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Principal Perceptions of the Effectiveness of WVBE Policy 5800: Standards of Professional Practice for West Virginia Superintendents, Principals and Teacher Leaders

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PRINCIPAL PERCEPTIONS OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF WVBE POLICY 5800:
STANDARDS OF PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE FOR WEST VIRGINIA
SUPERINTENDENTS, PRINCIPALS AND TEACHER LEADERS

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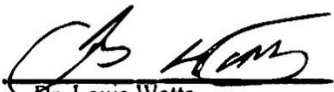Dr. Louis Watts, Committee Chairperson
Dr. Edna Meisel
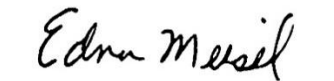Dr. Thomas Hisiro
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APPROVAL OF THESIS

We, the faculty supervising the work of **Allen Laugh**, affirm that the dissertation, *Principal Perceptions of the Effectiveness of WVBE Policy 5800: Standards of Professional Practice for West Virginia Superintendents, Principals, and Teacher Leaders.*, meets the high academic standards for original scholarship and creative work established by the EdD Program in **Leadership Studies** and the College of Education and Professional Development. This work also conforms to the editorial standards of our discipline and the Graduate College of Marshall University. With our signatures, we approve the manuscript for publication.

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DEDICATION

      I dedicate this dissertation to my wife, Barb, for constantly giving me the encouragement to endure this long process. You are an inspiration to me and everyone around you. These past few years were a little easier knowing you were with me every step of the way.

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ABSTRACT

Since the late 1980s, standards for students and teachers began to be the focus of education, creating demands and pressures on school leaders to become more than managers of a school. This change of focus expanded to include principals and required school leaders to possess instructional leadership qualities beyond managerial skills. In 2010, the West Virginia Board of Education enacted the *Standards of Professional Practice for West Virginia Superintendents, Principals and Teacher Leaders* (WVBE Policy 5800) to guide West Virginia educational leaders toward instructional leadership. The purpose of this study was to gain West Virginia principals' perceptions at all grade levels of the effectiveness of WVBE Policy 5800 as to whether the standards were successful in guiding effective instructional leadership. A researcher-developed survey was distributed electronically through the Qualtrix research platform to 678 West Virginia Principals. The survey was completed by 223 principals for a response rate of 33%. The findings of the study revealed that principals believe standards found in WVBE Policy 5800 were important in guiding instructional leadership. Specifically, the areas of climate/culture and interpersonal skills were viewed as most important by West Virginia Principals. Also, bureaucratic mandates and lack of parent involvement were considered substantial impediments in meeting standards found in WVBE Policy 5800. This study produced information that could be beneficial to practicing principals, future instructional leaders, and programs that prepare future educational leaders, but it is recommended this study be duplicated by other educational leaders outside of West Virginia to include standards guiding their instructional leadership.

CHAPTER ONE

SCHOOL LEADERSHIP

Introduction

Principals are known as the leaders of any school, but "in the minds of educators and the broader public is the image of the over-worked, underpaid principal-bureaucrat tangled in a web of administrivia, unionized teachers, uninvolved parents, and disinterested students" (Fenwick & Pierce, 2001, p.25). In the past, a principal's role was primarily one of manager (Hallinger, 1992; Rousmaniere, 2013; Steinberg, 2013), but today's principal duties go far beyond managerial duties. Supervisors of instruction, instructional leaders, curriculum developers, bureaucrats, and student disciplinarians, are just some of the many titles principals have today (Fenwick & Pierce, 2001; Walker & Qian, 2006), but one title stated throughout the literature as being most important is the title of instructional leader.

There have been many studies on leadership that state principals can be successful by following and carrying out central office directives, but this is not enough for principals today (Gawlik, 2008). Being an instructional leader consists of everything from the facility to curriculum, but a specific definition and what it takes to be an effective instructional leader has not yet been determined. There are many opinions on the definition and theories of being an effective instructional leader, but Terosky (2014) best sums up what is known about instructional leadership: "Despite the plethora of studies on instructional leadership as well as the attention it receives from foundations and higher level educational administrators, questions remain with the definition, implementation, and usefulness of the concept" (p. 7).

What does it take to be an instructional leader? According to Fenwick and Pierce (2001), instructional leaders "are master teachers with expert knowledge of teaching strategies, curriculum content, classroom management, and child development" (p.28). Murat Gulcan (2012) takes this a step further by describing specific roles of an instructional leader:

- Identifying the vision and mission of the school

- Programming and administering education

- Staff development

- Monitoring and assessing the teaching process

- Creating and developing a positive school climate.

The most important factor in all educational and instructional activities and consulting others for improvement ideas is undoubtedly school administrators. Regrettably, this role of conducting educational and instructional activities and consulting has become more complicated with challenging bureaucratic guidelines and the constant rise in expectations toward student achievement. Because of the bureaucracy and rise in expectations, many principals find it difficult to perform the duties required to be an effective instructional leader (Gulcan, 2012; Terosky, 2014).

Background

Principals today live in an era of increased demands for instructional leaders in schools. Most research shows an increase in bureaucracy, official mandates and interest groups that all want to have a part in the improvement of schools and school systems. Many educators see this as a major change in what principals used to be in

the past, but it should come as no surprise to anyone in the educational field; on the contrary, it should be expected. For example, in 1904, John Dewey wrote:

> Everywhere we have outgrown old methods and standards, everywhere we are crowded by new resources, new instrumentalities; we are bewildered by the multitude of new opportunities that present themselves. Our difficulties of today come, not from paucity or poverty, but from the multiplication of means clear beyond our present powers of use and administration. We have got away from the inherited and customary; we have not come into complete possession and command of the present. Unification, organization, harmony, is the demand of every aspect of life-politics, business, science. That education shares in the confusion of transition, and in the demand for reorganization, is a source of encouragement and not of despair. It proves how integrally the school is bound up with the entire movement of modern life (Dewey, 1904, pp. 18-19).

Due to an ever-changing world, it is expected that education will also change. Whether it be technological, climatic, cultural, or political, it is certain changes will occur.

In the past, a principal could be successful by managing the school environment and carrying out central office directives effectively. Today's principals do not have this luxury of just managing the school and following directives. The principal has become an educational middle manager, serving as a conduit between the district and the classroom, in an increasingly complex-school bureaucracy (Rousmaniere, 2013). Since the implementation of No Child Left Behind (No Child Left Behind [NCLB], 2002),

principals are not only expected to manage students, staff and facilities; now they must be the main change agent for education and mainly responsible for improved test scores (Gawlik, 2008).

The Changing Role of the Principal: For Better or Worse

Being an educational leader today is much different than for principals of the past. Expectations have increased, duties have become more stringent, and working with the public is becoming more difficult, but what does it mean to be an instructional leader? In looking at the responsibilities of the modern-day principal, it is of vital importance to have knowledge in areas of curriculum, instruction, assessment, interpersonal skills, planning skills, instructional observation skills, and research and evaluation skills (Jenkins, 2009). The modern-day principal has been transformed into something almost unrecognizable to the principals many years ago; principals are no longer just managers, they are now team builders, coaches, inspirational leaders, and visionaries of change (Alvoid & Black, 2014).

The duty of a principal has become more complex. Rather than just managing aspects of the educational day such as establishing time schedules, performing disciplinary duties, and overseeing safety, the instructional leader must understand individual learning needs, organize social and interactive environments, encourage learning expertise, motivate individuals, and provide sufficient sources of support for learning (Walker & Qian, 2006). They must also be the change-agent for improving school culture and climate, and are indirectly responsible for student testing performance, often being blamed for poor test scores (Gawlik, 2008; Terosky, 2014).

Fields (2012) believes principals today are no longer seen as deliverers of instruction. They are now the developers of instruction ultimately responsible for managerial aspects of a school, teacher and student performance, and test scores. The complexity has opened new avenues for principals in making decisions for educating the whole child, but without proper training and support, the principal will have a daunting task that could end in frustration and failure.

Leadership Challenges

Traditionally, accountability for principals meant doing well with treating teachers fairly, listening sensitively to parents, exercising instructional leadership, and maintaining a balanced budget. Today, the demands on higher standards and higher test scores pose a leadership challenge for many educational leaders. This new emphasis on standards is especially challenging when assessments do not always align with the standards, assessment results are disseminated and publicized, and test results determine whether a principal will maintain his or her position (Lashway, 2000). When one adds environmental factors such as unemployment, poor living conditions, crime, and student absenteeism, overcoming leadership challenges in improving education has become more difficult than ever before (Badenhorst & Koalepe, 2014).

Lashway states, "the culture of teaching is neither sacred nor insidious; it just reflects the efforts of dedicated people trying to do a difficult job with the tools at hand" (2002, p. 16). Leaders in schools today do not have the comfort of simply relying on dedicated people doing a difficult job; they must find ways to provide effective leadership to meet the demands of achieving high test scores while meeting personal leadership standards.

How can an educational leader achieve effective leadership? According to Lashway (2002), evidence points to four leadership challenges:

- *Be a champion for standards-* discuss issues of state accountability with teachers and work together to solve them.

- *Emphasize learning, not performance-* broaden the focus on steady improvement, not just performing well on state tests.

- *Educate the public-* be aggressive in explaining facts and figures wherever principals get public attention.

- *Protect the things that matter-* never abandon the passion and purpose of educating students.

Challenges for school leaders revolve around accountability; accountability for students, teachers, and leaders. But does this accountability system mean better education for today's students or does it force educational leaders and teachers to shrink curricula by focusing on a regimen of preparing for a test? Lashway (2000) believed it is a school's obligation to improve society with the educating of future, productive citizens and accountability of schools will never be just an internal matter; but rather an external matter that will always affect society. The entire community has a stake in school outcomes and with these outcomes come real consequences. Because the principal is considered the educational leader of the school, it is up to him or her to take the accountability lead for the outcomes, sometimes accepting more scrutiny than ever before.

In 2013, a study by MetLife that was summarized by Amada Torres explored opinions and experiences of principals regarding challenges public school principals face. The study found that the top leadership challenges were:

1. Managing the budget and resources to meet school needs (78%).

2. Addressing individual needs of diverse learners (83%).

3. Engaging parents and the community in improving education (72%).

The study continued by stating that 75% of the principals polled believe their jobs have become too complex, causing great stress for over half the principals surveyed that took a toll on their personal lives.

The last area of the MetLife survey focused on the implementation of the Common Core State Standards, where 93% of principals believed they were very knowledgeable, but knowledge was not the main issue. The main issue was that even though standards may be a useful guide in teaching and learning, they are not enough to meet current expectations for today's leaders in providing a high-quality education (Torres, 2013).

Leadership Policies

Since the late 1980s, standards for students and teachers began to be the focus of education. These standards were based on a top-down approach with many coming from the legislative and state departments of education of individual states (Hunt, 2008). Since then, standards for students and teachers have expanded to include the principal. Ramaswami (2013) stated, "The challenging demands and pressures of the current school environment have forced school leaders to not only possess managerial skills but also to be strong instructional leaders, especially in a standards-driven setting"

(p.45). He added that over time, there have been many models showing what principals

should know to create an effective school environment for learning. Because of the

current educational environment and the information learned from previous models, the

Interstate School Leadership Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) standards were created.

The ISLLC standards broadly describe the functions of effective educational

leadership and are to be used by states, districts, policy-makers, and organizations for

the development of their own standards and policies for improving the profession.

These standards were recognized by the Education Leadership Constituent Council

(ELCC) and were the foundation for program standards that guide the planning,

implementing, and accreditation of educational leadership preparation programs at

colleges and universities across the United States (Ramaswami, 2013). In 2015, the

new *Professional Standards for Educational Leaders* (PSEL) were approved by the

National Policy Board for Educational Administration (NPBEA) (National Policy Board,

2015b). Since then, many state education departments have used the ISLLC standards

for measuring the progress of school administrators in their development in becoming

instructional leaders (Ramaswami, 2013).

In 2010, the West Virginia Board of Education enacted standards to govern West

Virginia educational leaders. These standards were called *Standards of Professional*

Practice for West Virginia Superintendents, Principals and Teacher Leaders; or *West*

Virginia Board of Education Policy 5800 (WVBE Policy 5800) and were put in place to

better prepare West Virginia students for the rigors of living in the 21st century. These

standards were intended to be the main guide for future program development and

policy in the areas of leadership, recruitment, preparation, selection, licensure,

professional development and evaluation. Overall, it was to be the framework of professional practice around which leaders can reflect on and improve their professional expertise (WVBE Policy 5800, 2010).

In 2016, the West Virginia Board of Education revamped the WVBE Policy 5800 standards set in 2010 that govern West Virginia educational leaders, removing the 21st century premise to simply improving overall instructional leadership. Besides re-wording and the removal of the words *proficiency in Global 21 skills* from section 3.1.5, the document is still viewed as the framework for professional practice and serves as the foundational document to guide today's educational leaders in West Virginia (WVBE Policy 5800, 2016).

Statement of the Problem

The current school environment is filled with challenging demands and pressures that have forced school leaders to possess both managerial skills and strong instructional leadership, especially in a standards-driven setting (Ramaswami, 2013). Walker and Qian (2006) believe beginning principals find it even harder with managing a school and still finding inventive ways to improve test scores. They continued by stating, "New principals are often surprised to find that they spend so much time on administrative matters and that educative aims seem difficult to pursue" (p.302). Besides being the manager of the school, the principal is also expected to be the instructional leader. This new role of being the instructional leader has changed the school principal's conventional understanding of the role and management of the school facility and school staff to better improve the educational performance of all students. Because of this new role of manager and instructional leader, the duty of principal has

become very difficult for both new and experienced administrators (Gulcan, 2012). If this is not enough, resignations, early retirements, and a shortage of qualified candidates for open principal positions have led to a crisis of finding certified principals in American education (Alvoid & Black, 2014).

Many of the complexities found in the literature can be considered barriers toward achieving instructional leadership. One study by Terosky (2014) of urban school principals specifically listed two categories as time-consuming managerial tasks: accountability-related compliance and bureaucratically driven procedures around community-based services. When participants were asked what would improve instructional leadership, many participants responded with reducing paperwork, reports, emails, surveys and training sessions. In another study performed by the Center on Reinventing Public Education, many of these tasks were viewed as time-consuming, but not barriers to impede educational outcomes. According to this study, "Perceived barriers fell into three categories: those that prevented instructional innovation, those that restricted resources allocation, and those that impeded efforts to improve teacher quality" (Miller & Lee, 2015, p.8). Out of the 128 barriers listed in the study, only one-third of the perceived barriers were judged as real or had real consequences if not performed.

In a 2011 survey of American educators, over 70% of principals reported that their jobs were too complex, creating higher levels of stress and anguish toward job satisfaction (Alvoid & Black, 2014). In looking at WVBE Policy 5800 with its nine standards and 58 sub-standards and the added duties of modern-day principals, would

West Virginia educational leaders report the same results as found in the 2011 survey or would the survey results be different?

Purpose of Study

Throughout the literature, many authors give effective leadership practices, opinions of what incorporates instructional leadership, and even ideas on what it takes to be an effective instructional leader, but two questions arise when discussing the effectiveness of WVBE Policy 5800:

- Do West Virginia principals believe standards found in WVBE Policy 5800 are an appropriate guide toward instructional leadership?

- Do they believe they have the appropriate preparation to do what is asked in WVBE Policy 5800?

The purpose of this study is to gain West Virginia principals' perceptions at all grade levels of the effectiveness of WVBE Policy 5800 concerning whether the standards are effective in guiding effective leadership. This study asked principals what standards are vital for the development of becoming an instructional leader, what factors impede principals from meeting leadership standards, and what can be done for West Virginia principals to aide them in meeting standards found in WVBE Policy 5800.

Research Questions

1. To what extent do principals in West Virginia believe the standards found in WVBE Policy 5800 are applicable in their work as instructional leaders?

2. What standards found in WVBE Policy 5800 do West Virginia principals believe are the most important in being an instructional leader?

3. What factors impede West Virginia principals from meeting standards found in WVBE Policy 5800?

4. What support or resources do West Virginia principals believe they need to meet standards found in WVBE Policy 5800?

5. To what extent do gender, years of administrative experience, years of educational experience, grade level of the school, and Title I status of the school affect principals' perceptions that the standards found in WVBE Policy 5800 are applicable in their work as instructional leaders?

6. To what extent do gender, years of administrative experience, years of educational experience, grade level of the school, and Title I status of the school affect principals' perceptions of the relative importance of the standards found in WVBE Policy 5800 in their work as instructional leaders?

Significance of the Study

Since the inception of WVBE Policy 5800, expectations for West Virginia principals have changed immensely. These changes have increased expectations, for not just our educational leaders, but also for students who attend West Virginia public schools. "These changing expectations, coupled with insufficient training and support, have led many principals to the conclusion that the job is no longer sustainable" (Alvoid & Black, 2014, para. 4). These changing expectations lead to the questions of whether principals feel standards found in WVBE Policy 5800 can be successfully met and whether principals have the appropriate training and support to meet these same standards.

This study may also give specific information on how school systems and principal preparatory programs can better prepare future principals in becoming more effective instructional leaders and what standards should be the main focus for future educational leaders. In addition, the specific information may assist in the establishment of future leadership standards.

Research Methods

Population

The population for this study will be West Virginia principals and assistant principals at all school levels.

Sample

The State of West Virginia consists of fifty-five counties. During the study, each county was associated with a Regional Education Service Agency (RESA) to provide educational support and service to students, teachers, and school systems. West Virginia had eight RESAs and this study encompassed principals and assistant principals from each of the eight RESAs.

Survey Instrument

This study consisted of a quantitative survey instrument with an open-ended qualitative section. The first part of the survey gathered demographic data, asking respondents the type of school in which they work (Title I or non-Title I, elementary, middle, or high school), age, and years of educational and administrative experience. The second portion of the survey contained specific questions about West Virginia principals' perceptions on what factors prevent educational leaders from meeting standards found in WVBE Policy 5800. The third section asked principals to rank

standards in order of importance and the final two sections of the survey asked principals to choose factors they believe are barriers in meeting standards and factors/resources that would benefit them in becoming more effective instructional leaders. Principals were also asked to give qualitative responses of other factors/resources that would benefit them in becoming more effective instructional leaders.

