviewees felt it was important to build a professional reputation of fairness and respect. There are non-negotiable traditions in communities that the administrators needed to know and follow. They also needed to create opportunities that demonstrated their ability to work with all people, especially when there was a potential for conflict. The interviewees understood the need to develop relationships and to find a balance with the parents of the community, especially those parents they were on a first name basis with due to the frequency of seeing their children for discipline issues. This was their opportunity to counsel with parents and the community, to change behavior and attitudes. Betty described the situation this way: “It would be often when parents are struggling to help provide the right guidance for their kids. They had reached a point, they’re not sure what to do, and they needed advice.” And Wanda had the following to say: “Sometimes people are not aware they have different biases or racial ideas about things. You need to teach people how to live and appreciate each other.” Some of the interviewees viewed dealing with parents as the most frustrating part of the job because they refused to accept the reality regarding their children. There were two types of parents they described: the entitled

parent and the defensive parent. Entitled parents believed their children did not have to follow the school's educational policies, and defensive parents defended their child's behavior by screaming and bullying. It was advantageous for the interviewees to know both the parents and the community. The more involved they became in community relations and parent participation, the easier the balance was to maintain. Some of the interviewees lived in the communities and some did not. However, they were all continuously involved in school activities which were part of the community. Lavern described her problems with entitled parents: "The entitled parents are probably the most frustrating because they know what they are doing and they are doing it viciously. They are showing their children how to work the system." Wanda described some parents as "wacky": "Parents are wacky, somebody has got to be there for the children and by being able to do this on a bigger scale, I touch so many kids and some grown-ups, too."

The Hierarchical Domains

This section will explain the hierarchical domain. Figure 6.0 shows the framework for the hierarchical domains.

Figure 6.0 Hierarchical Domains Sub-Categories for the Female Assistant Principal



An analysis of the data suggests the importance for the secondary female AP to understand the hierarchy of administrators as part of her 'organizational socialization'. The hierarchy of the school organization begins at the top with the superintendent and financial officer, who report directly to the school board. Under the superintendent come the assistant superintendents, then central office personnel, and then secondary principals. Below them would be the secondary assistant principals, elementary principals, elementary assistant principals, and then the teachers. Secondary teachers are theoretically equal to elementary teachers, but often the secondary teachers regard themselves as superior to the elementary teachers. All building principals are directed by the superintendent or assistant superintendents. The next section will describe the findings regarding the hierarchical 'steps' in relation to each of the interviewee's understanding of how these positions determine the ranking of the principal and AP.

Superintendent

Each of the interviewees had worked under both female and male superintendents during the time they were APs and principals. Early during the interviews they revealed that as APs, they were not aware of the difficulties they would encounter with the superintendent, once they became a principal. Nora explained: "You only have to answer to the principal as an AP, so you miss the whole central office layer. There is the relationship with the superintendent and principal where you learn that you are never in charge." Betty agreed: "There are some things you have to operate within political confines as a principal that an assistant principal never has to do." Some of the superintendents had been mentors to the interviewees; some had recruited the interviewees; and some eventually were the reason for the interviewees to leave their positions. There were superintendents, usually male, who had come up through the ranks of the administrative hierarchy and there were superintendents, usually female, who had never been building administrators. The experiences and background of the superintendents may have defined the qualities they valued and who they hired as their building administrators. Deidre described how her perceived effectiveness changed when a new (female) superintendent took over:

I never thought of myself as a person anyone would want to get rid of. I'm sitting on the other side of the table now. How did I get here? What happened to one person's perspective that I'm just super and I blink and suddenly I can't do anything right?

Lavern also had problems with a superintendent: "For my own spiritual growth as an administrator I could not continue to work for that superintendent. I feel like he run me out." The interviewees explained how they believed the principal/superintendent relationship needs to be compatible. The superintendent and secondary principal cannot be at odds with each other, or the district is not productive. In fact, the principal is often the one blamed by the superintendent when things go wrong. Several respondents touched on this issue. Nora said: "One of the things when I applied for the job, I wasn't very proud of myself because I had not figured him into the equation. I didn't figure out what it would be like to work for him." Deidre felt like a scapegoat: "I think it is easy to point to me, I'm the person in charge of the high school, so then it's my fault." Betty thought school boards should consider this problem when hiring: "I think the board would want to make sure it was a good fit, and there was the potential for a good working relationship." In contrast, one interviewee was fortunate to work for a superintendent she greatly admired and respected, who showed care and concern for all. Lavern said:

He is just such an honest, kind, and ethical man. He supports you, he wants to see you do the best job, and he's all about helping you. You don't feel like you're being undermined. He's just everything good you would want to see in a superintendent.

It should be noted, however, that Lavern had previously worked under a "difficult" superintendent.

Assistant Superintendents

Assistant superintendents' involvement in the relationship between secondary principal and superintendent was unclear. However, one interviewee felt it was necessary as the secondary principal to keep her "game face" on when communicating with the assistant superintendent. Deidre elaborated, saying that the Assistant Superintendent sympathized with her behind the Superintendent's back: "Alone with me he would say,

‘Just thought I’d stop and see if you were doing okay; I really think it was unfair what she did!’ I think they were looking at me like I was fifteen and didn’t know what the hell I was doing.”

Secondary Principal

When they were APs, most of the interviewees saw their principals as managers and not educational leaders. Several of them were never given support by their principals while they served as APs. They were not treated fairly and were not given incentives to move up in administration. They felt their principals either did not realize they should be mentors to their APs or did not desire to be. Nora attributed this attitude to sexism: “Men would help other men advance in a particular position, but I never saw them do that for a woman.”