Delimitation and Limitations of the Study

This study was limited to principals in West Virginia who are governed by WVBE Policy 5800, which may limit the generalization of this study to other states. The participants of the study are principals in many different types of schools and have many different experiences; hence perceptions of the participants will vary. All responses are subject to personal bias.

Term Definitions

In this study, important terms, acronyms, and concepts were defined as follows:

WVBE Policy 5800: West Virginia Board of Education Policy 5800- Standards of Professional Practice for West Virginia Superintendents, Principals and Teacher Leaders (2010 and 2016).

Instructional Leadership: Principals' actions of setting clear goals, allocating resources to instruction, managing the curriculum, monitoring lesson plans, and evaluating teachers (Jenkins, 2009).

Organization of Study

   Chapter One of this study consists of background information, the changing role

of the principal, leadership challenges, leadership policies, statement of the problem,

purpose of the study, research questions, significance of the study, research methods,

delimitations and limitations of the study, and definition of terms. Chapter Two

discusses the changing role of today's principals toward becoming an instructional

leader and delved into reasons and events that promoted this change. Chapter Three

includes information regarding research methods used in the study. Chapter Four gives

specific findings of the study, and finally Chapter Five provides conclusions,

implications, and further recommendations as results of the study.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Evolution of the Principal

Throughout the literature on school leadership, principals have been variously described as work-horses, middle managers, un-heroic, inspirational leaders, team builders, and visionaries (Alvoid & Black, 2014; Rousmaniere, 2013; Walker & Qian, 2006). Today, the title of instructional leader is used to describe principals in an era where the focus is to improve test scores, yet the instructional leader is still responsible for all other aspects of leading a school toward improvement, including everything from instruction to facilities, staffing to parents, and students to improved test scores. Principals are still being viewed as linchpins for educational change, so principals today are constantly improving their craft. Being a principal may seem challenging, but principals throughout the years have been a favorite target for school reform and are meeting these challenges. (Hallinger, 1992).

From the late 19th century to the mid-20th century, principals did not have the same administrative duties of principals today. Rousmaniere (2013) stated that early principals were teacher leaders which had the flexibility to connect with the students, teachers, classrooms, and communities without feeling burdened with bureaucratic responsibilities passed down by local, state, or federal policy makers. She added that as society started to change, so did the educational system, and educational reformers realigned the duties of the principal from a teacher leader to a central administrative liaison. Principals were starting to take the shape of middle managers, causing an evolution with the principal becoming less involved with students and more accountable

for supervising teachers of students, becoming less connected with learning, yet eventually becoming more responsible for it.

By the end of the 20th century, a standards-based education approach was adopted for both students and professional staff (Hunt, 2008). This approach was in part due to three distinct educational movements: The Elementary and Secondary Education Act (United States Department of Education, 1965), the report *A Nation at Risk: The Imperative for Educational Reform (*United States National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983), and the Goals 2000: Educate America Act (United States Department of Education, 1993-1994*).* In 2002, the ESEA was updated, passed by Congress and was signed by President George Bush, implementing a reauthorization of the ESEA known as *No Child Left Behind (*NCLB, 2002). In 2015, Congress again passed the most recent reauthorization of ESEA known as *Every Student Succeeds Act* (ESSA), which was signed by President Barak Obama to replace NCLB (Every Student Succeeds Act, 2015). Because of the various educational reforms and the increase in achievement standards, the idea of principals being simply managers of a school is in the past; they are now the leaders of instruction and are responsible for student and staff performance as directed by various standards established for each.

From Manager to Instructional Leader

Principals are known as the leaders of any school. Historically, they have been individuals performing managerial tasks such as evaluating staff, managing money, overseeing the cleanliness and care of the facility, and disciplining students (Alvoid & Black, 2014). Today, the role of principal exceeds the managerial duties performed in the past. Rousmaniere describes the role of principals today as:

…the most complex and contradictory figure in the pantheon of

educational leadership. The principal is both the administrative director of

state educational policy and a building manager, both an advocate for

school change and the protector of bureaucratic stability. Authorized to be

employer, supervisor, professional figurehead, and inspirational leader,

the principal's core training and identity is as a classroom teacher. A

single person, in a single professional role, acts on a daily basis as the

connecting link between a large bureaucratic system and the individual

daily experiences of a large number of children and adults. Most

contradictory of all, the principal has always been responsible for student

learning, even as the position has become increasingly disconnected from

the classroom (2013, paragraph 2).

Rousmaniere further stated that even though there are many perceived changes with

the role of principal, the job shares many characteristics of the principal's role in past

decades. Principals still implement state educational policies, maintain stability of the

school culture at the local level, and manage facilities, but a more pronounced area of

concern for principals today is the increased emphasis on improving test scores (2013).

After reading much of the literature about principal decision making and how the

principals seem to be the main influence for creating high test scores, this concept of

similarity is difficult to see, but principals are still considered middle managers and

expected to be the instructional leader (Rousmaniere, 2013). Performing both tasks can

be difficult due to the conflict of being autonomous in meeting the specific needs of

schools and at the same time complying with the requirements of top-down mandates

and accountability policies (Chang, Leach and Anderman, 2015). Regardless of the difficulty, principals must be able to establish an effective environment of learning by creating a clear and focused mission, maintaining a stable school culture and facilitating curriculum and instruction while still implementing state educational policy to the school (Rousmaniere, 2013).

In 1965, Lyndon B. Johnson established a "War on Poverty," making a commitment to equal access to quality education throughout the nation. This commitment was the establishment and enactment of the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965* (ESEA) that distributed federal funds to schools and school districts and was designed to close the gap in reading, writing and mathematics between children from low-income families and children from the middle class. This act forged the establishment of high standards and accountability, holding schools more accountable for student educational performance, and provided a mechanism to increase educational equality, emphasizing equal access to education for all of America's youth (United States Department of Education, 1965).

In 1983, reforms were needed to respond to the diverse student population found in the United States, requiring higher levels of education for a post-industrial society and heightened international economic competition. Due to the diverse needs of American students, a report from President Ronald Reagan's National Commission on Excellence in Education entitled *A Nation at Risk* was released (United States National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983). Because of this report, education was reformed to offer higher levels of education for our nation's youth and a better delivery system more responsive to students and families. National policies moved away from specific

regulations, rules and procedures that hindered principal decision-making toward policies that included school-based management, increased accountability and deregulation. Decisions were being made by the school staff rather than the central office. Autonomy seemed to be the direction of education, transforming schools from rule followers to rule makers (Graham, 2013; Steinberg, 2013).

Unfortunately, the ideas of moving away from specific regulations, rules and accountability was short lived. Autonomous decisions were hindered by many bureaucratic rules and regulations set by external entities, reducing much of the flexibility needed to make coherent decisions for school improvement. Steinberg (2013) believes this was due to the infusion of market-based principles, where incentives were based on seniority rather than performance and were governed by more external factors beyond school control. Also, public leaders, such as school principals, were hindered by many internal structures, such as frequent leadership turnover and top-down mandates that often-constrained innovation and flexibility. Because of the various organizational control and principles that governed schools, the report findings from *A Nation At Risk* diminished, impeding autonomy progress for public school principals (Gawlik, 2008; Graham, 2013; West, Peck, Reitzug & Crane, 2014).

In the late 1980s, there were three distinct movements that affected the view of the role of principals as instructional leaders (Hunt, 2008):

- Excellence movement: to increase standards for students and teachers.
- Restructuring movement: to promote and encourage educators through site-based management and increasing control to schools.

- Standards movement: to redirect attention from teaching practices to student achievement.

The instructional leader was considered the main source of knowledge for educational programs, instruction, and curriculum, while also being directly involved with teachers in decision-making and verifying the changes by monitoring student progress. As a result, even though the principal was perceived to be the expert and catalyst of change, he/she faced the challenging dilemma that program and curricular decisions were made by policy makers outside the school (Hallinger, 1992). Subsequently, in 1994, a standards-based educational reform entitled *The Goals 2000: Educate America Act* was established that provided a framework in which program and curricular decisions became the responsibility of individual school systems. (Hunt, 2008).

The Educate America Act gave a national framework for education reform by promoting equitable education and high levels of student achievement for all American students (1994). To promote equality and higher levels of achievement, school systems were required to write grant proposals on how student achievement would improve. These proposals were the result of local and state administrators working together in targeting the needs necessary for improving education. Once the districts received funds, the principal planned and implemented activities with staff members to implement the necessary changes outlined by the proposal. This kind of planning was the first-time building administrators had to seriously examine learning standards, moving away from the manager title toward becoming a leader of instruction (Hunt, 2008).

In 2001, Congress took the improvement efforts outlined in the *Educate America Act* a step further by reauthorizing ESEA with the inception of the *No Child Left Behind*

Act (NCLB). NCLB narrowed school improvement efforts by requiring that student achievement was improving yearly, or that students were making adequately yearly progress (AYP). Because of this focus on AYP, principals were forced to make instructional decisions to meet AYP requirements. If the school's student achievement at specific grade levels did not meet AYP, the principal was considered the main person responsible for improvement (Hunt, 2008).

Both *A Nation at Risk* and *NCLB* were calls for action in improving education and changed the way principals lead. No more could principals rely on simply being good managers; they must also have a vast knowledge of curriculum and instructional practices to meet the standards that apply to principals today. Even though being an instructional leader may vary from school system to school system, it is obvious that being a principal in today's schools has become more strenuous than ever before.

On December 10, 2015, President Obama signed *The Every Student Succeeds Act* (ESSA) that included provisions meant to ensure success for students and schools. Some of these provisions are that the law:

- Upholds critical protections for America's disadvantaged,

- Requires all students in America be taught to high academic standards to prepare them for college and careers,

- Ensures vital information is provided through annual statewide assessments that measure student progress, and

- Maintains an expectation of accountability and action to effect positive change (Every Student Succeeds Act, 2015).

The ESSA was intended to build on areas of progress under NCLB and was a collaborative effort of educators, parents, communities, and students across America. It was meant to uphold the nation's commitment to equal opportunity for all students and further expand educational opportunities for all students (Every Student Succeeds Act, 2015).

The progression of government intervention has paved the way for principals down a road from being managers of a school to becoming educational leaders. Accountability, change, high academic standards, and ensuring student progress are now the norm for today's principals, but many questions emerge concerning whether principals can reach the lofty goals set by the federal and state governments. Standards for schools, teachers, students and principals are in place, but the question is whether these standards are attainable and sufficient enough to move education forward.

Principal Responsibilities

The responsibilities of principals have grown tremendously over the past 20 years. Many societal changes have added new pressures on schools and school leaders; however, testing and accountability, demographic shifts, technology, decentralization and site-based management, redefinitions of family, violence, various legislative initiatives such as school vouchers, the press to privatize, changes in the economy and court mandates related to desegregation have created a web of conflicting demands and expectations for school principals (Fenwick & Pierce, 2002). These expectations vary from school to school, but the challenges of increased responsibilities still consist of similar areas of concern: school development planning, problem solving, rigorous intervention, and establishing a culture of continuous

improvement (Badenhorst & Koalepe, 2014). Even though principals are still considered managers in their responsibilities, the duty of improving instruction is the main responsibility for all principals (Fenwick & Pierce, 2001).

Concerning the preparation of school leaders for the rigors of educational responsibilities, various models of leadership are used. Fenwick and Pierce identified three models of leadership that are used for preparing principals today:

- Traditional model: based on behavioral sciences and management,

- Craft model: principals are trained by other principals, and

- Reflective inquiry: principals are encouraged to generate knowledge through a process of systematic inquiry (2002, p. 3).

Ramaswami (2013) stated, "Many models over time have focused on what a principal should know and what he/she should be able to do to create an effective school environment that translates into student learning" (p. 45). He continued that the initiative entitled *The Educational Leadership Policy Standards, Interstate School Leadership Licensure Consortium* (ISLLC) established by the National Policy Board for Educational Administration in 2008 led to the increase of expectations for school principals. School leaders were forced to possess managerial skills and become strong instructional leaders in this standards-driven setting because of the challenging demands and pressures these expectations put on the current school environment (Ramaswami, 2013). These standards were designed, "to serve as a broad foundation for describing the functions of effective educational leadership that states, districts, organizations, and policy-makers can use as a national model for developing their own standards and policies for improving the educational leadership profession" (National

Policy Board, 2008). The ISLLC standards were the foundation for the 2011 program standards that guided implementing, planning, and accrediting educational leadership programs at colleges and universities and were recognized by the Education Leadership Constituent Council.

In 2015, the new *Professional Standards for Educational Leaders* (PSEL) were approved by the National Policy Board for Educational Administration (NPBEA). Once known as the ISLLC standards, these standards outlined the knowledge and skills expected of all principals, assistant principals, and district leaders. These standards are called the *National Educational Leadership Preparation Standards* (NELP) and were designed to guide accreditation reviews, program designs, and state program approvals (National Policy Board, 2015a). The 2015 PSEL standards were refashioned, consisting of a clearer, stronger emphasis on the whole student with an emphasis on student learning. The PSEL also outlines foundational principals of leadership to ensure every child is well educated and prepared for the 21st century (National Policy Board, 2015b).

What is Instructional Leadership?

Throughout the literature, various adjectives have been used to describe the different forms of leadership: instructional, participative, democratic, transformational, moral, etc. However, these descriptors are simply labels to describe the different styles or methodological approaches to accomplish the two objectives for the effectiveness of any organization: setting defensible directions and influencing others to move toward those directions (Liethwood, Louis, Anderson and Wahlstrom, 2004). Because of this approach, schools can be perceived as being like a business. For example, a business must measure performance regularly to be certain the business is heading in an

appropriate direction; schools measure performance regularly by assessing student performance on test scores annually. Also, businesses strive to stay ahead of the competition whereas schools are consistently being compared with one another both within our nation and the world to stay ahead of other schools or school systems (Steinberg, 2013). Regardless of the comparisons, for the sake of keeping up with the fast-paced changes in education, principals are expected to demonstrate effective instructional leadership skills that result in improved student achievement.

The term instructional leader is a relatively new concept started in the early 1980s when school principals voiced the importance of instruction relating to student success. In the 1990s, instructional leadership took a back seat to practices of school-based management and teacher leadership. Now, instructional leadership has taken the forefront once again with school accountability and more emphasis on academic standards. (Jenkins, 2009).

Being a school administrator and instructional leader differ in many ways. Jenkins described the difference in this manner: "Principals who pride themselves as administrators usually are too preoccupied in dealing with strictly managerial duties, while principals who are instructional leaders involve themselves in setting clear goals, allocating resources to instruction, managing the curriculum, monitoring lesson plans, and evaluating teachers" (2009, p.35). The literature goes further than what Jenkins describes, with other responsibilities such as offerings of continuing education for teachers, using time for both instruction and shared decision-making with staff and establishing professional relationships while still being the effective manager as were principals of the past (Rousmaniere, 2013; Walker and Qian, 2006).

Many theories of what it takes to be an instructional leader exist. Gulcan (2012) stated the roles of an instructional leader consist of five items: identifying the vision and mission of the school, programming and administering education, providing staff development, monitoring and assessing the teaching process, and creating and developing a positive school climate. Steinberg (2013) stated the roles of an effective leader as building a vision and setting direction, being able to work with people, transforming the school by establishing collaborative cultures and building positive relationships with parents and community, and managing teaching and learning. Jenkins (2009) believed a good instructional leader needs to possess certain skills, such as being a good resource provider for instruction, being a good communicator, and always being visibly present. Even though there are many theories about what it takes to be an instructional leader, questions still remain about the implementation, definition, and usefulness of the concept despite the plethora of instructional leadership studies and attention it receives from foundations and higher-level educational administrations (Terosky, 2014).

Throughout the literature, terms such as principal autonomy and decentralized control have been used in describing what is needed for principals to become instructional leaders. In a study performed by the Broad Center for the Management of School Systems (2012), it proclaims that due to the past decades of central office decision making, it is difficult for some school systems to move away from their bureaucratic systems, policies and practices that have been a driving force for educational decision-making. The study also stated that this bureaucracy disempowers teachers, promotes apathetic students, leaves parents feeling frustrated, and keeps

taxpayers in the dark (The Broad Center, 2012). Regardless as to whether the school is part of an urban or rural educational system, the literature states that even though many positive changes are occurring in today's educational arena, there are still many issues that keep today's principals from becoming the instructional leaders needed to transform our schools to meet the goals established by our local, state, and federal government.

Gulcan (2012) summarizes the role of principal as an instructional leader as the most important factor in consulting and conducting educational and instructional activities. He further stated that even though the teacher is directly responsible for what goes on with the student in the classroom, the principal is indirectly responsible for every student in every classroom, even though they have little control over delivery of instruction. Overall, the principal must be knowledgeable about curriculum and instruction, intervene with teachers in making instructional decisions and monitor the progress of students (Hallinger, 1992).

Decentralization and Autonomy in Decision-Making

Every West Virginia principal must abide by standards and must be able to make decisions that are relevant to his or her school. Before relevant standard-driven decisions can occur, principals must act as the conscience of the school by providing strong leadership, clearly stating and living up to core values (Lashway, 2000), but it takes more than achieving a degree or simply meeting standards. Strong leaders are individuals that are closest to the students and possess information that goes far beyond the surroundings of a school. Meredith Honig calls this information 'local knowledge' that "is important in strengthening youth learning and other outcomes"

(2006, p.358). In other words, even though central office personnel may have knowledge of the surroundings of a school, the climate and culture of the school is understood best by those who are there daily. Also, school personnel understand community partners, parents, the neighborhood, and student limits which may affect decision-making (Honig, 2006).

When it comes to decision-making, principals have been given more autonomy than in the past. Effective decision making must give each school autonomy over staffing, scheduling, and teaching methods, but also have standards schools must meet and contain clear information on school performance (Ouichi, 2006). Even though autonomy has increased over the years, there are still many barriers principals believe affect decision-making. Much of the literature describes district, state, and federal barriers, but there are also site-based barriers such as limited bus routes, curricular materials, and technology that may inhibit decision-making (Miller and Lee, 2015).

A report by Miller and Lee (2015) revealed results of a study in the New England states of New Hampshire, Maine, Massachusetts, Maryland, New York, Vermont, Rhode Island, and Connecticut that claimed principals had more authority over decision-making than they may think, arguing that these barriers are perceived barriers that vary from principal to principal. This study put these perceived barriers in three categories: instructional innovation, resource allocation, and teacher quality.

1. Instructional innovation: The area of instructional innovation contained the least number of barriers with principals feeling constraints from old accountability rules that included state and district policies concerning requirements of student seat time and social promotion with social promotion

being the most difficult to overcome. For example: If a fifth-grade student is reading on a first-grade level, why would the student be passed on to the sixth-grade? It would be very difficult to hold back a middle-school aged student in the elementary school.

2. Resource Allocation**:** The principals cited as a barrier the ability to reallocate money to areas of needs. Most of these school funds were tied to grants, class sizes, salary costs, and central office spending; the ability to use funds for specific school needs were already governed by others not directly associated with school decision-making. Even though many principals saw this as a barrier, others saw the need of understanding budget processes and grant limits to use the allocated funds better for the school's benefit.

3. Teacher quality**:** Principals found it difficult to find the right teachers who not only possess the right talents, but also whose interests and practices match the school's needs. Central-office placement of teachers, labor laws and the inability to terminate poor teachers were some of the issues principals stated. However, hiring laws, evaluations of professional staff, and principal autonomy of hiring teachers are changing constantly, and it is up to the principal to remain knowledgeable of the changes.

Standards of Professional Practice for West Virginia Superintendents, Principals and Teacher Leaders (West Virginia Board of Education Policy 5800)

In 2010, the West Virginia Board of Education (WVBE) sought public comments on establishing standards for superintendents, principals and teacher leaders. The superintendent at the time, Dr. Steve Paine, spoke about the new policy by stating:

It is imperative that West Virginia educators are prepared to help students

meet the higher demands and greater expectations of the 21st century

knowledge economy. To develop the top students in the world, we need to

develop the best schools and adequately prepare principals,

superintendents and teachers to lead them (WV Board of Education

Seeks Public Input on New Leadership Standards Policy, 2010).

Implemented in 2010, *Policy 5800: Standards of Professional Practice for West Virginia Superintendents, Principals, and Teacher Leaders* was established to better prepare students for the 21st century and was the direct result of collaborative efforts from teacher unions, policy makers, higher education institutions, and other stakeholders. Today, within the 21st century, WVBE Policy 5800 has been revised, removing the 21st century premise to a direction of improving overall instructional leadership (WVBE policy 5800, 2016).

WVBE Policy 5800 (2010) is intended to be the main guide for future program development and policy in the areas of leadership, recruitment, preparation, selection, licensure, professional development and evaluation. It is also intended to be the framework of professional practice around which leaders can reflect on and improve their professional expertise. The standards found in WVBE Policy 5800 reflect a series of operating premises that are intended to guide their application to practice. Section three of this policy lists the operating premises as follows: focus on learning, continuum of professional skills, leadership occurs in context, distributed and collaborative leadership, expected evidence of outcomes, coherent leadership focus, and importance of technology to leadership efficacy (WVBE Policy 5800, 2010).

According to the 2010 WVBE Policy 5800, the school principal, next to the classroom teacher, is considered the most significant influence on student achievement. Even though each school has its own unique climate and culture, the programs and procedures established by the leadership will either positively or negatively influence student learning. The nine standards found in WVBE Policy 5800 are based on the premise that principals can no longer do what is necessary to improve student performance on their own. Principals must be able to use various support services and resources found at the central office and the services and resources derived from student data and professional needs of the school. Principals must also promote a shared-leadership style by supporting teacher leadership to promote and instill a sense of collective accountability and to be involved in discussions on school improvement and classroom practice to improve student learning. Finally, both principals and teachers must be given autonomy to provide the flexibility needed to make school-based decisions on how to improve school and classroom practice (WVBE Policy 5800, 2010).

On September 8, 2016, the policy was revised from the previous policy established July 1, 2010. Like the 2010 version, the policy serves as a central guide for future program developments in the areas of leadership recruitment and educational leadership policies and is the framework of professional practice among educational leaders in improving their professional expertise. Besides many differences throughout the standard functions, the most prominent change was found in Section 3.1.e: *Expected Evidence of Outcomes*, where the valued outcomes for students were

decreased from four to three, taking away *proficiency in Global 21 skills* (WVBE Policy 5800, 2016).

According to WVBE Policy 5800 (2016), the most significant influence on student achievement is the effectiveness of the school principal. Like the 2010 policy, the 2016 version is based on the same premise of having quality, school-specific support services from the district office based on student data and professional needs, an increase in the leadership of teachers, and principals' and teachers' flexibility to make school-based decisions. Every school is unique appertaining to culture, expectations, procedures, priorities and programs, but if the principal has expertise in instructional leadership, a school will dramatically improve. "It is the role of the school principal to elevate the quality of operations and to align the efforts of staff, so they coalesce to support the learning and well-being of each student" (WVBE Policy 5800, 2016).

The nine standards found in WVBE Policy 5800 are designed to serve as a guide to help educational leaders move in the direction of effective instructional leadership and improved student test scores. The following are the nine standards found in the policy:

- 5.2.a: Demonstrates interpersonal and collaborative skills.
- 5.2.b: Creates a clear and focused learning mission.
- 5.2.c: Facilitates rigorous curriculum, engaging instruction and balanced assessments.
- 5.2.d: Builds and sustains a positive learning climate and cohesive culture.
- 5.2.e: Promotes continual professional growth and attracts and retains quality staff.

- 5.2.f: Acts as a student advocate and creates support systems for student success.

- 5.2.g: Manages operations to promote learning.

- 5.2.h: Connects to families and the larger community.

- 5.2.i: Effects continuous improvement (WVBE Policy 5800, 2016).

Overall, the standards found in WVBE Policy 5800 (2016) are the framework for all principals to become leaders of school teams. If the leaders and school teams adhere to the nine standards, they will be empowered to create conditions that will enhance the learning of all students.

Summary

Education in the United States is constantly changing. Technology, demographic shifts, changes in the economy, testing and accountability, and various legislative initiatives have created many conflicting demands and expectations for school principals (Fenwick & Pierce, 2002). Traditionally, accountability for principals meant treating teachers in a fair manner, exercising instructional leadership, and controlling a budget. Today, accountability is based mainly on creating high standards for all students to improve student achievement, placing student performance as being the key factor of a school's success (Alvoid & Black, 2014; Lashway, 2000).

There are many effective leadership theories that are found throughout the literature, but a leader can best be described as a person who can influence, motivate, give good examples and guide others in a creative way, ensuring an organization stays the course toward goals (Gulcan, 2012). The nine standards found in WVBE Policy 5800 are designed to serve as a guide for principals to assist in influencing, motivating,

and guiding others toward a common goal, but due to the many responsibilities school leaders have today, leading today's schools has become more difficult (Torres, 2013). Regardless of the difficulty, holding principals accountable for student achievement is the norm and WVBE Policy 5800 is the guide.

In 2016, WVBE Policy 5800 was revised from the 2010 version to serve as a guide for future program developments in recruiting administrators and shaping educational leadership policies. The policy is also meant to serve as a framework of professional practices among educational leaders in improving their expertise as school leaders. Since every school is unique, the nine standards found in WVBE Policy 5800 will help educational leaders move in a direction of effective leadership to meet specific school needs and improve test scores.

The purpose of this study was to measure the perceptions of school principals as to the effectiveness, usefulness, and significance of the nine standards found in WVBE Policy 5800. In addition, this study considered factors that may impede principals from meeting the nine leadership standards and presented principal opinions on what factors and/or resources would benefit principals in becoming more effective instructional leaders. Furthermore, this study measured whether gender, years of educational and administrative experience, grade levels, or low socio-economic status had a significant effect on principals' perceptions of the usefulness and significance of standards found in WVBE Policy 5800.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODS

Throughout the years, many models of leadership have focused on what principals should know and how they can create an effective school environment that results in student learning, but few studies have been performed to tell whether standards are effective at the school level (Ramaswami, 2013). According to the ISLLC standards, principals should promote the success of every student by establishing a vision of learning that is shared and supported by all stakeholders; advocating, nurturing, and sustaining a school culture conducive to student learning; ensuring management of the organization for a safe, efficient and effective learning environment; collaborating with faculty and community members, responding to diverse community interests and needs; acting with integrity, fairness, and in an ethical manner; and understanding, responding to, and influencing the political, social, economic, legal, and cultural context (National Policy Board, 2008). WVBE Policy 5800 builds on the ISLLC standards, adding facilitating a rigorous curriculum, engaging instruction and balanced assessments, promoting continual professional growth and attracting and retaining quality staff; and effecting continuous improvement (WVBE Policy 5800, 2016). However, Gawlik (2008) noted that the increased responsibilities, low pay, pressure from school boards, and difficult parents make achieving these standards difficult.

Context

Accountability is a term all principals know, and instructional leadership has become more crucial today than ever before (DeNisco, 2015). The days of simply managing a school are gone and principals must be more accountable with everything

from running a facility to improving student test results. With this increase in accountability and state standards, many principals believe making successful decisions is becoming more difficult (Gawlik, 2008). Regardless of the difficulty, meeting standards is a necessity when describing the duties of today's principals.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to gain West Virginia principals' perceptions of the effectiveness of the leadership standards in WVBE Policy 5800 in guiding effective leadership. Specific focus was given to factors impeding principals from meeting leadership standards and the principals' view of which standards are vital for being an instructional leader.

Research Questions

1. To what extent do principals in West Virginia believe the standards found in WVBE Policy 5800 are applicable in their work as instructional leaders?

2. What standards found in WVBE Policy 5800 do West Virginia principals believe are the most important in being an instructional leader?

3. What factors impede West Virginia principals from meeting standards found in WVBE Policy 5800?

4. What support or resources do West Virginia principals believe they need to meet standards found in WVBE Policy 5800?

5. To what extent do gender, years of administrative experience, years of educational experience, grade level of the school, and Title I status of the school affect principals' perceptions that the standards found in WVBE Policy 5800 are applicable in their work as instructional leaders?

6. To what extent do gender, years of administrative experience, years of educational experience, grade level of the school, and Title I status of the school affect principals' perceptions of the relative importance of the standards found in WVBE Policy 5800 in their work as instructional leaders?

Research Design

The research design for this study was a mixed method, non-experimental design to gain West Virginia principals' perceptions of WVBE Policy 5800. The first section of the survey consisted of five questions. The questions requested demographic information concerning gender, years of educational and administrative experience, school grade levels, and if the school receives Title I services. The second section consisted of nine quantitative questions, prompting principals to record perceptions on the applicability of the WVBE Policy 5800 standards using a Likert-like scale. The third section required principals to rank the nine WVBE Policy 5800 standards in order of significance. The fourth and fifth sections asked principals to choose factors they believe are barriers in meeting standards found in WVBE Policy 5800 and factors/resources that would benefit them in becoming more effective instructional leaders. Within the fourth and fifth sections, principals were asked to give qualitative responses of other factors/resources that would benefit them in becoming more effective instructional leaders.

Data Collection and Analysis

To understand perceptions of WVBE Policy 5800 standards from West Virginia principals from various perspectives, the research design was quantitative collected

through a researcher developed quantitative survey instrument. The survey was an online survey consisting of five sections: Section I- demographics; Section II- rating the usefulness of each WVBE policy 5800 Standard; Section III- ranking the nine standards in order of significance; Section IV- principal perceptions of barriers in meeting WVBE Policy 5800 standards; and Section V- principal perceptions of factors/resources that would benefit principals in becoming more effective in leadership. Three statistical tests were used to analyze the data: The Chi-square test of independence (to analyze the frequency of participant choices concerning applicability of each standard), the Mann-Whitney U (to compare mean ranks of three or more independent samples), and the Kruskal-Wallis (to compare mean ranks of three or more independent samples). The survey instrument was administered in Qualtrics.

Population and Sample

The population for this study was all principals of West Virginia at all school levels (n=678). The survey was an online survey, requiring email addresses for each administrator. The email addresses were acquired from the West Virginia Department of Education online school directory.

The sample was principals who responded to the survey. These principals came from a variety of school configurations and levels and varying levels of administrative experience.

Validation

Prior to administering the survey instrument, the survey was reviewed twice by a panel of experts in the field of educational leadership. The panel of experts consisted of school principals and county administrators. These field of leadership experts were

asked to complete the survey and provide feedback for clarity. When feedback from the participants was returned, appropriate changes to the survey were made.

Research Bias and Limitations

This study was limited to principals in West Virginia who are directed by WVBE Policy 5800, which limits the generalization of this study. The participants of the study are principals in many different types of schools and have many varied experiences; hence perceptions of the participants will vary. All responses are subject to personal bias.

Significance of the Study

This study is significant because it will give specific information on how principals view the role of educational standards in helping them be instructional leaders, and in turn, focusing on and increasing student achievement. In addition, these results will assist school systems and leadership preparatory programs to better prepare current and aspiring principals. Lastly, the results of this study may assist in the development and revision of future standards of professional practice for principals.

CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS

Introduction

In 2010, the West Virginia Board of Education (WVBE) established a set of

standards for all West Virginia superintendents, principals and teachers. These

standards were intended to be the framework of professional practice, upon which

leaders could reflect and improve their professional expertise. In 2016, the policy was

revised and was based on the same premise of the earlier version, believing the most

significant influence on student achievement is the effectiveness of the school principal.

The purpose of this study was to gain West Virginia principals' perceptions of the

effectiveness of the leadership standards in WVBE Policy 5800 in guiding effective

leadership. A survey was sent to all 678 identified principals in West Virginia public

schools to measure principals' perceptions of the application of WVBE Policy 5800 in

their work as instructional leaders. In addition, these data may be useful to assist school

systems and leadership preparatory programs to better prepare current and aspiring

principals. Lastly, the results of this study may assist in the development and revision of

future standards of professional practice for principals.

Chapter Four will present and describe the data gained from the results of this

study. It will also focus on specific principal demographic items, rating the usefulness of

each WVBE Policy 5800 standard, ranking the nine standards in order of significance,

principal perceptions of barriers in meeting WVBE Policy 5800 standards, and principal

perceptions of support or resources that would benefit principals in becoming more

effective leaders.

Population and Sample

A survey was distributed to 678 principals in West Virginia. Of the 678 surveys distributed, 267 surveys were returned. Of the 267 surveys returned, 223 participants submitted usable data, comprised of 146 female responses and 77 male responses for a return rate of 33%. The principals who responded to the survey had an average of 22.81 years' experience in education and 8.18 years as a principal.

The school grade levels consisted of four areas: elementary (136), middle/junior high (40), high school (42), and other (7). Out of the 223 schools, 118 schools were considered Title I schools.

Research Questions

The study on WVBE Policy 5800 gathered perceptions of West Virginia principals regarding the following research questions:

1. To what extent do principals in West Virginia believe the standards found in WVBE Policy 5800 are applicable in their work as instructional leaders?

2. What standards found in WVBE Policy 5800 do West Virginia principals believe are the most important in being an instructional leader?

3. What factors impede West Virginia principals from meeting standards found in WVBE Policy 5800?

4. What support or resources do West Virginia principals believe they need to meet standards found in WVBE Policy 5800?

5. To what extent do gender, years of administrative experience, years of educational experience, grade level of the school, and Title I status of the

school affect principals' perceptions that the standards found in WVBE

Policy 5800 are applicable in their work as instructional leaders?

6. To what extent do gender, years of administrative experience, years of

educational experience, grade level of the school, and Title I status of the

school affect principals' perceptions of the relative importance of the

standards found in WVBE Policy 5800 in their work as instructional

leaders?

The data showed whether the standards are applicable in guiding effective leadership

and will focus on factors impeding principals from meeting leadership standards. Further

focus was given to standards that principals believe were vital for the development of

becoming an instructional leader.

Data Collection

This study is a mixed method design, gaining West Virginia principals'

perceptions of WVBE Policy 5800. Section 1 of the survey consisted of five questions

that asked demographic information concerning principals' gender, years of educational

and administrative experience, school grade levels, and if Title I services were present

in their schools. Section 2 consisted of 18 quantitative questions to measure the

usefulness in their work as instructional leaders of WVBE Policy 5800 on a Likert scale,

ranging from very applicable to not applicable at all. Section 3 required principals to

rank the nine WVBE Policy 5800 standards in order of importance in their work as

instructional leaders. The fourth and fifth sections asked principals to choose factors

that were considered barriers in meeting standards and factors/resources that would

benefit their work as instructional leaders found in WVBE Policy 5800. Section 4

consisted of 21 listed factors and Section 5 consisted of 16 specific factors, with a qualitative area in each section for principals to list factors not presented.

Research Question 1: To what extent do principals in West Virginia believe the standards found in WVBE Policy 5800 are applicable in their work as instructional leaders?

Concerning the determination of principals' perceptions with the applicability of each standard found in WVBE Policy 5800 (Research Question 1), Section 2 of the survey asked principals to rate the applicability using a Likert scale, with 1 defined as "Very Applicable" to 4 defined as "Not Applicable" at all. Table 1 shows the percentages of the response results from principals. Out of the 223 participants, 220 of the principals responded to this question and the number in parentheses is the actual number of principal respondents. A Chi-square test of independence was calculated, analyzing the frequency of participant choices concerning applicability of each standard. Significance was attained for every standard at the $p<0.01$ probability level. The choice of "Not-Applicable" was not included in the SPSS calculation for this analysis in the standards where no participants responded with this choice.