According to one interviewee, the perception by male administrators is that the female secondary administrator is soft and therefore not as good a leader as the men. She argued that white males who were the “chosen ones” made sure they had people in place to make things run. Nora further elaborated, saying:

The other two principals clearly had me in a box of things they wanted me to do and were not looking to help me obtain a job as a principal. As long as I was doing the part of the job they needed done, that’s all they cared about. They weren’t interested in mentoring me.

Many of the interviewees explained that when they became principals and leaders of the building, they were often alone in their decisions, even when they had believed that support would be there. As principals, they knew how important it is to have somebody to call for support, an internal core that will stand with you when step into the ‘fire’. Wanda said, referring to her role as principal: “This is definitely not something you can do alone, you need somebody.”

Secondary Assistant Principals

Four of the five interviewees agreed it was important to have taught for at least ten years before becoming an AP in order to have a solid foundation and understanding to build on when stepping into administration. Also, once they became administrators they

had a clearer understanding of the expectations of the teachers. It is normal in the first year as an AP to look at the responsibilities from a teacher's perspective. They had mixed opinions on how serving as an AP prepared them to be principals, but believed that those who knew how to manage their time were most successful as APs. Wanda said: "It wouldn't have mattered to me; more time doing that would not have made a difference." Deidre stated: "I was prepared for some things, but there were other things I don't think anyone can prepare you to do." Lavern especially stressed time management:

I did see in our district that the people who were not successful as assistant principals were people who could not manage their time. I know I keep coming back to that, but in our school the amount of discipline was massive.

The interviewees admired those people who were 'lifetime' APs. They saw how adaptable they had to have been to serve successfully under numerous principals. While they admired them, they also felt that to stay longer than three to five years in the AP position caused one to be perceived as a failure who lacked leadership ability.

Elementary Principals

The interviewees discussed the divide between elementary and secondary principals, identifying it as the traditional school stereotype according to which the elementary school is female and the high school is male, with coaches, athletics, and other "male" things. They believed that elementary principals are often dismissed or ignored by superintendents because they are female. Superintendents saw no need to mentor them. Nora described the situation this way: "I think the expectation is that elementary principals are generally female and whatever they do, they do. I don't think they're under criticism as much as the secondary female administrator." Lavern agreed, saying: "They [superintendents] just see them as 'just go down there and clap your hands, sing, and take care of those little kids'."

Teachers

At the lowest rank in the hierarchical domain of the school organization is the classroom teacher. While the interviewees stated that considerable experience as a teacher is beneficial before becoming an administrator, they agreed that each individual's

experiences and abilities could make a difference as to her readiness for an administrative position. The interviewees believe that teaching is the great equalizer: male and female teachers have similar status. Indeed, this may be the only place they are equal to males in the educational organization. Lavern thought many teachers do not understand that:

I get frustrated with my students in classes at the university because they don't understand what it is like when you walk away from that teacher protection and pay scale and get into the administration world. You don't want to come off as this angry woman, because I'm not angry, but I am aware of it. And how do we make a difference?

Summary of the Functional, Inclusionary, and Hierarchical Categories

The grounded theory that emerged from this study can be expressed this way: the female assistant principal must understand and know how to navigate through the “organizational socialization” of the school community by overcoming the “stumbling blocks” and creating a “stepping stone” in the functional, inclusionary, and hierarchical domains of the organizational socialization in order to move up in administration.

The various tasks the APs perform are in the category of functional domains. When the interviewees were asked about the tasks they performed as educational or transformative leaders the responses centered on how much opportunity they were given by their principal to be an educational and transformative leader and how much time they had to act on those opportunities. Time became a determining factor when discipline demanded as much as ninety percent and only small increments of time remained for the opportunities of leadership responsibilities. Many of the duties were not learning experiences for leadership, but managerial tasks appointed by their principals. This was a stumbling block when areas such as finances were unfamiliar once they became principals. This was a common complaint by all the APs. The interviewees regarded their role as female APs as a wonderful learning opportunity. Opportunities to develop school improvement plans, serve on curriculum committees, and participate in textbook selection were definite ‘stepping stones’ for aspiring principals. While they believed serving as APs was a wonderful training ground for the position of principal, they also

knew that remaining in the position of APs often equated one to being a “loser.” They became aware of the stigma of the position and the affects it may have on how they were viewed as leaders and when they might be given the opportunity of “stepping” into the role of principal. While they often admired the “lifer” who remained in the AP position, they believed there was little opportunity to affect change.

In order for the interviewees to manage discipline, they developed relationships through understanding of and care for the students and performed using a style that was comfortable and efficient. This was a positive ‘step’ in leadership where they were honing their skills of public relations. They were working with people in what was possibly a negative environment with a level of dignity. Supervision of students, while time consuming, was also a time to support, advise, and connect with the school community. This ‘step’ of developing rapport proved beneficial as APs and as principals. Supervision of teachers through evaluations and encounters with the teachers’ union provided an occasion for developing mutual respect and sharing. Their own teaching experiences gave them the opportunity to know and understand the expectations of teachers and remember what they had desired of their APs. Most agreed that remaining as teachers for at least ten years was necessary. This is not the standard career path of the male administrator.

Acquiring and demonstrating conformity to the social roles, norms, and values of the organization occurs in the inclusionary domains. The interviewees explained how they came to understand the social roles, norms, and values through the help or hindrance of the ‘ole boy network’ and the role models/mentors who worked with them. The ‘ole boy network’ was a stumbling block when trying to ‘fit in’ or be accepted as part of the administrative team. They also knew that in order to compete with those in the ‘ole boy network’ they could not be equal in ability; they had to be better. Even that did not necessarily guarantee an ‘open door’ when seeking principal positions. While the responsibilities are the same for male and female APs, many decisions are made by the ‘ole boy network’ with the female AP excluded. Most of the interviewees either had mentors, role models, and/or critical friends to turn to for support and advice. This person was often not their principal and for some there were no female mentors. This was a difficult ‘step’ when one only had the male experience to duplicate and follow.

They also explained how they became mentors for their own APs, believing it was part of their responsibility as principals; but they were not always accepted by their male APs, who often resented them being in the position they desired.

The professional staff included the secretaries, teachers, and resource persons. Secretaries, according to the interviewees, were not always willing to give support to female AP's or principals. It was definitely a stumbling block when secretaries (usually female) were willing to help the male administrators but were not willing to help the female administrators. Since the secretary is the one person who knows all school functions and operations; the school administrator definitely needs to have her "in his or her corner." Resource people were eager and willing to support their leadership by providing a safety net. These people (e.g. counselors, police officers, central office personnel) provided the APs with additional information adding to the expertise upon which to base their decisions. A definite "stepping stone" was the mutual respect that developed between interviewees and teachers when the interviewees were able to relate to whatever problems the teacher was encountering because they had had the same classroom experiences.

The interviewees made connections with students by being straight forward and caring but still struggled with the conflicting issues between students and teachers. Students saw APs as their principals, a beneficial 'step' for the interviewees, but the conflicts between students and teachers were sometimes 'stumbling blocks' to them as the outsider looking at situations where they could see both sides of the problem. It was important to find a balance with parents and community, but they often became frustrated dealing with the entitled and defensive parents. Believing they were the one person doing what was best for the child, they felt that parents created 'stumbling blocks' when they hindered the possibility of helping the child. Parents were more challenging to the female AP since the role model of the secondary administrator is a six foot, charismatic, male. There were also advantages to knowing the parents and the traditions of the community and how to be an active participant in the community. Until a line of trust was established with the parents and community, they were 'blocked' as outsiders. By becoming involved in the community and earning their trust they then could begin taking the 'steps' in the right direction for the school community.

The female AP begins in the lowest rank of a secondary administrator, found in the category of the hierarchical domains. The stepping stones for the interviewees in the hierarchical domains were the positive relationships they had with the members of the administrative team. Several of the interviewees received their AP or principal positions because of the mutual respect and admiration they developed with their superintendents. Many learned a great deal about administration from former or present administrators in other districts. They also gained expertise from observing principals and APs. They understood the importance of their experiences as teachers and how this served them in their AP and principal positions. What they were not aware of as APs was the political confines and the importance of the relationship between the principal and superintendent. This ‘stumbling block’ may have been the direct cause of some of the interviewees’ leaving administration. Within the ‘ole boy network,’ superintendents may understand only one type of person in the position of administrator. Interviewees knew that the perceptions by male administrators were often that they were soft and not leaders. This placed a greater demand on them to not be the ‘typical’ female, a difficult task showing strength as a female leader in a “man’s world.” Also, not understanding the function of the assistant superintendent and the role he or she may play in the relationship between the superintendent and principal may interfere with the principal’s ability to communicate with the superintendent. As APs, the interviewees were given a glimpse of the role of the principal as one who manages more than leads and recognized the need to be mentors to their own APs. Once they became principals they often felt alone in their decisions, realizing that being an AP does not prepare a principal for everything.

Chapter Six will summarize the dissertation, discuss the findings, and present the conclusions and recommendations for practice and for further research.

CHAPTER SIX

Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Created to provide additional assistance to the principal, the role of the assistant principal is thought to be a training ground for the principalship (Kelly, 1990). While the major duties of discipline and attendance have provided little incentive or training for “stepping” into the principal’s role, few secondary principals receive their positions without AP experience (Glanz, 2004; Kelly, 1990). Looking upon their job as custodial, ambiguous, and powerless, the APs’ dissatisfaction with job opportunities possibly hampers the efficiency and decision making effectiveness of the role (Black, 1990; Greenfield, 1990).

While women are overrepresented in teaching and the elementary principalship, they are underrepresented in the secondary principalship and superintendency (Brunner, 2000; Marshall & Hooley, 2004). Male secondary principals seldom experience the struggle women face balancing administrative roles with family demands; this may help to explain why the superintendency is described as the most gender-stratified executive position in the country (Witmer, 2006). Men serving as secondary assistant principals provide a male job pool for promotion from assistant principal to principal. (Ryland, 2005) Experience affords the male AP with leadership experience, while but most women are denied equal access (Blount, 1998).

Women and minorities are presented with limited opportunities for socialization into line administrative positions (Ortiz, 1982). Since most secondary administrative positions dominated by white males, the female AP must duplicate the leadership style of her male mentors, hoping the results will be appropriate and help her understand administrative behavior (Wilson, 2004). Nonetheless, the secondary AP position remains an extremely crucial position for those who wish to advance in administration (Pigford & Tonnsen, 1983).

Summary of the Study

Problem

This study was conducted to contribute to the knowledge about females in the secondary assistant principal position and to explore the question of whether the position of the female assistant principal is a valid and productive preparation or apprenticeship for the position of principal. Since limited studies on the secondary female assistant principal have been carried out, there is a fundamental need to know more about this position in order to determine whether it needs to be redefined or reconstructed, as a step on the administrative career ladder, especially for women.

Methodology

This qualitative semi-structured interview study was conducted with five past or present secondary female principals who had served as assistant principals. Each was interviewed twice and also completed a survey. All participants, from schools in the Ohio counties of Hamilton, Montgomery, Butler, and Warren, were voluntary. Of the five participants, three were European American and two were African American, ranging in age from thirty-five to fifty eight. The school districts they worked in had student enrollments from 625 to 2000, and the amount of time they had been classroom teachers ranged from four to sixteen years.