Table 1
Applicability of WVBE Policy 5800

Question	Very Applicable	Applicable	Somewhat Applicable	Not Applicable	Chi ^{2} Obtained Value:	Probability
Demonstrates interpersonal skills	75.45% (166)	21.36% (47)	3.18% (7)	0.00% (0)	202.017	.000 *
Demonstrates collaborative skills	76.82% (169)	20.00% (44)	3.18% (7)	0.00% (0)	204.264	.000 *
Creates a clear learning mission	63.64% (140)	32.27% (71)	4.09% (9)	0.00% (0)	123.328	.000 *
Creates a focused learning mission	64.55% (142)	30.45% (67)	5.00% (11)	0.00% (0)	125.651	.000 *
Facilitates a rigorous curriculum	55.91% (123)	36.82% (81)	7.27% (16)	0.00% (0)	81.506	.000 *
Facilitates engaging instruction	62.27% (137)	30.91% (68)	6.82% (15)	0.00% (0)	104.791	.000 *
Facilitates balanced assessments	43.64% (96)	43.64% (96)	12.27% (27)	0.45% (1)	132.098	.000 *
Builds a positive learning climate	73.06% (160)	25.57% (56)	1.37% (3)	0.00% (0)	176.179	.000 *
Sustains a positive learning climate	75.45% (166)	20.91% (46)	3.64% (8)	0.00% (0)	187.055	.000 *
Builds a cohesive culture	69.55% (153)	25.91% (57)	4.55% (10)	0.00% (0)	151.974	.000 *
Sustains a cohesive culture	71.36% (157)	24.09% (53)	4.55% (10)	0.00% (0)	161.268	.000 *
Promotes continual professional growth	52.27% (115)	39.55% (87)	8.64% (19)	0.00% (0)	70.528	.000 *
Attracts and retains quality staff	55.00% (121)	27.27% (60)	15.00% (33)	2.73% (6)	137.409	.000 *
Acts as a student advocate	60.27% (132)	31.05% (68)	8.22% (18)	0.46% (1)	196.735	.000 *
Creates support systems for student success	68.04% (149)	27.27% (60)	4.11% (9)	0.46% (1)	262.444	.000 *
Manages operations to promote learning	63.64% (140)	31.82% (70)	4.55% (10)	0.00% (0)	119.804	.000 *
Connects to families and the larger community	54.55% (120)	35.91% (79)	7.73% (17)	1.82% (4)	169.851	.000 *
Effects continuous improvement	63.43% (137)	33.33% (72)	4.17% (9)	0.00% (0)	113.221	.000 *

* Significance attained at the p<0.01 level.

In looking at the Chi Square results of the Likert-like scale responses, significance was attained for all the standards. Overall principals perceive all the standards as "very applicable" or "applicable" compared to the "somewhat applicable" or "not applicable" choices.

Descriptively, five standards were rated highest as very applicable with 70% or more of the responses:

- *Demonstrates interpersonal skills*

- *Demonstrates collaborative skills*

- *Builds a positive learning climate,*

- *Sustains a positive learning climate,*

- *Sustains a cohesive culture.*

In looking at the Chi-Square results of the Likert-like scale responses, four

standards were rated lowest as very applicable with 55% or less of the responses:

- *Facilitates balanced assessments*

- *Promotes continual professional growth*

- *Attracts and retains quality staff*

- *Connects to families and the larger community*

Out of these results, *facilitating balanced assessments* scored the lowest at

43.64%, and the next lowest standard was *promoting continual professional growth* at

52.27%.

Research Question 2: What standards found in WVBE Policy 5800 do West

Virginia principals believe are the most important in being an instructional

leader?

Concerning the extent to which principals believe the standards found in WVBE

Policy 5800 were important in their work as instructional leaders (Research Question 2),

Section 3 asked principals to rank each standard in order of importance: 1 defined as

"most important" to 9 defined as "least important." Table 2 shows the percentages of the

response results from principals. Out of the 223 participants, 218 of the principals

responded to this question and the number in parentheses is the actual number of

principal respondents. A Chi-square test of independence was calculated, analyzing the

frequency of participant choices concerning the importance of each standard.

Significance was attained for every standard at the p<0.01 probability level.

Table 2
Policy 5800 Rankings of Importance

Standard:	Most Important Ranked 1st	2nd:	3rd:	4th:	5th:	6th:	7th:	8th:	Least Important Ranked 9th:	Chi ^{2} Obtained Value:	Probability
Demonstrates interpersonal and collaborative skills	15.14% (33)	15.14% (33)	13.30% (29)	11.93% (26)	11.47% (25)	10.55% (23)	8.72% (19)	5.96% (13)	7.80% (17)	19.496	.012 *
Creates a clear and focused learning mission	18.35% (40)	16.97% (37)	17.43% (38)	10.55% (23)	10.55% (23)	8.72% (19)	4.13% (9)	4.59% (10)	8.72% (19)	47.043	.000 *
Facilitates rigorous curriculum, engaging instruction and balanced assessments	12.84% (28)	12.39% (27)	14.68% (32)	18.87% (41)	11.47% (25)	10.09% (22)	5.50% (12)	9.17% (20)	5.05% (11)	34.600	.000 *
Builds and sustains a positive learning climate and cohesive culture	29.36% (64)	24.31% (53)	19.27% (42)	11.01% (24)	5.05% (11)	3.21% (7)	5.05% (11)	1.83% (4)	0.92% (2)	191.748	.000 *
Promotes continual professional growth and attracts and retains quality staff	3.21% (7)	5.05% (11)	11.93% (26)	10.55% (23)	13.30% (29)	11.47% (25)	14.22% (31)	14.22% (31)	16.06% (35)	34.678	.000 *
Acts as a student advocate and creates support systems for student success	12.39% (27)	11.01% (24)	6.42% (14)	11.93% (26)	14.22% (31)	13.30% (29)	13.76% (30)	13.30% (29)	3.67% (8)	19.652	.012 *
Manages operations to promote learning	7.34% (16)	5.50% (12)	7.80% (17)	9.17% (20)	13.30% (29)	15.14% (33)	11.47% (25)	11.47% (25)	18.81% (41)	25.130	.001 *
Connects to families and the larger community	0.92% (2)	5.05% (11)	3.67% (8)	7.80% (17)	10.09% (22)	9.63% (21)	19.27% (42)	22.02% (48)	21.56% (47)	107.461	.000 *
Effects continuous improvement	4.13% (9)	4.13% (9)	4.59% (10)	7.80% (17)	10.09% (22)	17.89% (39)	17.89% (39)	17.89% (39)	15.60% (34)	65.748	.000 *

* Significance attained at the p<0.01 level.

In looking at the importance of standards, the following is a specific chart showing most important and least important standard rankings:

Table 3
Rankings of Importance

Most important rankings	Least important rankings
1st: Builds and sustains a positive learning climate and cohesive culture (29.36%)	1st: Connects to families and the larger community (21.56%)
2nd: Creates a clear and focused learning mission (18.35%)	2nd: Manages operations to promote learning (18.81%)
3rd: Demonstrates interpersonal and collaborative skills (15.14%)	3rd: Promotes continual professional growth and attracts and retains quality staff 16.06%)
4th: Facilitates rigorous curriculum, engaging instruction and balanced assessments (12.84%)	4th: Effects continuous improvement (15.60%)
5th: Acts as a student advocate and creates support systems for student success (12.39%).	5th: Creates a clear and focused learning mission (8.72%)
6th: Manages operations to promote learning (7.34%)	6th: Demonstrates interpersonal and collaborative skills (7.80%)
7th: Effects continuous improvement (4.13%)	7th: Facilitates rigorous curriculum, engaging instruction and balanced assessments (5.05%).
8th: Promotes continual professional growth and attracts and retains quality staff (3.21%)	8th: Acts as a student advocate and creates support systems for student success (3.67%).
9th: Connects to families and the larger community (.92%)	9th: Facilitates rigorous curriculum, engaging instruction and balanced assessments (.92%)

Overall, significance was found for the rankings of all the standards in the Likert scale choices from "most important" (1st) to "least important" (9th). These significant results are explained as followed:

- *Demonstrates Interpersonal and Collaborative Skills:* In ranking the importance of this standard, 15.14% of the principals ranked this standard as "most important," with the same percentage ranking the standard as second most important. This standard was ranked as "least important" by 7.80% of the principals. In terms of its ranking of importance among all the standards, this standard was ranked 3rd in importance among the 9 standards. The Chi-square result for this standard was significant in terms of differences in ranking, obtaining a Chi-square score of 19.496 with a probability of .012.

- *Creates a Clear and Focused Learning Mission:* 18.35% of the principals ranked

  this standard as the "most important" with 16.97% ranking the standard second.

  8.72% of the principals ranked this standard as "least important." In terms of

  importance among all standards, this standard received the 2nd highest rating

  among the 9 standards. A Chi-square score of 47.043 with a probability of .000

  was significant at the p<.01 level, showing considerable differences in the

  rankings by the principals.

- *Facilitates Rigorous Curriculum, Engaging Instruction and Balanced*

  Assessments: Regarding this standard, the first two "most important" rankings

  were close, with 12.84% of the principals ranking this standard first and 12.39%

  ranking the standard second. 5.05% of the principals ranked this standard as

  "least important". In terms of importance among all standards, it received the 4th

  highest ranking among the nine standards. A Chi-square score of 34.600 with a

  probability of .000 was significant in terms of differences at the p<.01 level.

- *Builds and Sustains a Positive Learning Climate and Cohesive Culture:* 64

  respondents (29.36%) chose this standard as "most important" in both the

  standard ranking and the overall ranking for all nine standards. Only two

  principals (.92%) chose this standard as "least," making this standard the least

  chosen by principals, both with this standard and the overall standard choices.

  The Chi-square obtained value for this standard was 191.748 with a probability of

  .000, showing significance was attained.

- *Promotes Continual Professional Growth and Attracts and Retains Quality Staff:*

  Seven respondents (3.21%) ranked this standard as "most important." The

percentage of principals finding this standard as "least important" was 16.06%. In terms of ranking among standards, this standard was ranked eighth. The Chi-square obtained value for this standard was 34.678 with a probability of .000 showing significance was attained.

- *Acts as a Student Advocate and Creates Support Systems for Student Success:* The "most important" ranking for this standard received 12.39% of principal responses with the "least important" percentage rank at 3.67%. In order of importance, this standard was ranked fifth among the nine standards. The Chi-square obtained value for this standard was 19.652 with a probability of .012, showing significance was attained.

- *Manages Operations to Promote Learning:* With the standard *manages operations to promote learning*, 7.34% of the principal participants ranked this standard as "most important" with 18.81% of principals choosing it as "least important." Out of the nine standards, this standard was ranked sixth overall. The Chi obtained value for this standard was 25.130 with a probability of .001, showing significance was attained.

- *Connects to Families and the Larger Community:* Principals who found this standard as "most important" was the lowest among all nine standards, having only 2 participants (.92%) ranking it as such. Principal participants ranking this standard as "least important" were 21.56%, making it the highest percentage in the "least important" ranking out of the nine standards. The Chi-square obtained value for this standard was 107.461 with a probability of .000, showing significance was attained.

- *Effects Continuous Improvement:* With the standard *effects continuous improvement*, the percentage of principals choosing this response as "most important" was 4.13%, which was the same percentage as principals choosing this standard second. In the "least important" ranking, 15.60% of participants chose this response. In terms of its ranking of importance among all the standards, it was ranked seventh among the nine standards. The Chi-square obtained value for this standard was 65.748 with a probability of .000, showing significance was attained.

Descriptively, the rankings show the "most important" standard, with a principal response rate of 29.36%, being *building and sustaining a positive learning climate and cohesive culture.* The second highest "most important" response rate of 18.35% was the standard of *creating a clear and focused learning mission. Connecting to families and the larger community* was rated lowest in the "most important" rank with a 0.91% response rate. The highest "least important" principal response rate at 21.56% was *connecting to families and the larger community*. The next highest "least important" responses rates were 18.81% for *managing operations to promote learning* then 15.60% for *effects continuous improvement*.

Research Question 3: What factors impede West Virginia principals from meeting standards found in WVBE Policy 5800?

To answer Research Question 3, Section 4 of the survey asked principals to choose factors they believe would impede them in meeting standards found in WVDE Policy 5800. The principals were given 21 responses to select, with a final area for

principals to add factors not listed as a choice. Table 4 below shows the factors and

percentages of the principal responses.

Table 4
Factors Impeding the Meeting of Standards

Factors:	% (#)	Factors:	% (#)	Factors:	% (#)
Bureaucratic mandates/ Micromanaging	62.33%	Student transiency	42.15%	Lack of administrative incentives	21.52%
Lack of parent involvement	61.88%	Low student socio-economic status	40.36%	Curriculum/Curriculum relevancy	19.73%
Teacher quality	57.85%	Lack of meaningful professional development opportunities	34.53%	Educational resources	17.49%
Discipline	56.05%	School culture	30.49%	Teacher evaluation system	14.80%
Excessive testing	52.02%	County and/or state policies	27.80%	Principal preparation program/s	14.35%
Lack of appropriate support	51.57%	Autonomous decision-making	24.34%	Length of contract	6.73%
Inability to keep effective teachers	50.67%	Community involvement	22.42%	Student diversity	4.48%

According to the data, the top two choices were *bureaucratic mandates/ micromanaging* at 62.33% and *lack of parent involvement* at 61.88%. *Length of contract* (6.73%) and *student diversity* (4.48%) were considered the lowest factors scoring well below 10%.

Qualitative Responses. Principals were also asked to list any other factors they believe would impede principals in meeting standards found in WVDE Policy 5800. Out of the 223 respondents, 16 responded with additional factors. Six of the responses were

very similar to the choices found in the question list. The survey choices and the

principals' similar responses are as follows:

Table 5
Principals' Other Factors Impeding the Meeting of Standards

Respondent response:	Survey list choice:
Relevance of state testing	Excessive testing
Lack of meaningful PD opportunities	Lack of time dedicated to PD's
Bureaucratic mandates	-Hold us accountable but let us do our jobs
	-Continuous changes to standards and test made by state
	-Red tape
Low SES	Economic downfall of county

The next 10 qualitative responses were not presented as a choice in the survey.

These were concerns principals added to the list:

- Believing that all students can learn

- Useless paperwork to justify other jobs

- Teacher mindset working with low SES students

- AFT involvement

- Not enough school personnel/ stretched too thin/ lack of staff

- Drug epidemic/ trauma

- Addiction

- Facebook (social media)

- Overwhelming quantities of duties/ Management vs. leadership requirements

- School calendar- kids not motivated to start in early August/ parents continue to

  take vacations and miss school

Research Question 4: What support or resources do West Virginia principals believe they need to meet standards found in WVBE Policy 5800?

Section 5 of the survey asked principals to choose factors they believe would best assist them in meeting standards found in WVDE Policy 5800. The principals were given 16 responses to choose from, with a final area for principals to add factors not listed as a choice. In the chart below, (Table 6), shows the factors and percentages of the principal responses.

Table 6
Factors that Assist Principals in Meeting Standards

Support/Resources	%	Support/Resources	%
More collaboration among principals	64.13%	Build support from central office administrators	32.74%
Less policy mandates	52.02%	Control over professional developments	29.15%
Less political influences	48.43%	Customize administrator professional developments	24.66%
Decrease time demands	44.84%	Develop a county-wide leadership framework	24.22%
Salary increases	42.15%	More effective principal preparatory programs	22.42%
More autonomous decision-making with curriculum	39.01%	Partnering with colleges/ universities	19.28%
More input in curriculum decision-making	35.43%	More autonomous decision-making with finances	18.39%
More autonomous decision-making with teacher hiring	32.74%	Mentoring programs	17.04%

Principals were asked to list any other factors they believe would best assist them as principals in meeting standards found in WVDE Policy 5800. Out of the 223 respondents, 12 responded with additional suggestions. The principal responses different than the survey choices are as follows:

- A consistent (year after year) summative assessment that matches the standards

- It should not be so difficult to get rid of ineffective teachers and staff.

- Decision making over hiring service personnel

- Educator training in working with trauma

- Decrease managerial duties

- Decrease expected duties -- one person cannot meet the management AND the leadership challenges of the position; one will have to suffer.

- Less intrusive calendar

- Mandates and extensive special education requirements

- Teachers who still believe they are valued by our society.

The next three qualitative responses were not presented as a choice in the survey but were suggestions made by participants that were comparable to survey choices. The following is a list of the survey choices and the like responses given by the principals:

Table 7

Principals' Other Factors Assisting the Meeting of Standards Similar to Survey

Respondent response:	Survey list choice:
County Office Support and Communication	Build support from central office administrators
Increase the salaries for teachers to attract and keep higher quality teachers. We are at a crisis in WV needing teachers, especially Math, Science, Foreign Language, and Special Education.	Salary increases
Less paperwork/reports	Less policy mandates

Research Question 5: To what extent do gender, years of administrative experience, years of educational experience, grade level of the school, and Title I status of the school affect principals' perceptions that the standards found in WVBE Policy 5800 are applicable in their work as instructional leaders?

To measure the significance of applicability with gender, the Mann-Whitney U test was performed to compare the two mean ranks of independent samples of male and female responses. Table 8 presents the findings for the 18 standards given to West Virginia principals and the Mann-Whitney U/ probability results.

Table 8
Gender

Question	Male Mean Ranks	Female Mean Ranks	Mann-Whitney U	Probability
Facilitates a rigorous curriculum	124.88	102.91	4379	.006 *
Facilitates balanced assessments	123.44	103.67	4488.5	.016 *
Builds a cohesive culture	123.86	103.45	4457	.005 *
Sustains a cohesive culture	124.73	102.99	4390.5	.002 *
Promotes continual professional growth	133.86	98.17	3696.5	.000 *
Acts as a student advocate	123.47	102.84	4410	.008 *
Creates support systems for student success	125.39	101.82	4264	.001 *
Manages operations to promote learning	121.16	104.88	4662	.032 *
Connects to families and the larger community	130.84	99.76	3926	.000 *
Effects continuous improvement	123.48	100.85	4126	.003 *

* Significance attained at the p<0.01 level.

Gender of the participant made a significant difference in Likert scale choices for the following standards:

- Facilitates a rigorous curriculum

- Facilitates balanced assessments

- Builds a cohesive culture

- Sustains a cohesive culture

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- Promotes continual professional growth

- Acts as a student advocate

- Creates support systems for student success

- Manages operations to promote learning

- Connects to families and the larger community

- Effects continuous improvement

In accordance to the Likert scale, the scores ranged from "Very Applicable" (1) to "Not Applicable" (4). Because of this rating scale, lower scores in the comparisons of mean ranks for all the standards were more significant than higher scores. Since female scores were lower than males, it can be interpreted as standards found in Policy 5800 to be more significant with female principals than with their male counterparts.