This study asked the following questions:

1. To what extent does the experience of the female assistant secondary school principal prepare her for the various aspects of being a building principal?
2. Does the focus of the female assistant secondary school principal on discipline help or hinder performance once the assistant principal becomes a principal?
3. Does the female assistant secondary school principal perform any duties which develop the qualities needed as an educational leader? If so, what are they?
4. Does the female assistant secondary school principal have experiences that prepare her to become a transformative leader? If so, what are they?
5. Do female principals perceive their experience as APs as being different from that of male principals? If so, how?

The responses were tape recorded, and notes were taken by the researcher. As common themes began to emerge, the two resources used to organize the data were the questions and the researcher's insights. The method of analysis included memo writing, clustering, grouping of questions, formal coding, line by line coding and comparative analysis.

By interpreting the research with the related questions and research, themes began to emerge and relevant relationships were identified (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). The grounded theory that emerged from this study is that organizational socialization is a comprehensive process the secondary female administrator must go through as an AP to become a principal. She must understand the functional, inclusionary, and hierarchical domains of administration, as explained by Greenfield, not only for the role she must play as an AP, but also to navigate through the domains as a female in a male dominated organization (1990).

Findings

Functional Domains

Each participant completed a survey that compared her duties as an AP to her duties as a principal. The results of this survey showed that the major responsibilities of principals were: supervision, evaluation, and hiring of staff; major discipline infractions; building expenditures; representation at community functions; in-service programs, and developing the master schedule. The results showed that discipline and supervision were major responsibilities for the APs, providing minimal training for the major duties of being a principal; this is in agreement with Bush's study (1997).

To be able to perform as an educational leader, the respondents were limited by the opportunities they were given by their principals and the time available once all discipline was managed. These responsibilities were at the discretion of the principal and varied from principal to principal. If the principal was a team player, they were given more leadership roles. The educational responsibilities were learning opportunities, but as APs they had very little power to show leadership in these areas. Transformative leadership was also limited by opportunities and time. Each of the participants varied in her understanding of what transformative leadership responsibilities she performed. However, all believed that being an AP was an opportunity to learn new and different

skills. The obstacles that were completely out of their control, such as time and duties, made little sense to the APs and did not help them understand what need there was to complete them. Bush (1997) explains further the restrictions that are placed on the educational leadership opportunities of the AP.

All of the respondents expressed how proud and flattered they were to become APs and considered it valuable training for being an administrator. None of the participants expressed a desire to remain in the position of AP, believing the stigma of being an AP equated to being a loser. Realizing they could not effect change if they remained in the position, they all sought the role of principal.

To the participants, the time spent on discipline was significant because it was a time to connect and communicate with the students and their parents. It was important to know, understand, and care for the people involved even though there has been an uneasy relationship between the ethics of care and administrative theory, according to Blackmore (1999). They also identified this time as important for the support of teachers. The descriptions given by the participants when explaining the role of disciplinarian was that they acted as mediators, counselors, and disciples. Daresh (2004) agrees that the role of disciplinarian is one of counseling and student advisement.

Each of the respondents developed her own style of discipline, but all were aware that as female APs they had to make certain they did not appear “soft.” While males are able to expand their repertoire of acceptable leadership behavior and appearing both “soft,” and “tough,” women are not as able to expand their stereotyped roles (Heller, 1982). Being efficient, staying calm, and showing no fear while making sure that students understood the behavioral expectations were styles they had to learn to perfect. Time was a huge factor in being the AP, and they had to learn quickly how to manage the discipline and record keeping in order to manage the responsibilities, referred to by Gerke (2004).

Participants took the opportunity during supervision to connect with the students, an important task they continued once they became principals. They also recognized the AP position as a chance for community involvement. Attending school activities provided the opening for APs to demonstrate their ability to interact with students and parents while building rapport in the community.

Those who had taught in the same district in which they served as APs had earned a respect from staff for their teaching skills, but holding their former colleagues to high standards was difficult. From the experience of being teachers and members of the teachers' union, these APs understood what teachers needed and expected but continued communication was also important in the success of working with teachers. Having to stand firm on evaluation and discipline, the APs appreciated the fact that union issues were problems for the principal.

Inclusionary Domains

Working as APs at a secondary level placed the participants in a male dominated organization where the "ole boy network" was strongly in place (See Gardiner, Emoto, & Grogan, 2000, p. 14 for definition). The participants stated they were treated differently than the male administrators in areas of responsibilities, support, and promotion. They felt the different standard was due to the fact the secondary level stereotypically is a "man's world." The role of leadership is defined as suitable for a "white male" but women and minorities tend to be seen as much less desirable leaders (Lovely & Dawson, 1990). Male administrators received more help from other administrators, and different levels of accountability were imposed. Female APs were excluded from the male club of playing golf or relaxing in the principal's office, therefore losing the opportunity to be a part of those important conversations and decision making moments. Breaking into the 'ole boy network' was not an option and Coursen (1975) agrees when describing how administrative positions are filled.

Family obligations hindered the participants from entering or remaining in administrative careers. Several of the interviewees did not consider seeking an administrative position while their children were young. Others left their position, unable to balance family and administrative demands, as described by Gardiner, Emoto, and Grogan, (2000).

Having mentors, critical friends, and role models was the key to opening the doors into administration (Collins, 1983). Without mentors or a support person, entering the administrative track took much longer. Mentors, friends, and role models gave the participants the support and wisdom of how to navigate the pitfalls of the role of AP and

helped when they became principals. It was vital to have this support from those they could trust to advise them on the social roles, norms, and values of the school organization (Schein, 1992). Only a few of the APs had principals who were mentors, but most had a male and/or female friend or mentor who shared their experiences and expertise. Even when the principal was not a mentor, the APs learned a great deal by watching what to do or what not to do from other APs and principals.