Years of Administrative Experience. To measure the significance of applicability with years of administrative experience, the Kruskal-Wallis test was performed to compare the five mean ranks of independent samples of years of administrative experience. The years were divided into five categories: 1-5 years, 6-10 years, 11-15 years, 16-20 years, 21 or more years.

Years of administrative experience had no significance on Likert scale choices with the applicability of standards found in WVBE Policy 5800**.** The closest to significance was *acts as a student advocate* with a "p" level of .141. Because of this, a chart was not included for this area of the study. Also, multiple comparisons were not performed because the overall test does not show significant differences across samples.

Years of Educational Experience. To measure the significance of applicability with years of educational experience, the Kruskal-Wallis test was performed to compare the four mean ranks of independent samples of years of educational experience. The years were divided in five categories: 1-5 years, 6-10 years, 11-15 years, 16-20 years, 21 or more years.

Years of educational experience had no significance on Likert scale choices with the applicability of standards found in WVBE Policy 5800. The closest to significance was *attracts and retains quality staff* with a "p" level of .082. Because of this, a chart was not included for this area of the study. Also, multiple comparisons were not performed because the overall test did not show significant differences across samples.

Grade Levels. To measure the significance of applicability with grade levels of principals' schools, the Kruskal-Wallis test was performed to compare the three mean ranks of independent samples of school grade levels. Grade levels were described as elementary, middle school, and high school. Table 9 presents the findings for the 18 standards given to West Virginia principals and the Kruskal-Wallis/ probability results.

Table 9
Grade Levels

Question	Elementary Mean Ranks	Middle Mean Ranks	High School Mean Ranks	Kruskal-Wallis	Probability
Demonstrates collaborative skills	107.54	129.82	122.33	8.389	.015 *
Creates a clear learning mission	106.89	141.44	13.33	12.596	.002 *
Creates a focused learning mission	105.28	138.95	120.91	12.847	.002 *
Facilitates a rigorous curriculum	107.08	136.95	117.00	8.683	.013 *
Facilitates balanced assessments	103.98	138.54	125.52	12.459	.002 *
Promotes continual professional growth	105.89	134.11	123.56	8.761	.013 *
Acts as a student advocate	104.19	134.86	125.53	11.635	.003 *
Creates support systems for student success	105.64	130.35	125.64	9.398	.009 *
Connects to families and the larger community	106.44	128.12	127.50	7.122	.028 *

* Significance attained at the $p < 0.01$ level.

Out of the 18 standards listed in the survey, nine of the standards showed significance. For those standards where school grade levels did show significance, a pair wise comparison was performed to note where the significance was occurring. In accordance to the Likert scale, the scores ranged from "Very Applicable" (1) to "Not Applicable" (4), making the lower mean ranks indicating the perception of "very applicable." The survey given to principals provided another choice of "Other" for schools other than typical elementary (K-8), middle (6-8), and high schools (9-12). Because "Other" could not be defined and had such a low response rate, responses in the "Other" category were not used in the analysis of school grade level.

The standards, the pair wise comparisons and applicability are as follows:

- *Demonstrates collaborative skills:* There was a significant difference between elementary and middle school mean ranks, with the elementary responses more applicable than middle schools.

- *Creates a clear learning mission:* There was a significant difference between elementary and middle school mean ranks, with the elementary responses more applicable than middle schools.

- *Creates a focused learning mission*: There was a significant difference between elementary and middle school mean ranks, with the elementary responses more applicable than middle schools.

- *Facilitates a rigorous curriculum*: There was a significant difference between elementary and middle school mean ranks, with the elementary responses more applicable than middle schools.

- *Facilitates balanced assessments:* There was a significant difference between elementary and middle school mean ranks, with the elementary responses more applicable than middle schools.

- *Promotes continual professional growth:* There was a significant difference between elementary and middle school mean ranks, with the elementary responses more applicable than middle schools.

- *Acts as a student advocate*: There was a significant difference between elementary and middle school mean ranks, with the elementary responses more applicable than middle schools.

- *Creates support systems for student success:* There was a significant difference between elementary and middle school mean ranks, with the elementary responses more applicable than middle schools.

- *Connects to families and the larger community*: There was a significant difference between elementary and middle school mean ranks. There was also a

significant difference between elementary and high school mean ranks of 21.06. Because the ranks are lower at the elementary level, the elementary responses were more applicable than middle/high schools.

Low SES (Title I). To measure the significance of applicability with Low SES, the Mann-Whitney U test was performed to compare the two mean ranks of independent samples of being considered Title I (Yes) or non-Title I (No). The findings revealed being a principal at a Title I school had no significance on Likert scale choices with the applicability of every standard found in WVBE Policy 5800 over non-Title I school principals**.** The closest to significance was facilitates a rigorous curriculum with a "p" value of .207. Therefore, a chart showing results of this section of the survey was not included. Multiple comparisons were also not performed because the overall test did not show significant differences across samples.

Research Question 6: To what extent does gender, years of administrative experience, years of educational experience, grade level of the school, and Title I status of the school affect principals' perceptions of the relative importance of the standards found in WVBE Policy 5800 in their work as instructional leaders?

To measure the significance of gender in the importance of the standards, the Mann-Whitney U test was performed to compare the two mean ranks of independent samples of male and female responses. Table 10 presents the findings for the two standards: one standard bordering significance and the other standard where significance was attained.

Table 10
Gender

Standard:	Male Mean Ranks	Female Mean Ranks	Mann-Whitney U	Probability
Connects to families and the larger community	118.86	103.10	4487	.074
Affects continuous improvement	90.86	117.69	6559	.002 *

* Significance attained at the p<0.01 level.

Gender of the participant made a significant difference in Likert-like scale choices for one standard, *effects continuous improvement*. In accordance to the Likert scale, the scores ranged from "Very Applicable" (1) to "Not Applicable" (4). One other standard, *connects to families and the larger community*, was close to significance with a probability of .074, but did not attain the p<0.05 level. Because of the rating scale in the comparisons of mean ranks for this standard that showed significance, males chose a lower rank than females; one could speculate that males believed the standard was more important in their work as principal than females.

Years of Administrative Experience. To measure the significance of importance with administrative experience, the Kruskal-Wallis test was performed to compare the four mean ranks of independent samples of years of experience. The years were divided in five categories: 1-5 years, 6-10 years, 11-15 years, 16-20 years, 21 or more years.

The data showed one standard, *facilitates rigorous curriculum, engaging instruction and balanced assessments,* bordering significance at .058, but overall, years of administrative experience had no significance on Likert-like scale choices with the importance of standards found in WVBE Policy 5800. Multiple comparisons were not performed because the overall test did not show significant differences across samples.

Years of Educational Experience. To measure the significance of applicability with years of educational experience, the Kruskal-Wallis test was performed to compare the four mean ranks of independent samples of years of experience. The years were divided in five categories: 1-5 years, 6-10 years, 11-15 years, 16-20 years, 21 or more years.

Years of educational experience had no significance on Likert-like scale choices with the importance of standards found in WVBE Policy 5800**.** Multiple comparisons were not performed because the overall test did not show significant differences across samples.

Grade Levels. To measure the importance of standards with grade levels, the Kruskal-Wallis test was performed to compare the three mean ranks of independent samples of elementary, middle, and high schools. The survey given to principals provided another choice of "Other" for schools other than typical elementary (K-8), middle (6-8), and high schools (9-12). Because "Other" could not be defined and had such a low response rate, responses in the "Other" category was not used in the analysis of school grade-level.

Table 11
Grade Levels

Standard:	Elementary Mean Ranks	Middle Mean Ranks	High School Mean Ranks	Kruskal-Wallis	Probability
Creates a clear and focused learning mission	119.65	113.14	85.88	9.226	.010 *

* Significance attained at the p<0.01 level.

School grade level showed significance on Likert-like scale choices with only one standard: *creates a clear and focused learning mission.* The pair-wise comparison revealed a significant difference between the elementary grade level and the high school grade level. The survey asked participants to rank importance with the choices of

"Very Important" (1) to "Not Important" (9). Therefore, the elementary mean rank of 119.65 compared to the high school mean rank of 85.88 is interpreted as the high school level principals see this standard as more important than the elementary level principal.

Low SES (Title I). To measure the significance of applicability with Low SES, the Mann-Whitney U test was performed to compare the two mean ranks of independent samples of being considered Title I (Yes) or non-Title I (No).

The data showed *builds and sustains a positive learning climate and cohesive culture* the only standard bordering significance with a probability of .067. The rest of the standards had a probability range of 2.42 to 9.25, showing no significance with Title I school responses compared to non-Title I schools.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The information found in this chapter contains the purpose, procedures, findings/ conclusions, and implications of the study for WVBE Policy 5800: Standards of Professional Practice for West Virginia Superintendents, Principals and Teacher Leaders. In addition, recommendations are presented for educators who aspire to be educational leaders, principals currently serving as instructional leaders, and post-secondary leaders who prepare principals for educational leadership. Finally, recommendations for further research are presented.

Purpose

The nine standards found in WVBE Policy 5800 are designed to serve as a guide to help educational leaders move in the direction of effective instructional leadership and improved student test scores. Therefore, this study was designed to gather perceptions of principals serving schools today, as to whether these standards serve their designed purpose. In addition, the study included factors impeding principals from meeting leadership standards and asked principals to indicate which standards were vital for the development of becoming an instructional leader. Finally, gender, years of educational and administrative experience, grade levels, and low socio-economic status were considered with the findings.

Research Questions

To determine the effectiveness and importance of WVBE Policy 5800, the following research questions were used to guide this study:

1. To what extent do principals in West Virginia believe the standards found in WVBE Policy 5800 are applicable in their work as instructional leaders?

2. What standards found in WVBE Policy 5800 do West Virginia principals believe are the most important in being an instructional leader?

3. What factors impede West Virginia principals from meeting standards found in WVBE Policy 5800?

4. What support or resources do West Virginia principals believe they need to meet standards found in WVBE Policy 5800?

5. To what extent do gender, years of administrative experience, years of educational experience, grade level of the school, and Title I status of the school affect principals' perceptions that the standards found in WVBE Policy 5800 are applicable in their work as instructional leaders?

6. To what extent do gender, years of administrative experience, years of educational experience, grade level of the school, and Title I status of the school affect principals' perceptions of the relative importance of the standards found in WVBE Policy 5800 in their work as instructional leaders?

Procedures

The Survey of Leadership Standards in WVBE Policy 5800 was sent via email to all the principals in West Virginia the first week of October 2017 and a follow up survey was sent the first week of November 2017. The research design was a mixed method design collected through a researcher-developed quantitative/qualitative survey instrument using the Qualtrics research platform. The survey consisted of five sections: demographics, rating the usefulness of each policy standard, ranking the nine standards

found in WVBE Policy 5800, principal perceptions of barriers in meeting WVBE Policy

5800 standards, and factors/resources that would benefit principals in becoming more

effective leaders. In the sections regarding barriers and factors/resources, principals

were asked to also list any barriers and factors/resources that were not listed in the

survey choices.

All quantitative data were analyzed using the SPSS system. All qualitative data

were listed with Research Questions 3 and 4.

Findings/Conclusions

Research Question 1: To what extent do principals in West Virginia believe

the standards found in WVBE Policy 5800 are applicable in their work as

instructional leaders?

In interpreting principal responses to the standards found in WVBE Policy 5800,

a Chi-square test of independence was used to analyze the frequency of participant

choices and showed significance was attained for every standard at the $p<0.01$

probability level. In analyzing the overall percentages, over 50% rated 18 of the 19

standards as very applicable and all 19 were perceived as applicable or very applicable.

The only exception not rated very applicable by at least 50% of respondents was

facilitating balanced assessments with a response rate of 43.64%, meaning many

principals find balanced assessments important, but not to the extent as other

standards. When considering the percentage of principals rating the standards as either

applicable or very applicable, the results are even more conclusive, with the lowest

percentage in the combined categories for *attracting and retaining quality staff* (82.7%).

In considering the overall findings, the results show principals in West Virginia schools

responding to this survey do see the standards of WVBE Policy 5800 as applicable to their work as instructional leaders.

The study had five standards that received a response rate of 70% or greater in the very applicable category:

- Demonstrates interpersonal skills

- Demonstrates collaborative skills

- Builds a positive learning climate

- Sustains a positive learning climate

- Sustains a cohesive culture

The possible implications of the high rating for these standards will be further considered under Research Question 2.

The standards that were rated as only somewhat applicable or not applicable by higher percentages of respondents include some aspects of leadership which normally are viewed as important in the work of principals. For example, even though 55% of principals found the standard of *attracting and retaining quality staff* very applicable, nearly 18% found the standard as only somewhat applicable to not applicable at all. One could speculate since a principal's performance is continually measured based on test scores, the quality of teaching staff is a necessity when it comes to school success (Lashway, 2002; Reyes, 2008; Stricherz, 2001; West, Peck, Reitzug & Crane, 2014). If a teacher is not performing at an acceptable standard, the principal must perform observations, evaluations, focus support plans, and possibly improvement plans, causing extra work for the principal. If the principal was able to attract and retain quality staff, some aspects of this work would not be as necessary. Though attracting and

retaining quality teachers is important, principals recognize their ability to do so is limited by the shortage of certified and qualified teachers (Ostroff, 2017; Passy, 2018). As a result, it may be speculated that several respondents did not view this standard to be as relevant to their work as one would expect. Because of this shortage of educators, attracting quality staff is more difficult than in years past, let alone retaining them. Two other factors were also seen as only somewhat applicable or not applicable by several principals: *acts as a student advocate (8.68%)* and *creates support systems for student success (4.57%).* While these factors have all been found to be beneficial in school quality and school improvement (Benson & Martin, 2003; Dixon & Tucker, 2008; McKenna & Millen, 2013), some principals in West Virginia find little to no applicability in their duties as an educational leader.

In analyzing which standards scored highest, 76.82% of principals believe that the standard *demonstrates collaborative skills* was the most important, scoring higher than the next highest two standards of *demonstrates interpersonal skills* (75.45%) and *sustains a positive learning climate* (75.45%). Due to these results, one may conclude that principals in West Virginia believe the most important attributes for a principal to have are related to people skills through collaboration and demonstrating interpersonal skills and sustaining a positive learning climate.

As previously stated, even though "people skills" were determined by West Virginia principals as being most important, it appears that all the standards found in WVBE Policy 5800 are considered beneficial in guiding principals in becoming effective educational leaders since over 80% of the responses were very applicable to applicable

for every standard. However, in a few cases, several principals did not see some standards as relevant to their day to day school responsibilities, as noted above.

Research Question 2: What standards found in WVBE Policy 5800 do West Virginia principals believe are the most important in being an instructional leader?

For Research Question 2, principals were asked to rank the standards with respect to level of importance. A Chi-square test of independence was calculated, analyzing the frequency of participant choices, and significance was attained for every standard at the $p < 0.01$ probability level. In general, there was a gradual progression of standards principals found most important and least important, showing the most important standard ranking first being *building and sustaining a positive learning climate and cohesive culture,* with the standard ranking highest as least important being *connects to families and the larger community*.

In comparing these results with the applicability of the standards, even though *demonstrating interpersonal and collaborative skills* scored higher in matter of importance, the most important ranking standard was based on a school-wide standard *building and sustaining a positive learning climate and cohesive culture*. As previously stated, Research Question 1 showed similar importance with *demonstrates collaborative skills* and *sustains a positive learning climate* ranking highest in principal responses. Because of these results, one could speculate that building a climate and culture is a necessity when it comes to school improvement and 29.49% of the West Virginia principals agree. Also, without a positive climate and culture of learning and

teaching, school success is considered difficult to achieve (Thapa, Cohen, Higgins-D'Alessandro, & Guffey, 2012).

The standard *connects to families and the larger community* ranked highest as least important, with 21.56% of the principals rating it as such. This standard was 2.65% higher than the next highest least important standard of *manages operations to promote learning* (18.81%). In conclusion, even though connecting to families and the community has been proven to be an important factor to school improvement (Benson & Martin, 2003; Halsey, 2004; McKenna & Millen, 2013), principals in West Virginia found it as the least important standard for daily practice.

In comparing most important to least important standards, only the highest most important ranking was opposite in comparisons with lower-ranking least important scores. For example: since *builds and sustains a positive learning climate and cohesive culture* had the highest most important ranking, then the lowest least important ranking should be the same standard. This opposite effect held true for *builds and sustains a positive learning climate and cohesive culture* standard but did not hold true for the other eight standards. One reason for this difference could be due to different levels of instruction, with elementary schools finding certain standards more important than middle and high school respondents (Shuls & Ritter, 2013). Regardless of the possible reasons, these results show that not every principal focuses on the same standards nor do they all lead the same way.

Research Question 3: What factors impede West Virginia principals from meeting standards found in WVBE Policy 5800?

For Research Question 3, principals were given a list of 21 factors that could be considered impediments in meeting standards found in WVBE Policy 5800. Out of the 21 factors, two factors stood out as impeding the most: *bureaucratic mandates/ micromanaging* (62.33%) and *lack of parent involvement* (61.88%).

In considering the issue of bureaucratic mandates/micromanaging, the literature supports that bureaucracy causes considerable stress, placing more demands on today's educational leaders in an ever-changing complex society (Walker & Qian, 2006). With these demands come limitations on what principals can do to improve teaching/learning and barriers with what could possibly promote student success (The Broad Center, 2012). More literature discusses the need to decrease the bureaucracy that surrounds the principal in today's schools (Bosman, 2007; Honig, 2006), but according to the survey results, one could surmise bureaucratic mandates/ micromanaging is still an issue and possible impediment for many West Virginia principals.

Lack of parent involvement was found to be contradictory to what principals believe associated with Research Questions 1 and 2, where principals found connecting to families the least important standard found in WVBE Policy 5800; yet when answering the question of what impedes principals, parent involvement was considered one of the highest impediments. According to the research, much of the parent involvement found in many schools focuses on extracurricular activities (Halsey, 2004), but there is often a disconnect between the school and home environment that many

educators do not understand (McKenna & Millen, 2013). In pursuance of bridging the disconnect between schools and a student's home environment, there are several strategies that principals can do to improve parent involvement, but these strategies are time consuming and complicated, especially in the lower socioeconomic areas (Benson & Martin, 2003). In looking at the survey results, one could theorize that West Virginia principals realize parent involvement is an important aspect to school's success, but due to the disconnects and time restraints, parent involvement is seen as an impediment, rather than an important standard for school growth.

Other factors principals listed were: *believing that all students can learn, useless paperwork, teacher mindset working with low SES students, union involvement, lack of school personnel, drugs and addiction, social media, excessive duties,* and *school calendar.* Even though these factors were not presented as choices on this survey, future considerations should be made to add these factors in determining principal impediments.

Research Question 4: What support or resources do West Virginia principals believe they need to meet standards found in WVBE Policy 5800?

For Research Question 4, principals were asked what support or resources would best help them meet standards found in WVBE Policy 5800. Out of the 16 choices given to principals, *more collaboration among principals* ranked highest (64.13%). *Less policy mandates* received the second highest percentage with 52.02% with *less political influences* third with a score of 48.84%. The lowest choice was *mentoring programs* (17.04%) with *more autonomous decision-making with finances* scoring higher at 18.39%.

In looking at the literature, there is a plethora of information on professional learning communities and collaboration among principals and teachers, but there is very little that discusses collaboration among principals. One article entitled *Strong Principal Networks Influence School Culture* (2013) suggested strong principal collaboration builds knowledge and capacity among principals by sharing experiences and solutions (Neale & Cone, 2013). In looking at West Virginia principal responses, more collaboration among principals is needed and should be considered a viable resource to assist principals in meeting standards found in WVBE Policy 5800.

Other factors that principals believe would help them meet policy standards were: *a consistent summative assessment that matched standards, easier process for removing ineffective teachers and staff, more decision making over hiring service personnel, more educator training in working with trauma, decreasing managerial duties, decrease expected duties since one person cannot meet the management and the leadership challenges of the position, less intrusive calendar, decrease paperwork, policy mandates and extensive special education requirements, improved communication and support from the central office, higher salaries* and *promote teachers value to society*. Like Research Question 3, these factors were considered valid by some principals and should be added to future studies.

Overall, even though the percentages were not high in all other choice areas, each choice received a vote from principals. Because of this, all the choices could be considered at least somewhat important to principals in West Virginia as a valid resource in meeting WVBE Policy 5800 standards.

Research Question 5: To what extent do gender, years of administrative experience, years of educational experience, grade level of the school, and Title I status of the school affect principals' perceptions that the standards found in WVBE Policy 5800 are applicable in their work as instructional leaders?

According to the survey results, gender and grade levels made a significant difference in participant responses in all WVBE Policy standards. In the areas of years of administrative experience, educational experience and low socio-economic status, no significance was attained with this study.

To measure significance of applicability with gender, the Mann-Whitney U test was performed to compare the two mean ranks of independent samples of male and female responses. According to the Mann-Whitney U test, significance was attained for nine of the 18 standards at the $p<0.01$ probability level. These nine standards were all more significant with female participants than male and are as follows: *facilitating a rigorous curriculum and balanced assessments, building and sustaining a cohesive culture, promoting a cohesive culture, promoting continual professional growth, acting as a student advocate, creating support systems for student success, connecting to families and the larger community,* and *effecting continuous improvement.* The standard *manages operations to promote learning* attained significance at the $p<0.05$ probability level and was also more significant with female participants than male. These results could be due to the number of female participants compared to the male participants of the survey or just that male and female administrators simply have different thoughts and/or strengths for what is best in leading a school (Hallinger, Dongyu, & Wang, 2016),

but it seems that gender of the principal can play a role in the principal's belief toward the standards found in WVBE Policy 5800.

To measure significance of applicability with grade levels, the Kruskal-Wallis test was used to compare the three mean ranks of independent samples of school grade levels. According to the Kruskal-Wallis/ probability results, significance was attained for eight of the 18 standards at the $p<0.01$ probability level between elementary and middle school ranks, with the elementary responses more applicable than middle schools. These eight standards at the $p<0.01$ level was: *demonstrates collaborative skills, creates a clear learning mission, creates a focused learning mission, facilitates a rigorous curriculum, facilitates balanced assessments, promotes continual professional growth, acts as a student advocate*, and *creates support systems for student success*. For the standard *connects to families and the larger community*, significance was also attained, but at the $p<0.05$ probability level between elementary and middle schools with the addition of significance between elementary and high schools.

Grade level may have similar reasons for significance as gender, since most participants were female; but another rationale could be there were more elementary school principals who performed this survey than secondary principals. Another reason for the varied responses could be due to secondary principals may simply find some standards more important because of the different curriculum necessary for their students (Shuls & Ritter, 2013). While elementary teachers are usually responsible for all subjects being taught, secondary teachers usually are only responsible for one subject area. Also, there are many more school-based extracurricular activities at the

secondary level that may affect perception of many standards, so a focus on those standards may not be as important to secondary principals as to elementary principals.

Research Question 6: To what extent do gender, years of administrative experience, years of educational experience, grade level of the school, and Title I status of the school affect principals' perceptions of the relative importance of the standards found in WVBE Policy 5800 in their work as instructional leaders?

Research Question 6 showed significance in two WVBE Policy standards concerning gender and significance with one WVBE Policy standard corresponding to grade levels. In the areas of *years of administrative experience, educational experience and low socio-economic status*, no significance was attained with this study.

With regards to gender, the Mann-Whitney U test was performed to compare the two mean ranks of independent samples of male and female responses. In analyzing the responses, female responses scored significantly higher than their male counterparts. Specifically, the standard *effects continuous improvement* was significant at the $p<0.01$ probability level whereas the standard *connects to families and the larger community* was close to significance, with a .074 probability level. This result could be due to the number of female responses (146) compared to the number of male responses (77). Another speculation is that female principals are more active in instructional leadership as compared to their male counterparts (Hallinger, Dongyu, & Wang, 2016). Other reasons for this difference could be due to the different leadership styles, school needs, or strengths/weaknesses of each principal throughout the state that cannot be determined from this study (Badenhorst & Koalepe, 2014; Gulcan, 2012; Heck & Hallinger, 2005; Lingam & Lingam, 2015; Ortiz & Ogawa, n.d.; Steinberg, 2013).

The Kruskal-Wallis test was performed to compare the three mean ranks of independent samples of elementary, middle, and high schools. The test determined only one standard, *creates a clear and focused learning mission* was significantly higher with elementary schools (119.65%) than high schools (85.88%). Like Research Question 5, this difference could be teachers at the elementary schools mainly teach multi-subject areas, whereas high school teachers focus on one subject area. Since elementary schools concern themselves with every subject area, they must continually create learning missions to change with the student. High school teachers usually focus on one subject area and base much of what they teach on standards rather than student needs (Shuls & Ritter, 2013). This difference in focus does not mean high schools do not have learning missions; it is just the learning mission focus is more toward specific areas, whereas an elementary school learning mission must encompass all the subject areas teachers are responsible for. Also, like research question five, extracurricular activities may play a certain role in a principal's belief of which standards are more important as compared to their elementary counterparts.

Summary

The survey results from this study show the standards found in WVBE Policy 5800 do have merit when it comes to guiding principals' in becoming effective educational leaders. Over 75% of the principals surveyed chose very applicable to applicable on the survey, but in considering standard rankings, the importance of each standard varied. Even though there were differences with importance, the data gathered from this study reveals that the standards do assist most principals with their duties as instructional leader.

When it came to factors that impede principals in meeting standards, over 50% of the principals stated *bureaucratic mandates/ micromanaging, lack of parent involvement, teacher quality, discipline, excessive testing, lack of appropriate support,* and *inability to keep effective teachers* all impede them in meeting standards. *Length of contract, student diversity, principal preparation programs, the teacher evaluation system, curriculum/curriculum relevancy, lack of administrative incentives, community involvement,* and *autonomous decision-making* were lowest, receiving less than 25% of principal responses.

Lack of parent involvement was one factor that received a high percentage from principals that impede them in meeting standards; yet the WVBE policy 5800 standard scored lowest in importance. One could speculate that principals may be frustrated with obtaining a strong parent base, realizing that even though appropriate parent involvement may be a necessity, it is difficult to get the necessary and appropriate backing from parents to make meaningful changes to the school. To obtain strong parent involvement can be a daunting task that many administrators are not willing to perform to the extent necessary for increased involvement from parents (McKenna & Millen, 2013).

Teacher quality and inability to keep effective teachers both seem to counter responses between impediments and importance. When it comes to the matter of importance, *promotes continual professional growth and attracts and retains quality staff* ranked close to parent involvement, being major factors in impeding principals from meeting standards. One could theorize it is due to the lack of qualified teachers or an inability to control what teachers come or go (Ostroff, 2017). Another hypothesis could

be that the standard needs to be separated, focusing part of the standard on professional growth and another standard focusing on attracting and retaining quality staff.

In discussing other factors listed, ten more were listed that did not compare with the listed choices. Out of the ten, three were societal issues that have caused or have potential to cause issues for educational leaders. The other factors added were *drug epidemic/addiction, trauma, and social media*. Since these additions were not surveyed, it is difficult to tell whether other principals feel the same importance of whether they are impediments, so these factors could be used in future studies.

When it came to factors that would assist principals, *more collaboration among principals* was the highest response with a 64.13%, with the next highest response being *less policy mandates* at 52.02%. There were no responses that did not receive a vote, meaning that each has some credit when it comes to factors that would be beneficial for principals. It can be speculated that principals believe collaboration with others who perform similar duties as themselves and knowing what professional developments others experienced would possibly be beneficial for what they do as an educational leader (Neale & Cone, 2013).

The final response in the survey asked principals to list items they believe would be beneficial to them in meeting standards. Of the responses given, there were 12 added suggestions that were not like the survey choices. One response, *teachers who still believe they are valued by our society*, was a bit confusing and probably needed to be elaborated by the respondent, but all other additional factors should be added to further studies.

Gender, years of experience, grade levels, and low socio-economic status showed various significant differences, but these differences mainly pertained to gender and grade levels. Years of experience and low SES findings were surprising since much of the literature focused on the difficulty of teaching at low SES schools (Kennedy, 2010; Papay, 2013; Ullucci & Howard, 2015) and how lack of experience adversely effects principal productivity (Walker & Qian, 2006); but this study revealed that there was no statistical significance between these two areas and meeting WVBE Policy 5800 Standards. With gender and grade level, factors of different leadership styles, school needs, strength/weaknesses of the principal, and extracurricular activities were mentioned, but further studies are needed to address these theories.

Recommendations for Educational Leaders

This study produced information that could be beneficial for principals presently working as instructional leaders, future instructional leaders, and programs to prepare principals for their future as educational leaders.

Referring to this study will give pertinent information for practicing principals, mainly with the suggestion of increased collaboration among principals. Even though many factors were relevant and could assist practicing principals in improving their duties as instructional leaders, increasing collaboration is one factor that could greatly benefit every principal in the state by knowing successes and failures others have experienced and should be considered by district and state leaders.

For future principals, all the information in this study would be beneficial in determining expectations when placed in a position as instructional leader. Factors will be more pertinent to some, but every finding in this study could be used in what future

educational leaders should expect when faced with leading teachers and students toward educational success.

With reference to principal preparation programs, the information from this study could be used by higher education instructional leadership programs. Many programs offer various practices that may not be as current as information found in this study, but if the individuals who prepare principal preparation programs see these results, the instruction for future principals could be more precise and more beneficial for future educational leaders.

Limitations

Results from this study only give the perceptions of West Virginia principals who participated in this study and cannot be generalized as valid opinions for principals who did not participate in this survey. Also, this study only applies to principals in West Virginia who are directed by WVBE Policy 5800. Principals in other states may have received different trainings in leadership and may follow different leadership standards. Because of these differences, principal responses/perceptions outside of West Virginia may be unlike responses/perceptions of participants in this study.

The findings in this study are limited to only the perceptions of participants completing this survey and should not be considered as opinions of other West Virginia principals who chose not to participate. Principals have given responses from their own professional opinions toward WVBE Policy 5800; and since the researcher's own experience as a principal is directed by the WVBE Policy 5800 standards, it could be viewed as a source of insight and provide extensive background knowledge to obtain

information and understanding of survey responses. Because of this, the researcher could be viewed as a limitation in that it is a potential source of prejudice.

Finally, the number of female respondents to this survey outweighed the male respondents by almost 50%. Because of this, the number of female respondents compared to the male respondents could be observed as a source of bias toward female principals to those of male principals.

Recommendations for Further Research

In an era of constant educational change, it is important for educational decision-makers to know what will assist as well as hinder future educators and educational leaders. Due to the findings of this study, further questions have presented themselves and future studies are recommended to enhance and improve future educational leaders.

A study of parent involvement issues for specific schools and possible solutions could be performed to assist schools with low parent involvement. Extracurricular activities could be added since they were theorized as being a possible factor in hindering or benefiting parent involvement. To improve the principal shortage, a study on factors that influenced present educational leaders could be performed and results can be used to influence teachers in becoming principals. A comparison of male and female principals could be beneficial by providing positive leadership traits each gender could learn from one another since significance was varied for many standards. Finally, the literature stated appropriate professional developments for principals were beneficial in becoming effective instructional leaders, so a study on effective professional developments could be performed to enhance instructional leadership.

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APPENDIX A: INSTRUCTIONAL REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL LETTER

MARSHALL UNIVERSITY®

www.marshall.edu

Office of Research Integrity
Institutional Review Board
One John Marshall Drive
Huntington, WV 25755

FWA
00002704

IRB1
#00002205
IRB2
#00003206

August 30, 2017

Louis Watts, Ed.D.
Leadership Studies, MUGC

RE: IRBNet ID# 1109180-1
At: Marshall University Institutional Review Board #2 (Social/Behavioral)

Dear Dr. Watts:

Protocol Title:	[1109180-1] Principal Perceptions of Leadership Standards in West Virginia Board of Education Policy 5800

Expiration Date:	August 30, 2018	
Site Location:	MUGC	
Submission Type:	New Project	APPROVED
Review Type:	Exempt Review	

In accordance with 45CFR46.101(b)(2), the above study and informed consent were granted Exempted approval today by the Marshall University Institutional Review Board #2 (Social/Behavioral) Designee for the period of 12 months. The approval will expire August 30, 2018. A continuing review request for this study must be submitted no later than 30 days prior to the expiration date.

This study is for student Allen Laugh.

If you have any questions, please contact the Marshall University Institutional Review Board #2 (Social/ Behavioral) Coordinator Bruce Day, ThD, CIP at 304-696-4303 or day50@marshall.edu. Please include your study title and reference number in all correspondence with this office.

APPENDIX B: SURVEY CONSENT

Marshall University IRB

Anonymous Survey Consent

Approved on:	8/30/17
Expires on:	8/30/18
Study number:	1109180

You are invited to participate in a research project entitled "Principal Perceptions of Leadership Standards Found in West Virginia Board of Education Policy 5800." This study is designed to collect data on principals' perceptions of the effectiveness of West Virginia Board of Education Policy 5800 in guiding them in being effective leaders and other issues related to the policy. Dr. Louis Watts and Allen Laugh from Marshall University are conducting the study. This research is being conducted as part of dissertation requirements for Allen Laugh.

This survey is comprised of 34 questions for principals and will take approximately 1520 minutes to complete. The survey will obtain information regarding principal perceptions of the effectiveness of West Virginia's principal leadership standards through Policy 5800, whether the standards are applicable in guiding effective leadership, and has a specific focus on factors impeding principals from meeting leadership standards as well as what standards are vital for the development as an instructional leader. Your replies will be anonymous, so do not put your name anywhere on the form. IP addresses will not be stored. There are no known risks involved with this study. Participation is completely voluntary and there will be no penalty or loss of benefits if you choose to not participate in this research study or to withdraw. If you choose not to participate, you may disregard this email and not click on the link to the survey. You may choose to not answer any question by simply leaving it blank. Completing the survey on Qualtrics indicates your consent for use of the answers you supply. If you have any questions about the study, you may contact Dr. Louis Watts at 304-746-1933 or Allen Laugh at 304-299-2800.

If you have any questions concerning your rights as a research participant you may contact the Marshall University Office of Research Integrity at (304) 696-4303.

By completing this survey on Qualtrix, you are also confirming that you are **18** years of age or older.

Please keep this page for your records.

APPENDIX C: SURVEY

Q1

Please indicate your gender:

○   Male

○   Female

Q2

Excluding other administrative jobs (i.e., assistant principal, supervisor), how many years experience do you have as a principal:

[   ]

Q3

Your total number years of experience as an educator in public education:

[   ]

Q4

What grade do you presently support:

○   Elementary

○   Middle/ Jr. High

○   High School

○   Other

Q5

Does your school receive Title I services?