Each of the participants saw her role as a mentor to her own APs as a vital responsibility, once she became a principal. They described being a mentor as similar to their role as a teacher to their students. They expected their APs to be able to step into the principal's position if necessary. Not all of the participants had APs who desired or accepted being mentored by them.

Participants believed that secretaries, almost always female, were not as supportive of female administrators as they were of the male administrators. If secretaries were provided, they were often difficult to trust and count on. Garawski describes this need for secretaries and the importance of loyalty (1990). Other resources, such as school psychologists, counselors, and police officers offered a more amicable support to the female AP, providing her with a safety net from which to ask questions and demonstrate leadership. Teachers support was earned by the APs through mutual respect and their knowledge of how it was to be a classroom teacher. Teachers were also the key to understanding those traditions of the school and community.

Students do not differentiate between an AP and principal. Both are seen as principals, and they responded to the respect and care they were given by the person in this position. The participants described the balance they maintained by being fair while still following the rules. This was difficult as the outside person seeing both sides of a situation between student and teacher. Following the rules while doing what was best for the child was not a comfortable or easy position to be in. Some participants welcomed having the principal overturn their decisions.

Maintaining the balance between parent and student, dealing with conflict, and attempting to change the behavior and attitudes of everyone were a constant challenge. APs' frustration came from parents who refused to deal with the reality of their own child's situation. The participants acknowledged the importance of being involved in the

activities of the school and community, which helped them find a balance with parents by showing their genuine interest.

Hierarchical Domains

In the school organization it was important for APs to understand the hierarchy of school administration and how this hierarchy determines who will “step up” to the next position. The superintendent, who is at the top of the hierarchy, was not directly involved with most of the participants while they served as APs, but there was a great deal of difference in involvement once they became principals. As principals, the superintendent became someone who could influence as well as undermine the secondary principal, and as APs, they were not aware of the possible difficulties in the superintendent/principal relationship.

There was minimal involvement between the assistant superintendent and APs or principals. The superintendent may use the assistant superintendent as a liaison or snoop, but whatever power or role the assistant superintendent has is usually determined by the superintendent.

As APs, the participants believed the principals they served were mostly managers and not educational leaders. Only a few of the participants were given support and mentored by their principals. Most were disregarded as long as they did their job as the AP adequately. The participants recognized that men would help other men in administration. Shakeshaft summarizes this scenario as “white males hire white males” (1993, p. 98). They also understood that many male administrators regarded women as soft and not leadership material. Once they became principals, they discovered they were often alone in their decisions, but considered the secondary principal job not something one should do without a support group.

As APs, the majority of participants believe it was important for them to have been classroom teachers for at least ten years before becoming an AP. They believed that this amount of time provided APs with enough insight as administrators to understand what teachers need from APs and what is best for students. They did not believe that serving as an AP necessarily prepared one for all the things a principal should know.

The interviewees respected those who were lifetime APs and recognized these individuals as loyal, flexible, and sacrificing. They also knew that if APs stayed longer than three to five years in the position they were seen as failures.

The participants believed the stereotyping between elementary and secondary administrators was that females belong at the elementary levels of administration and males belong in the secondary levels of administration. The participants felt that female elementary administrators are often dismissed and/or ignored by the male secondary administration and the superintendent.

Teachers held the lowest rank in the school organization and this may be the only place where men and women are equal in position. To a great extent, women enter education to be teachers and men enter education to be administrators (Shakeshaft, 1987).

Implications of the Findings

All of the participants were proud to be APs and considered the job a valuable training ground for understanding the commitment of being an administrator. The position was seen by the participants as an opening to model how to live and appreciate each other. Even though discipline consumed a great deal of their time and was considered to be a negative responsibility the participants considered discipline their chance to build relationships and make connections with an element of care. Believing it to be one of the hardest positions in school administration, they felt that APs still have the opportunity to touch the students, something they often missed once they became principals. Smith (2004) reveals in *Nell Noddings, The Ethic of Care and Education* that caring is a moral attitude and that by caring for students we are giving them a chance to care and reflect on that practice.

Most of the participants were able to move into administration because they had a connection with the district or someone who was already in administration, or both (See Marshall & Hooley, 2004). Because they were known by their district or knew someone in the district, three of the participants stepped into the position after the school year started. This opportunity was the first “step” beginning their administrative careers. While all the participants were well qualified for the position, without the help of

someone on the inside or being in the right place at the right time, their “step” into administration would have been delayed or possibly not have occurred at all.

Mentors or role models provided the needed inside information on how to navigate through the position of AP, but the building principals seldom provided this help. (See Gardiner, Enomto, & Grogan, 2000). This could possibly have been because the principal did not see his role as a mentor, or had no desire to be a mentor, or because all the principals were male and they were uncomfortable being a mentor to a female AP. While some participants had female mentors, they seldom worked within the same district. This may have been because few female role models are in administrative positions or because their situation did not afford the possibility. Duff (1999) explains further the need for female mentors.

Even without having mentors, the participants understood the importance and need to mentor their own APs once they became principals; however, willingness to be a mentor was not always well received by their APs. Reasons for this may have been resentment because their APs had desired the position of principal or because they were males who resented being told what to do by a female.

Learning about school finance was never provided to any of the participants by their principals, and all interviewees related that the financial part of the job was a steep learning curve, once they became principals. A possible explanation provided by one of the respondents was that principals are responsible for millions of dollars in building expenditures and do not have the time to explain a process that is consuming so much of their time and attention. Or perhaps the principal chooses not to include the APs because dealing with the expenditures is a major responsibility of power.