○   Yes

○   No

Q6

In your professional experience, please rate the applicability of each standard from WVBE Policy 5800 as it pertains to your administrative duties on a regular basis:

	Very applicable	Applicable	Somewhat applicable	Not applicable at all
Demonstrates interpersonal skills	○	○	○	○
Demonstrates collaborative skills	○	○	○	○
Creates a clear learning mission	○	○	○	○
Creates a focused learning mission	○	○	○	○
Facilitates a rigorous curriculum	○	○	○	○
Facilitates engaging instruction	○	○	○	○
Facilitates balanced assessments	○	○	○	○
Builds a positive learning climate	○	○	○	○
Sustains a positive learning climate	○	○	○	○
Builds a cohesive culture	○	○	○	○
Sustains a cohesive culture	○	○	○	○
Promotes continual professional growth	○	○	○	○
Attracts and retains quality staff	○	○	○	○
Acts as a student advocate	○	○	○	○
Creates support systems for student success	○	○	○	○
Manages operations to promote learning	○	○	○	○
Connects to families and the larger community	○	○	○	○

	Very applicable	Applicable	Somewhat applicable	Not applicable at all
Effects continuous improvement	○	○	○	○

Q7

In your professional opinion, please rank the standards in order of significance, 1 being the most significant with 9 being the least significant:

	Demonstrates interpersonal and collaborative skills
	Creates a clear and focused learning mission
	Facilitates rigorous curriculum, engaging instruction and balanced assessments
	Builds and sustains a positive learning climate and cohesive culture
	Promotes continual professional growth and attracts and retains quality staff
	Acts as a student advocate and creates support systems for student success
	Manages operations to promote learning
	Connects to families and the larger community
	Effects continuous improvement

Q8

In your professional opinion, please check factors that you believe would impede principals in meeting standards found in WVDE Policy 5800: (Check all that apply)

☐ Teacher quality

☐ Discipline

☐ Lack of parent involvement

☐ Inability to keep effective teachers

☐ School culture

☐ Student transiency

☐ Curriculum/ curriculum relevancy

☐ Low student socio-economic status

☐ Principal preparation program/s

- [ ] Lack of appropriate support

- [ ] Excessive testing

- [ ] Lack of administrative incentives

- [ ] Bureaucratic mandates/ micromanaging

- [ ] Autonomous decision-making

- [ ] Educational resources

- [ ] Lack of meaningful professional development opportunities

- [ ] Teacher evaluation system

- [ ] County and/or state policies

- [ ] Student diversity

- [ ] Community involvement

- [ ] Length of contract

- [ ] Other factors:

[   ]

Q9

In your professional opinion, what factors/ resources do you believe would benefit you in becoming more effective instructional leaders: (Check all that apply)

- [ ] More effective principal preparatory programs

- [ ] Mentoring programs

- [ ] Decrease time demands

- [ ] More collaboration among principals

- [ ] More autonomous decision-making with finances

- [ ] More autonomous decision-making with curriculum

- [ ] More autonomous decision-making with teacher hiring

- [ ] Less policy mandates

☐ More input in curriculum decision-making

☐ Control over professional developments

☐ Customize administrator professional developments

☐ Less political influences

☐ Partnering with colleges/ universities

☐ Salary increases

☐ Build support from central office administrators

☐ Develop a county-wide leadership framework

☐ Other factors:

[text box]

APPENDIX D: EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP POLICY STANDARDS: ISLLC 2008

Standard:	Function:
I. An education leader promotes the success of every student by facilitating the development, articulation, implementation, and stewardship of a vision of learning that is shared and supported by all stakeholders	A. Collaboratively develop and implement a shared vision and mission. B. Collect and use data to identify goals, assess organizational effectiveness, and promote organizational learning C. Create and implement plans to achieve goals D. Promote continuous and sustainable improvement E. Monitor and evaluate progress and revise plans
II. An education leader promotes the success of every student by advocating, nurturing and sustaining a school culture and instructional program conducive to student learning and staff professional growth.	A. Nurture and sustain a culture of collaboration, trust, learning, and high expectations B. Create a comprehensive, rigorous, and coherent curricular program C. Create a personalized and motivating learning environment for students D. Supervise instruction E. Develop assessment and accountability systems to monitor student progress. F. Develop the instructional and leadership capacity of staff G. Maximize time spent on quality instruction H. Promote the use of the most effective and appropriate technologies to support teaching and learning I. Monitor and evaluate the impact of the instructional program
III. An education leader promotes the success of every student by ensuring management of the organization, operation, and resources for a safe, efficient, and effective learning environment.	A. Monitor and evaluate the management and operational systems B. Obtain, allocate, align, and efficiently utilize human, fiscal, and technological resources C. Promote and protect the welfare and safety of students and staff D. Develop the capacity for distributed leadership E. Ensure teacher and organizational time is focused to support quality instruction and student learning
IV. An education leader promotes the success of every student by collaborating with faculty and community members, responding to diverse community interests and needs, and mobilizing community resources.	A. Collect and analyze data and information pertinent to the educational environment B. Promote understanding, appreciation, and use of the community's diverse cultural, social, and intellectual resources C. Build and sustain positive relationships with families and caregivers D. Build and sustain productive relationships with community partners
V. An education leader promotes the success of every student by acting with integrity, fairness, and in an ethical manner.	A. Ensure a system of accountability for every student's academic and social success B. Model principles of self-awareness, reflective practice, transparency, and ethical behavior C. Safeguard the values of democracy, equity, and diversity D. Consider and evaluate the potential moral and legal consequences of decision-making E. Promote social justice and ensure that individual student needs inform all aspects of schooling
VI. An education leader promotes the success of every student by understanding, responding to, and influencing the political, social,	A. Advocate for children, families, and caregivers B. Act to influence local, district, state, and national decisions affecting student learning C. Assess, analyze, and anticipate emerging trends and initiatives in order to adapt leadership strategies

economic, legal, and cultural context.	

APPENDIX E: PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS FOR EDUCATIONAL LEADERS:

NELP 2015

Standard:	Function:
Standard 1: Mission, vision, and core values- Effective educational leaders develop, advocate, and enact a shared mission, vision, and core values of high-quality education and academic success and well-being of each student.	**Effective leaders**: **a)** Develop an educational mission for the school to promote the academic success and well-being of each student. **b)** In collaboration with members of the school and the community and using relevant data, develop and promote a vision for the school on the successful learning and development of each child and on instructional and organizational practices that promote such success. **c)** Articulate, advocate, and cultivate core values that define the school's culture and stress the imperative of child-centered education; high expectations and student support; equity, inclusiveness, and social justice; openness, caring, and trust; and continuous improvement. **d)** Strategically develop, implement, and evaluate actions to achieve the vision for the school. **e)** Review the school's mission and vision and adjust them to changing expectations and opportunities for the school and changing needs and situations of students. **f)** Develop shared understanding of and commitment to mission, vision, and core values within the school and the community. g) Model and pursue the school's mission, vision, and core values in all aspects of leadership.
Standard 2: Ethics and Professional Norms- Effective educational leaders act ethically and according to professional norms to promote each student's academic success and well-being.	**Effective leaders:** **a)** Act ethically and professionally in personal conduct, relationships with others, decision making, stewardship of the school's resources, and all aspects of school leadership. **b)** Act according to and promote the professional norms of integrity, fairness, transparency, trust, collaboration, perseverance, learning, and continuous improvement. **c)** Place children at the center of education and accept responsibility for each student's academic success and well-being. d) Safeguard and promote the values of democracy, individual freedom and responsibility, equity, social justice, community, and diversity. e) Lead with interpersonal and communication skill, social-emotional insight, and understanding of all students' and staff members' backgrounds and cultures. f) Provide moral direction for the school and promote ethical and professional behavior among faculty and staff.
Standard 3: Equity and Cultural Responsivenes- Effective educational leaders strive for equity of educational opportunity and culturally responsive practices to promote each student's academic success and well-being.	**Effective leaders:** **a)** Ensure that each student is treated fairly, respectfully, and with an understanding of each student's culture and context. **b)** Recognize, respect, and employ each student's strengths, diversity, and culture as assets for teaching and learning. **c)** Ensure that each student has equitable access to effective teachers, learning opportunities, academic and social support, and other resources necessary for success. **d)** Develop student policies and address student misconduct in a positive, fair, and unbiased manner. **e)** Confront and alter institutional biases of student marginalization, deficit-based schooling, and low expectations associated with race, class, culture and language, gender and sexual orientation, and disability or special status. **f)** Promote the preparation of students to live productively in and contribute to the diverse cultural contexts of a global society. **g)** Act with cultural competence and responsiveness in their interactions, decision making, and practice. **h)** Address matters of equity and cultural responsiveness in all aspects of leadership.
Standard 4: Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment- Effective educational leaders develop and support intellectually rigorous and coherent systems of curriculum, instruction, and assessment to promote each student's	**Effective leaders:** **a)** Implement coherent systems of curriculum, instruction, and assessment that promote the mission, vision, and core values of the school, embody high expectations for student learning, align with academic standards, and are culturally responsive. **b)** Align and focus systems of curriculum, instruction, and assessment within and across grade levels to promote student academic success, love of learning, the identities and habits of learners, and healthy sense of self. **c)** Promote instructional practice that is consistent with knowledge of child learning and development, effective pedagogy, and the needs of each student.

academic success and well-being.	**d)** Ensure instructional practice that is intellectually challenging, authentic to student experiences, recognizes student strengths, and is differentiated and personalized. **e)** Promote the effective use of technology in the service of teaching and learning. **f)** Employ valid assessments that are consistent with knowledge of child learning and development and technical standards of measurement. **g)** Use assessment data appropriately and within technical limitations to monitor student progress and improve instruction.
Standard 5: Community of Care and Support for Students- Effective educational leaders cultivate an inclusive, caring, and supportive school community that promotes the academic success and well-being of each student.	**Effective leaders:** **a)** Build and maintain a safe, caring, and healthy school environment that meets that the academic, social, emotional, and physical needs of each student**.** **b)** Create and sustain a school environment in which each student is known, accepted and valued, trusted and respected, cared for, and encouraged to be an active and responsible member of the school community. **c)** Provide coherent systems of academic and social supports, services, extracurricular activities, and accommodations to meet the range of learning needs of each student. **d)** Promote adult-student, student-peer, and school-community relationships that value and support academic learning and positive social and emotional development. **e)** Cultivate and reinforce student engagement in school and positive student conduct. **f)** Infuse the school's learning environment with the cultures and languages of the school's community.
Standard 6: Professional Capacity of School Personnel- Effective educational leaders develop the professional capacity and practice of school personnel to promote each student's academic success and well-being.	**Effective leaders:** **a)** Recruit, hire, support, develop, and retain effective and caring teachers and other professional staff and form them into an educationally effective faculty. **b)** Plan for and manage staff turnover and succession, providing opportunities for effective induction and mentoring of new personnel. **c)** Develop teachers' and staff members' professional knowledge, skills, and practice through differentiated opportunities for learning and growth, guided by understanding of professional and adult learning and development. **d)** Foster continuous improvement of individual and collective instructional capacity to achieve outcomes envisioned for each student. **e)** Deliver actionable feedback about instruction and other professional practice through valid, research-anchored systems of supervision and evaluation to support the development of teachers' and staff members' knowledge, skills, and practice. **f)** Empower and motivate teachers and staff to the highest levels of professional practice and to continuous learning and improvement. **g)** Develop the capacity, opportunities, and support for teacher leadership and leadership from other members of the school community. **h)** Promote the personal and professional health, well-being, and work-life balance of faculty and staff. i) Tend to their own learning and effectiveness through reflection, study, and improvement, maintaining a healthy work-life balance.
Standard 7: Professional Community for Teachers and Staff- Effective educational leaders foster a professional community of teachers and other professional staff to promote each student's academic success and well-being.	**Effective leaders:** **a)** Develop workplace conditions for teachers and other professional staff that promote effective professional development, practice, and student learning. **b)** Empower and entrust teachers and staff with collective responsibility for meeting the academic, social, emotional, and physical needs of each student, pursuant to the mission, vision, and core values of the school. **c)** Establish and sustain a professional culture of engagement and commitment to shared vision, goals, and objectives pertaining to the education of the whole child; high expectations for professional work; ethical and equitable practice; trust and open communication; collaboration, collective efficacy, and continuous individual and organizational learning and improvement. **d)** Promote mutual accountability among teachers and other professional staff for each student's success and the effectiveness of the school as a whole. **e)** Develop and support open, productive, caring, and trusting working relationships among leaders, faculty, and staff to promote professional capacity and the improvement of practice. **f)** Design and implement job-embedded and other opportunities for professional learning collaboratively with faculty and staff. **g)** Provide opportunities for collaborative examination of practice, collegial feedback, and collective learning. **h)** Encourage faculty-initiated improvement of programs and practices.
Standard 8: Meaningful Engagement of Families and Community- Effective educational leaders engage families and the community in meaningful, reciprocal, and mutually beneficial ways to promote each student's academic success and well-being.	**Effective leaders:** **a)** Are approachable, accessible, and welcoming to families and members of the community. **b)** Create and sustain positive, collaborative, and productive relationships with families and the community for the benefit of students. **c)** Engage in regular and open two-way communication with families and the community about the school, students, needs, problems, and accomplishments. **d)** Maintain a presence in the community to understand its strengths and needs, develop productive relationships, and engage its resources for the school. **e)** Create means for the school community to partner with families to support student learning in and out of school.

	f) Understand, value, and employ the community's cultural, social, intellectual, and political resources to promote student learning and school improvement. **g)** Develop and provide the school as a resource for families and the community. **h)** Advocate for the school and district, and for the importance of education and student needs and priorities to families and the community. **i)** Advocate publicly for the needs and priorities of students, families, and the community. **j)** Build and sustain productive partnerships with public and private sectors to promote school improvement and student learning.
Standard 9: Operations and Management- Effective educational leaders manage school operations and resources to promote each student's academic success and well-being.	**Effective leaders:** **a)** Institute, manage, and monitor operations and administrative systems that promote the mission and vision of the school. **b)** Strategically manage staff resources, assigning and scheduling teachers and staff to roles and responsibilities that optimize their professional capacity to address each student's learning needs. **c)** Seek, acquire, and manage fiscal, physical, and other resources to support curriculum, instruction, and assessment; student learning community; professional capacity and community; and family and community engagement. **d)** Are responsible, ethical, and accountable stewards of the school's monetary and nonmonetary resources, engaging in effective budgeting and accounting practices. **e)** Protect teachers' and other staff members' work and learning from disruption. **f)** Employ technology to improve the quality and efficiency of operations and management. **g)** Develop and maintain data and communication systems to deliver actionable information for classroom and school improvement. **h)** Know, comply with, and help the school community understand local, state, and federal laws, rights, policies, and regulations so as to promote student success. **i)** Develop and manage relationships with feeder and connecting schools for enrollment management and curricular and instructional articulation. **j)** Develop and manage productive relationships with the central office and school board. **k)** Develop and administer systems for fair and equitable management of conflict among students, faculty and staff, leaders, families, and community**.** **l)** Manage governance processes and internal and external politics toward achieving the school's mission and vision.
Standard 10: School Improvement- Effective educational leaders act as agents of continuous improvement to promote each student's academic success and well-being.	**Effective leaders:** **a)** Seek to make school more effective for each student, teachers and staff, families, and the community. **b)** Use methods of continuous improvement to achieve the vision, fulfill the mission, and promote the core values of the school. **c)** Prepare the school and the community for improvement, promoting readiness, an imperative for improvement, instilling mutual commitment and accountability, and developing the knowledge, skills, and motivation to succeed in improvement. **d)** Engage others in an ongoing process of evidence-based inquiry, learning, strategic goal setting, planning, implementation, and evaluation for continuous school and classroom improvement. **e)** Employ situationally-appropriate strategies for improvement, including transformational and incremental, adaptive approaches and attention to different phases of implementation. **f)** Assess and develop the capacity of staff to assess the value and applicability of emerging educational trends and the findings of research for the school and its improvement. **g)** Develop technically appropriate systems of data collection, management, analysis, and use, connecting as needed to the district office and external partners for support in planning, implementation, monitoring, feedback, and evaluation. **h)** Adopt a systems perspective and promote coherence among improvement efforts and all aspects of school organization, programs, and services. **i)** Manage uncertainty, risk, competing initiatives, and politics of change with courage and perseverance, providing support and encouragement, and openly communicating the need for, process for, and outcomes of improvement efforts. **j)** Develop and promote leadership among teachers and staff for inquiry, experimentation and innovation, and initiating and implementing improvement.

APPENDIX F: POLICY 5800: STANDARDS OF PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE FOR WEST VIRGINIA SUPERINTENDENTS, PRINCIPALS, AND TEACHER LEADERS. (2010)

Standard:	Function:
5.2.1: Demonstrates Interpersonal and Collaborative Skills	**a:** The principal models professional, moral and ethical behaviors that engender trust and respect among staff, students and the community. **b:** The principal builds networks and fosters a sense of teamwork and collaboration across the school and community, **c:** The principal demonstrates effective communication skills including use of digital tools and applications. **d:** The principal frames problems and make decisions to promote the long-term best interest of students. **e:** The principal anticipates, addresses and resolves conflict. **f:** the principal develops the leadership capabilities of others and delegates appropriately. **g:** The principal models a positive attitude and recognizes individual and collective accomplishments.
5.2.2: Creates a Clear and Focused Learning Mission.	**5.2.2:** **a:** The principal collaboratively sustains a learning-centered vision, mission and goals that reflect student needs in a changing nation and world. **b:** The principal works with staff to incorporate district, state and national priorities into the school's vision, mission and goals. **c:** The principal develops a sense of urgency for change and a commitment to actions necessary to bring about that change. **d:** The principal uses the school's vision, mission and goals to collaboratively build a focused and coherent set of strategies for school improvement. **e:** The principal works with staff to evaluate the alignment of school initiatives with the mission and goals and revises and/or eliminates activities as necessary. **f:** The principal sustains commitment to the vision, mission and goals by communicating progress and celebrating success.
5.2.3: Facilitates rigorous Curriculum, Engaging Instruction and Balanced Assessments.	**a:** The principal demonstrates a commitment to student learning by prioritizing leadership time and efforts on those actions that will advance student learning. **b:** The principal creates a climate of accountability where all staff demonstrates a collective sense of responsibility for student learning. **c:** The principal organizes the school around a cohesive philosophy and research-based programs appropriate to the programmatic level of the school. **d:** The principal works with staff to encourage strategies that develop student self-direction and personal accountability for learning. **e:** The principal ensures a rigorous standards-based curriculum and engaging instruction in each classroom by providing processes of collegial discussion, observation, feedback and support. **f:** The principal uses benchmark and summative assessment data to guide and modify school programs, allocate resources, assign staff and alter time to improve student achievement. **g:** The principal assists staff in developing and using quality assessment practices to guide instructional decisions. **h:** The principal regularly monitors classroom instruction and collaboratively determines targets for improvement. **i:** The principal works with district and school staff to implement a coordinated system of enrichment and intervention for students whose academic growth is not progressing satisfactorily. **j:** The principal works with staff to continually assess how the school schedule, staff assignments and use of resources can be modified to improve learning. **k:** The principal facilitates the acquisition and effective use of instructional resources and technologies that reflect current best practice.