Other areas of leadership responsibility such as evaluation, scheduling, hiring of staff and staff development varied depending on the discretion of the principal one served (Refer to Kelly, 1990, or Johnson, 2000 for further understanding). There was a modest amount of time available for learning educational and transformative leadership since discipline consumed the greater part of the school day. The participants realized there was a need to have these opportunities, but most were resigned to the attitude that it was all a part of the job of being the AP: “You pay your dues.”

The majority of the participants had ten years or more of teaching experience. While the quality of their individual experiences may have determined their ability to do the job, being in the classroom for at least ten years gives one a better understanding of what teachers, parents, and students need from an administrator. Women tend to take the higher ground of working for instructional improvement or in the best interest of children when men look at the next 'step up' the career ladder (Gardiner, Enomoto, & Grogan, (2000).

According to the research, females do not deal with discipline the same way that males do. Since women were thought to be incapable of discipline, as described by Shakeshaft (1987) imitating the male discipline model to prove they could handle discipline was difficult. It was necessary to develop a discipline style that was not only comfortable for the female APs but also one that could be performed with dignity and care for the student. The participants were aware of the scrutiny they worked under when dealing with discipline and made a deliberate effort to resist showing any stereotypical female attributes. Comments were frequently made by the participants that they were not "soft" or "wimpy," and never showed fear. However, they also knew they were under the magnifying glass and expected to fail by other administrators. Being their own person could not be related to being a stereotypical "female" in the role of an AP. While being a transformative leader includes the characteristic of being one who advances personal freedom, the adaptive challenge for these women was to identify the gap between their aspirations and the reality of their position. The model is one of "the male experience," and learning to adapt to the "status quo" gave them little opportunity to transform anyone if they wanted to succeed in the role of principal.

Excluded from the 'ole boy network' of decision making and advancement, it was difficult for the female AP not to feel resentment and/or anger. Males easily become APs since they are considered the "chosen ones," especially white males. The constant battle of trying to prove one fit for the position of AP, while being rejected, puts women on guard against being their true selves. Having a doctorate may be one way to be accepted in the 'ole boy network' but Edson's (1988) study implies that it does not make much difference

As long as secondary school administration is structured the way it is now, there will be very little tolerance for women to advance into the position of an administrator, especially those with young children (See Heller, 1982). Most women do not plan their administrative careers until their children are older. Since men do not have to choose between child care and careers, the male dominated secondary administration will continue to be regarded as the only way it should be done. Wilson (2004) elaborates on this by explaining that when we see leadership we only see males.

The relationship between the secondary principal and superintendent is crucial to the success of the district and the possible success of the principal. How much power one has as a principal is solely determined by how much power the superintendent allows the principal to have in the building. APs are usually not aware of this crucial balance until they become principals. The superintendent and secondary principal are thought to be the two most powerful positions in the school district, and the participants agreed it was essential that the school board makes sure it is a good fit.

What superintendents value in the position of a secondary principal may be based on their own experiences; and when they see only white males in the position of secondary principal, they assume this is the only reality. “There are already more than 80,000 principals in the United States and the Bureau of Labor (2001) reports there will be a more than 10 percent increase in openings for principals in the next six years” (Terry, 2002, p.3). If Perrault (2002) is correct, there will be a 10 percent increase in openings for principals in the next six years along with the already 80,000 principal positions in the United States. If so, maybe it is time for the “white male” model of the secondary school principal to change. The female AP does not need to be redefined or reconstructed; the organizational structure of administration does.

Recommendations for Future Research

This study provided a grounded theory that explains the comprehensive process the female secondary AP must go through to become a principal. The findings suggest a need for good mentors, male and female; more female administrators to serve as role models; classes in administration that address the needs of the AP; opportunities for male

and female administrators to dialog about leadership; and programs developed to provide aspiring women administrators support in accomplishing that goal.

Further research is needed on the female elementary assistant principals and principals, asking the same questions used in this research. This would make available a comparison of the elementary and secondary female administrators and provide further understanding as to whether they have similar challenges and beliefs. It would also be important to know if the perceptions they have in regarding each others role is similar or different.

Second, a study on the male secondary assistant principal and principal where similar questions were given in order to compare the male experience to the female secondary administrator experience. This may give further understanding regarding how similar or different their experiences were in areas such as: how they obtained their positions, did they have mentors or role models, how do they perceive their role as a disciplinarian, and what leadership opportunities did they have? This research could also provide further understanding on whether the role of the AP has been feminized and if holders of the position believe they are “marginalized” because of their subordinate role to the principal.

Research is needed on the educational background of male and female secondary administrators. This type of research would provide information on which areas of education are predominate in administration; do males and females come from similar educational backgrounds into administration; and whether there is an educational pattern that most administrators follow.

Next, research could be done on the women who became assistant principals and/or principals at the secondary level and left their positions early in their careers. This research may give more insight into why there are not more females in secondary administration and what could be done to change this situation. A similar study would be to research women who are qualified to be administrators and have chosen not to seek the position and why they made this decision. Again, this may help in understanding the shortage of female administrators at the secondary level and possible solutions for change.

Last, a study on the family background of the secondary female administrator to compare education, sibling rank, family culture and environment. In this research, information on family influence and standards could be compared for patterns and themes in defining the possible traits and characteristics of women who undertake the challenge of becoming secondary school administrators and why.

Recommendations for Practice

Each of the participants was asked: “What suggestions would you give to improve the position of the assistant principal?” These are their responses. They suggested that the female AP needs to have both male and female mentors. By having both male and female mentors one has a greater opportunity to be successful. Also, mentors should be selected by first identifying those persons who are good leadership role models. The AP should have a greater balance of responsibility. With discipline as the major task for most APs this does not give her the opportunity to experience the variety of responsibilities she will face as a principal. All APs should learn to value themselves and understand the importance of the position. The preparation program for administrators should be more realistic, so that people who desire to become administrators are informally mentored before taking administrative courses. This would give a clearer representation of the true nature of being an administrator. The participants stated that moving into administration should be progressive “steps” starting out as a teacher, to AP, to principal. This allows the person the opportunity to gain a more complete understanding of the needs and responsibilities of each position. They agreed that APs should be a part of the administrative team and they need to function as a team player. Last, all female APs need to learn a discipline style that works and that they are comfortable performing. Having more female role models in administration would give women a greater opportunity to connect with the performance of women’s ways of disciplining.

In conclusion, this study asked if serving as a secondary female AP is a valid and productive preparation for the role of the principal and whether the position of AP needs to be redefined or reconstructed as a “step” in the administrative career ladder. Since the

role of the AP is understood as predominately the disciplinarian of the school, then there is a need to reevaluate whether the AP is serving in the best capacity for the needs of educational leadership in schools. Do we need to have people in AP positions, with administrative qualifications if their main responsibility is discipline and not leadership? How can we say that it is the “step” into administration when there is little ascension in responsibility? As females in secondary administration continue to encounter the “glass ceiling,” how do we open dialog for the reconstruction and redefinition of the secondary administrative structure so it becomes more inviting to the female administrator? And, finally, why do we continue to accept an administrative model that is so limiting to the greater population of educational professionals?

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Appendix A

Interview Protocol

Begin with this statement: I would like to record what you say, so that I do not miss any of the conversation. I do not want to take a chance of just relying on my notes and missing something that you said or inadvertently change your words. If at any time during the interview you would like to turn the tape recorder off, press this button.

Opening explanation: The purpose for collecting this information is to know more about the position of the secondary assistant principal as a productive and valid preparation for the position of the principal. The information will be for my dissertation study and questions will mainly pertain to your experience as a female assistant principal and how that has prepared you for the basic aspects of being a building principal. Your responses will be recorded and along with the other interviews all data will be analyzed in order to group together perspectives from which, hopefully, a theory will emerge. This interview is confidential and access to all data will be only by me. Any risks will not exceed those of daily life. Possible benefits for you includes the opportunity to voice your concerns regarding the future educational needs and experiences of the female assistant principal and the overall benefit to the school administration organization. Do you have any questions at this time about this study?

(There are certain questions which may or not be asked depending upon how much information the researcher can obtain through school records, prior to interview. The following questions are possible warm-up lead in questions.)

**Start recording: This is (date) and we'll begin with.....*

Beginning: Informal Conversation

Guiding Questions:

How many years were you an assistant principal?

What was your student enrollment and was that in an urban, suburban, or rural district?

How many years have you been or were you a principal? Urban, suburban, or rural?

What is your student enrollment?

Have you served in administration in any other capacity?

How would you describe the district or districts?

How long to you receiving your licensure as an administrator were you given the opportunity to serve as an assistant principal?

Did you pursue the position and if so, for how long before receiving the position?

(This time will be used to get comfortable with the interviewee and hopefully build rapport and trust. Respondent will be encouraged to talk descriptively.)

Interview Guide:

Prefatory Statement: The **first** question is the overarching question of the study and I want you to take a few minutes to think over your past experiences as an assistant principal and your present experiences and-

1. describe to what extent the experience of being an assistant principal prepared you for the various aspects of being the building principal. If you want to look back over the questionnaire to help in this reflection, please do.

(As responses are given the interviewer will be actively listening. Probes may be used to deepen the response to the question.)

The following questions will then be asked:

2. Tell me about your experience as a female assistant principal.
3. How did you feel about acting as a disciplinarian in your role as assistant principal?
4. What were some of the duties you performed as an assistant principal which developed the qualities you needed as an educational leader? For example, did you lead workshops for teachers, were you involved in curriculum development, or did you develop any programs for students which met their educational needs? How have those qualities served you as a principal?
5. Were there any duties of the job which hindered your growth as an educational leader?
6. If a transformative leader is someone who advances the opportunities for respect, cultural enrichment, creative expression, intellectual honesty, and personal freedom, what were some of the experiences as an assistant principal that prepared you to become a transformative leader? Were there any experiences which hindered your growth as a transformative leader?
7. Do you think men have a different experience as assistant principals than women do? If so, in what ways?
8. What did it mean to you to be an assistant principal?

(Added question after first interview)

9. What needs to be added or could be done to make the assistant principalship better?

(During the interview it is the responsibility of the interviewer to maintain control of the interview by remembering what type of data she is looking for and managing the interview to get quality responses. She also explains why questions are being asked when necessary and allows time for clarification when something particularly important is said.)

Final or closing question: “That covers the things I wanted to ask. Is there anything you care to add?”

*The **second interview** will probe deeper into the experiences of the respondents after they have had time to read and reflect on the transcription of the first interview. For example:*

“When asked about being a disciplinarian you stated such and such in the first interview. After having some time to reflect on this, is there anything you would like to add to this statement or change?”

Appendix B

Informed Consent

Name
Address

Dear _____,

I am a doctoral candidate in the Educational Leadership Department at Miami University. I would like to thank you for agreeing to participate in a research project for my dissertation regarding the position of the female assistant principal. The study will concentrate on whether the position of the secondary assistant principal is a valid and productive preparation or apprenticeship for the position of the secondary principal.

Your participation will include a professional questionnaire and two interviews. The place and time of your first interview will be _____, February 2, at 9:00 a.m.

Your interviews will be strictly confidential and no real names of school districts or persons will be used in the dissertation **nor will any information be provided to your school districts or supervisors.** All transcripts of the interviews will be sent to you for corrections for accuracy. You have a right to withdraw from this study at any time up till completion of all research.

This study will be shared with my dissertation committee and other appropriate members of Miami University community.

I thank you for giving of your valuable time to the study, helping me and the educational leadership community to learn more about how the role of the female assistant principal has served you as a principal.