5.2.4: Builds and Sustains a Positive Learning Climate and Cohesive Culture.	**a:** The principal works with stakeholders to identify core beliefs and values that create a student-centered learning-focused school. **b:** The principal models, communicates and promotes core beliefs and values. **c:** The principal implements activities to assess, develop and sustain a cohesive student-centered learning-focused culture. **d:** The principal establishes and communicates high expectations for both students and staff and implements programs and policies to support these expectations. **e:** The principal implements program and processes to ensure the school is safe, orderly, well-maintained and conductive to learning. **f:** The principal works with staff to implement a school-wide coordinated approach for enhancing student character and good citizenship. **g:** The principal ensures that student extra-curricular and co-curricular activities are well-coordinated, equitable and add value to student learning, character and citizenship.
5.2.5: Promotes Continual Professional Growth and Attracts and Retains Quality Staff.	**a:** The principal implements district processes for hiring and mentoring new staff that result in the recruitment and retention of highly qualified personnel. **b:** The principal implements effective processes for staff evaluation, reflection and feedback that are linked to student achievement and improved professional practice. **c:** The principal models professional inquiry, engages in professional growth and promotes the continual learning of all staff. **d:** The principal works with staff to analyze variety of data, including data on instructional practices and student achievement, to establish the school's professional development targets. **e:** The principal works collaboratively to design and implement research-based approaches for professional growth, including digital age learning experiences, to address the school's professional development targets. **f:** The principal works with staff to organize, support and sustain teacher collaborative teams as the school's central vehicle for enhancing professional growth. **g:** The principal promotes teachers as leaders of professional practice and creates conditions that enhances their leadership success.
5.2.6: Acts as a Student Advocate and Creates Support Systems for Student Success.	**a:** The principal acts as a steadfast advocate for the achievement and well-being of all students and cultivates this advocacy in others. **b:** The principal ensures that student achievement and well-being are the central focus of all school practices and decisions and works to develop this commitment among all the staff in the school. **c:** The principal creates an environment and implements practices that value and protect diversity and promote social justice. **d:** The principal creates support for programs and processes that address student physical and social-emotional needs by communicating their link to student academic success. **e:** The principal works with staff to effectively use the state data system to identify and diagnose students with physical and social-emotional needs. **f:** The principal ensures there are programs, services and timely interventions to address student physical and social-emotional needs including wellness, counseling and social services.
5.2.7: Manages Operations to Promote Learning.	**a:** The principal works with district staff to evaluate operations and ancillary services to ensure they add value to student learning as well-being. **b:** The principal ensures that the school adheres to federal, state, and local policies and code. **c:** The principal develops, communicates and monitors effective procedures for carrying out the routines and management functions of the school. **d:** The principal follows district processes for obtaining, allocating, managing and monitoring the distribution of school fiscal resources. **e:** The principal ensures that current technology tools and applications are used to enhance efficiency and effectiveness. **f:** The principal works with district staff to provide efficient and effective transportation and child nutrition services. **g:** The principal ensures that school facilities are safe, well-maintained and used to maximize student learning. **h:** The principal ensures that the school has processes for the storage, security, privacy and integrity of data and information systems.
5.2.8: Connects to Families and the Larger Community.	**a:** The principal uses knowledge of demographics, culture and community needs to inform school decisions and develop school programs. **b:** The principal works with staff to create an inviting atmosphere and sense of partnership with families and the community. **c:** The principal uses various communication systems and technologies to keep families and the community informed and involved. **d:** The principal works with the district staff to develop school processes for communicating with and responding to print, digital and other media. **e:** The principal works with staff and stakeholders to create family involvement programs and community partnerships that advance the school vision, mission and goals. **f:** The principal creates partnerships with community agencies and organizations to improve and align services to students and families.
5.2.9: Effects Continuous Improvement**.**	**a:** The principal exhibits interpersonal and organizational skills associated with leading and sustaining successful change. **b:** The principal challenges the status quo and searches for innovative ways of improving the school.

	c: The principal creates the expectation and provides the structure for all staff to participate in collaborative teams to advance student achievement and improve the school. d: The principal develops, supports and participates in the work of collaborative school team(s) that are accountable for school and classroom continuous improvement. e: The principal ensures that appropriate data is collected, accessible an used to guide school and classroom improvement efforts. f: The principal works with the school collaborative team(s) to develop, implement and revise a viable, coherent strategic plan that charts the collective course for school improvement. g: The principal ensures accountability for continuous improvement by working with teams to establish and monitor school and classroom performance targets and benchmarks. h: The principal energizes improvement efforts through communication and celebration of individual and collective success.

APPENDIX G: POLICY 5800: STANDARDS OF PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE FOR WEST VIRGINIA SUPERINTENDENTS, PRINCIPALS, AND TEACHER LEADERS. (2016)

Standard:	Function:
5.2.a: Demonstrates Interpersonal and Collaborative Skills	**5.2.a.1:** The principal acts ethically and professionally in personal conduct, relationships with others, decision-making, stewardship of the school's resources, and all aspects of leadership. **5.2.a.2:** The principal develops the leadership capabilities of others and delegates appropriately, fosters a sense of teamwork, and makes decisions by collaborating with staff, students, and the community. **5.2.a.3:** The principal leads with interpersonal and communication and effectively builds relationships with staff, students and the community. **5.2.a.4:** The principal places children at the center of decision-making to promote each student's academic success and well-being. **5.2.a.5:** The principal acts according to and promotes the professional norms of integrity, fairness, transparency, trust, collaboration, perseverance, learning, and continuous improvement. **5.2.a.6:** The principal models a positive attitude and recognizes individual and collective accomplishments.
5.2.b: Creates a Clear and Focused Learning Mission.	**5.2.b.1:** The principal collaboratively sustains a learning-centered vision, mission and goals that promote the academic success and well-being of each student and reflect student needs in a changing nation and world. **5.2.b.2:** The principal works in collaboration with staff and the community and utilizes relevant data to develop and promote a vision for the school on the successful learning and development of each child and on instructional and organizational practices that promote such success. **5.2.b.3:** The principal develops shared understanding of and commitment to the mission, vision, and goals within the school and community and strategically develops, implements and evaluates actions to achieve the vision for the school. **5.2.b.4:** The principal uses the school's vision, mission and goals to develop a sense of urgency for change and a commitment to actions necessary to bring about that change and collaboratively build a focused and coherent set of strategies for school improvement. **5.2.b.5:** The principal works with staff to evaluate the alignment of school initiatives with the mission and goals and adjusts them to changing expectations and opportunities for the school, including addressing needs and situations of students. **5.2.b.6:** The principal models, pursues, and commits to the school's mission, vision, and goals in all aspects of leadership by communicating progress and celebrating success.
5.2.c: Facilitates rigorous Curriculum, Engaging Instruction and Balanced Assessments.	**5.2.c.1:** The principal demonstrates a commitment to advancing student learning by prioritizing leadership time and efforts and working with staff to improve learning by continually assessing the school schedule, staff assignments, and use of resources. **5.2.c.2:** The principal creates a climate of accountability where all staff demonstrates a collective sense of responsibility for student learning and a commitment of the mission, vision, and core values of the school. **5.2.c.3:** The principal promotes instructional practice that is consistent with knowledge of child learning and development, effective pedagogy, and the needs of each student. **5.2.c.4:** The principal works with staff to ensure instructional practice that recognizes student strengths, promotes a healthy sense of self, is intellectually challenging, is authentic to student experiences, and is differentiated and personalized. **5.2.c.5:** The principal ensures a rigorous standards-based curriculum and engaging instruction in each classroom by monitoring instruction and providing processes of collegial discussion, observation, feedback and support. **5.2.c.6:** The principal uses benchmark and summative assessment data to guide and modify school programs, allocate resources, assign staff and alter time to promote student academic success. **5.2.c.7:** The principal aligns systems of curriculum, instruction, and assessment within and across grade levels.

	5.2.c.8: The principal works with district and school staff to implement a coordinated system of enrichment and intervention for students whose academic growth is not progressing satisfactorily. **5.2.c.9:** The principal promotes the effective use of instructional resources and technologies that reflect current best practice.
5.2.d: Builds and Sustains a Positive Learning Climate and Cohesive Culture.	**5.2.d.1:** The principal works with stakeholders to identify core beliefs and values that create a student-centered, learning-focused school. **5.2.d.2:** The principal models, communicates and promotes core beliefs and values and builds and maintains a safe, caring, and healthy school environment that meets the academic, social, emotional, and physical needs of each student. **5.2.d.3:** The principal articulates, advocates, and cultivates core values that define the school's culture and stress the imperative of a child-centered education with high expectations for continuous improvement. **5.2.d.4:** The principal implements programs and processes to ensure the school is safe, orderly, well-maintained and conducive to learning. **5.2.d.5:** The principal cultivates and reinforces student engagement in school and positive student conduct. **5.2.d.6:** The principal ensures that student extra-curricular and co-curricular activities are well-coordinated, equitable and add value to student learning, character and citizenship.
5.2.e: Promotes Continual Professional Growth and Attracts and Retains Quality Staff.	**5.2.e.1:** The principal implements district processes for hiring and mentoring new staff that result in the recruitment and retention of highly effective personnel and promotes the personal and professional health, well-being, and work-life balance of faculty and staff. **5.2.e.2:** The principal delivers actionable feedback about instruction to teachers and staff members through valid, research-anchored systems of supervision and evaluation designed to support the development of knowledge, skills, and practice. **5.2.e.3:** The principal works collaboratively with staff to analyze a variety of date, including data on instructional practices and student achievement, to design and implement research-based approaches for professional growth, and to address the school's professional development targets. **5.2.e.4:** The principal develops the capacity, opportunities, and support for teacher leadership and leadership from other members of the school community, to organize, support and sustain teacher collaborative teams for enhancing professional growth. **5.2.e.5:** The principal empowers and motivates teachers and staff toward continuous learning and improvement
5.2.f: Acts as a Student Advocate and Creates Support Systems for Student Success.	**5.2.f.1:** The principal ensures that student achievement and well-being are the central focus of all school practices and decisions and works to develop this commitment among all the staff in the school. The principal ensures that each student is treated fairly, respectfully, and with an understanding of each student's culture and context. **5.2.f.2:** The principal creates an environment and implements practices that ensure each student has equitable access to effective teachers, learning opportunities, academic and social support, and other resources necessary for success. **5.2.f.3:** The principal creates support for programs and processes that address student physical and social-emotional needs by communicating their link to student academic success and provides accommodations to meet the individualized learning needs of all students. **5.2.f.4:** The principal works with staff to effectively use the state data system to identify and diagnose students with physical and social-emotional needs and address student misconduct in a positive, fair, and unbiased manner. **5.2.f.5:** The principal ensures there are programs, services and timely interventions to address student physical and social-emotional needs including wellness, counseling and social services.
5.2.g: Manages Operations to Promote Learning.	**5.2.g.1:** The principal institutes, manages, and monitors operations and administrative systems that promote the mission and vision of the school. **5.2.g.2:** The principal ensures that the school adheres to federal, state, and local policies and code. **5.2.g.3:** The principal strategically manages staff resources, assigning and scheduling teachers and staff to roles and responsibilities that optimize their professional capacity to address each student's learning needs. **5.2.g.4:** The principal follows district processes for obtaining, allocating, managing and monitoring the distribution of school fiscal resources. **5.2.g.5:** The principal works with district staff to provide efficient and effective transportation and child nutrition services. **5.2.g.6:** The principal ensures that school facilities are safe, well-maintained and used to maximize student learning. **5.2.g.7:** The principal ensures that the school has processes for the storage, security, privacy and integrity of data and information systems and utilizes these data systems to deliver actionable information for classroom and school improvement. **5.2.g.8:** The principal protects teachers' and other staff members work and learning from disruptions. **5.2.g.9:** The principal develops and administers systems for fair and equitable conflict management among students, faculty, leaders, families, and community.
5.2.h: Connects to Families and the Larger Community.	**5.2.h.1:** The principal maintains a presence in the community to develop productive relationships and uses knowledge of demographics, culture and community needs to inform school decisions and develop school programs.

	5.2.h.2: The principal is approachable, accessible, and welcoming; and creates and sustains positive, collaborative, and productive relationships with families and the community for the benefit and safety of students. **5.2.h.3:** The principal engages in open and two-way communication to keep families and the community informed regarding the school and involved with addressing student needs, problems, and accomplishments. **5.2.h.4:** The principal works with the district staff to develop school processes for communicating with and responding to print, digital and other media. **5.2.h.5:** The principal works with staff and stakeholders to advocate for and create family involvement programs and community partnerships that advance the school vision, mission and goals. **5.2.h.6:** The principal builds and sustains productive partnerships with public and private sectors to promote school improvement and student learning and align services to students and families.
5.2.i: Effects Continuous Improvement**.**	**5.2.i.1:** The principal exhibits interpersonal and organizational skills associated with leading and sustaining successful change and seeks to make the school more effective for all students, teachers, staff, families, and the community. **5.2.i.2:** The principal develops and promotes leadership among teachers and staff by empowering them with the collective responsibility for meeting the academic, social, emotional, and physical needs of each student. **5.2.i.3:** The principal creates the expectation and provides the structure for all staff to participate in collaborative teams; develops, supports, and participates in the work of collaborative teams; and ensures that appropriate data is collected, accessible, and used to guide school and classroom improvement efforts. **5.2.i.4:** The principal works collaboratively with school team(s) to design and implement job-embedded and other professional learning opportunities and engages others in an ongoing process of evidence-based inquiry, learning, strategic goal setting, planning, implementation, and evaluation for continuous school and classroom improvement. **5.2.i.5:** The principal ensures accountability for continuous improvement by working with teams to establish and monitor school and classroom performance targets and benchmarks and promotes inquiry, experimentation, and innovation in implementing improvement. **5.2.i.6:** The principal energizes improvement efforts through openly communicating the need for, the process for, and the outcomes of improvement efforts and the celebration of both individual and collective success.

APPENDIX H: VITA

Allen Ray Laugh Jr.

Wood County Board of Education
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Objective:
To obtain a Doctoral Degree through Marshall University.

Education:
Presently working towards Doctoral Degree through Marshall University, South Charleston Campus, in the area of Public Leadership with an emphasis in Curriculum and Instruction.

Marshall University, Huntington, WV, Master of Arts, December 2001: Educational Leadership/ Certified Principal K-12.

Glenville State College, Glenville, WV, May 1994: Multi-subject (K-8), Specialties in Mental Impairments (K-12), Behavior Disorders (K-12), and Learning Disabilities (K-12).

Certificates:

Certificate	Endorsement	Assigned Grades	Effective	Endorsed	Expiration
Professional Administrative Certificate	Superintendent	PK-AD	02/27/2007	11/01/2014	Permanent
Professional Administrative Certificate	Principal	0K-12	02/27/2007	07/28/2002	Permanent
Professional Teaching Certificate	Multi-Subjects	0K-08	07/01/2002	05/14/1994	Permanent
Professional Teaching Certificate	Specific Learning Disabilities	K-12	07/01/2002	08/09/1994	Permanent

Professional Teaching Certificate	Behavioral Disorders excluding Autism	0K-12	07/01/2002 08/09/1994 Permanent
Professional Teaching	Mentally Impaired-Mild-Moderate	0K-12	07/01/2002 05/14/1994 Permanent

Educational Training/ Professional Development:

Principals institute for first year administrator	(2004-2005)
OEPA Onsite Team Member	(2005-2006)
Kansas Writing Strategies	(2006-2007)
Assembly Required: A Continuous School Improvement System	(2008-2009)
WVASA conference at Oglebay	(2010)
Submitted Book Review for publication	(2011)
Educational leader through the school improvement process	(2013-2015)
Doctoral Residency Portfolio Presentation	(2017)

Educational Experience:

Principal, 2015-present
McKinley Elementary
Worked as the educational leader for McKinley Elementary. Perform such duties as evaluating teachers, disciplining student and scheduling. Overseen special education, managed facility and all other aspects of managing and leading the school for 21st century curriculums.

Principal, 2013-2015
Jefferson Elementary
Worked as the educational leader for Jefferson Elementary. Directed and lead the school through the improvement process and performed duties such as evaluating teachers, disciplining students and scheduling. Overseen special education, managed facility, and directed all other aspects of managing and leading a school through the improvement process for success in the 21st century.

Principal, 2008-2013
Creed Collins Elementary School, Pennsboro, WV.
Worked as the educational leader for Creed Collins Elementary. Performed such duties as evaluating teachers, disciplined students, scheduling, and overseen special education, facility maintenance, attendance, and all other aspects of managing and leading the school for 21st century.

Assistant Principal, 2006-2008
Ritchie County Middle School, Ellenboro, WV
Worked with Principal of Ritchie County Middle school performing such duties as evaluating teachers, student discipline, scheduling, and overseen special education, facility maintenance and attendance.

Assistant Principal, 2004-2006
Ritchie County Middle School/ High School, Ellenboro, WV
Administrator to carry out disciplinary procedures and oversee Special Education in the facility. Responsible for overseeing extracurricular activities, performing teacher evaluations, and assisting in the overall care of the facilities. Performed athletic director duties such as attending all athletic events, managing athletic funds, and evaluation of coaches.

Athletic Director, 2005-2006
Ritchie County High School, Ellenboro, WV.
Supervised all High School Athletic events, evaluated coaches, and overseen finances for all areas of athletics at Ritchie County High School.

Instructor of the Learning Disabled, 2000-2004.
Ritchie county Middle School, Ellenboro, WV.
Instructor of the learning and behavior disabled students in the resource and regular classrooms. Assist regular education teachers in teaching and behavior modification techniques.

Instructor of the Mentally Impaired, 1995-2000.
Ritchie County High School, Ellenboro, WV.
Instruct the mild and moderate mentally impaired youth in a self-contained classroom. Served as a job coach during plan period for 1 year.

Behavior Disorder Specialist, 1994-1995.
Ritchie County Middle School, Ellenboro, WV.
Instructed behavior disabled youth with behaviors ranging from mild to severe. Assisted other school personnel in handling misbehaviors. Counseled students with behavioral problems and overall environmental problems. Worked with students having learning disabilities and mental impairments in inclusion settings.