If you have any questions, feel free to call me at _____(home) or _____(cell). You may also contact my committee chair person: Dr. Frances Fowler at

_____.
Thank you,

M. Jane Gregg

Doctoral Candidate
Miami University

I, _____ agree to participate in Jane Gregg's research study, *The Female Assistant Principal: Stepping Stone or Stumbling Block to the Principalship*. My participation involves participating in two interviews and questionnaire. I will participate in individual interviews where I will be asked about my experiences as a principal and assistant principal. I understand that my identity will be kept confidential and that the information I provide will be used in a dissertation and professional publications, if possible. The use of pseudonyms will render the information confidential and no information will be provided to my school districts or supervisors. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am under no obligation to answer any of the questions asked of me. I may discontinue participation or refuse to answer specific questions or terminate the interview at any time, prior to completion of the research, with no consequences. Risks to me do not exceed the risks of everyday life.

Signature _____ Date _____
(Participant's signature)

Signature _____ Date _____
(Researcher's signature)

Audio-tape Consent

I, _____ agree to allow Jane Gregg to audio-tape the
(Participant's name)
interview session. I understand that pseudonyms will be used in the transcription of the interviews, thus maintaining my identity as confidential.

Signature _____ Date _____
(Participant's signature)

Signature _____ Date _____
(Researcher's signature)

For any questions regarding the study, please contact Jane Gregg at _____ or
(e-mail) _____ or you may contact her advisor, Dr. Frances Fowler, at (phone
number) or (e-mail). For questions regarding rights as a subject you may contact
Advancement of Research and Scholarship (513-529-3734) or
humansubjects@muohio.edu.

Subjects must be given a complete copy of the signed Informed Consent.

Appendix C

Demographic Data and Questionnaire

Number _____

1. What educational position do you aspire to obtain next?
2. At what university or college did you receive principal licensure?
3. What other administrative licenses do you have?
4. What is the highest degree you have earned?
5. What level is your administrative certification (elementary, secondary, etc.)?
6. How many years were you a classroom teacher?
7. What is the total number of years you have been an educator?
8. What is or was the enrollment of your current school in which you were an assistant principal? Principal?
9. What were the grades you supervised as an assistant principal? principal?
10. When you were an assistant principal, how many assistant principals were there in the building? How many assistant principals do/did you have as a principal?

Please assess the importance of each responsibility as the **principal's** role as you have participated in the position.

5=Major responsibility
3=Equally shared responsibility
1=Minor responsibility
0=No responsibility

Personnel Activities

Supervision and evaluation of classified staff	_____
Supervision and evaluation of certified staff	_____
Teacher duty schedule	_____
Substitute teachers	_____
Student teachers	_____
Recommending staff	_____

Hiring staff _____
Updating teacher handbook _____

Administrative Meetings _____
Building Leadership Meetings _____
Department Chair/ Team Leader Meetings _____

School/Community Relations

Administrative representation at community
functions _____
Administrative representation at school functions _____
News and press releases (newsletters, press) _____
Liaison to school board _____

Student Activities

Arrange student athletic events _____
Supervise student athletic events _____
Supervise student activity accounts _____

Student Personnel

Student discipline (minor infractions) _____
Student discipline (major infractions) _____
Student attendance _____
Student orientation _____
Hallway supervision _____
Cafeteria supervision _____
Maintaining student records _____
Updating student handbook _____

Curriculum and Instruction

Teacher In-service programs _____
Supervision of federal programs _____
Building curriculum _____
District curriculum _____
Textbook selection _____
Home education _____
Alternative education programs _____
Creation of school master schedule _____
Student scheduling _____
Grants/school reform initiatives _____

School Management

School budget	_____
Supervision of building expenditures	_____
Scheduling facilities use by outside group's	_____
Emergency safety management	_____
Supervision of building construction	_____
Supervision of maintenance/custodial staff	_____
School calendars	_____
Student transportation	_____

Please assess the importance of each responsibility as the **assistant principal's** role, as you experienced it in the position.

- 1=Major responsibility
- 2=Equally shared responsibility
- 3=Minor responsibility
- 4=No responsibility

Personnel Activities

Supervision and evaluation of classified staff	_____
Supervision and evaluation of certified staff	_____
Teacher duty schedule	_____
Substitute teachers	_____
Student teachers	_____
Recommending staff	_____
Hiring staff	_____
Updating teacher handbook	_____
Administrative Meetings	_____
Building Leadership Teams	_____
Department Chairs/ Team Leaders	_____

School/Community Relations

Administrative representation at community functions	_____
Administrative representation at school functions	_____
News and press releases (newsletters, web-sites)	_____
Liaison to school board	_____

Student Activities

Arrange student athletic events	_____
Supervise student athletic events	_____
Supervise student activity accounts	_____

Student Personnel

Student discipline (minor infractions)	_____
Student discipline (major infractions)	_____
Student attendance	_____
Student orientation	_____
Hallway supervision	_____
Cafeteria supervision	_____
Maintaining student records	_____
Updating student handbook	_____

Curriculum and Instruction

Teacher In-service programs	_____
Supervision of federal programs	_____
Building curriculum	_____
District curriculum	_____
Textbook selection	_____
Home education	_____
Alternative education programs	_____
Creation of school master schedule	_____
Student scheduling	_____
Grants/School Reform initiatives	_____

School Management

School budget	_____
Supervision of building expenditures	_____
Scheduling facilities use by outside group's	_____
Emergency safety management	_____
Supervision of building construction	_____
Supervision of maintenance/custodial staff	_____
School calendars	_____
Student transportation	_____

***Please return questionnaire to Jane Gregg at time of interview.**

Appendix D

Example of Diagram of Relationships

