

Superintendent and Principal Perceptions of Professional Learning

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Background Information

- Inaugural Principal Academy at KSU occurred summer (2018)
- The Principal Academy is a year-long professional learning experience for school leaders
- Consists of a four-day summer workshop, three follow-up virtual sessions, and ongoing access to a principal network
- Original agreement was between four local school districts and KSU, but school leaders from seven districts participated

Academy Purpose(s)

- To provide targeted professional learning to local school leaders
- Conduct empirical research through the academy to contribute to the knowledge base in principal preparation

Academy Implementation

- Phase I
- Began in Fall 2017
- We collected data from local superintendents/designees to inform the 2018 academy curriculum
- Analyzed superintendent perceptions of the professional learning needs of school leaders

Academy Implementation Cont'd.

- Phase II
- Summer 2018
- Held four day workshop
- Collected data from participants
- Established a digital principal network
- Planned first virtual meeting, based on feedback

Methodology

Goal(s) of this action research were to:

- Examine principal perceptions of the professional learning needs of school leaders
- Determine if principal perceptions differed from superintendent perceptions
- Use feedback data to inform future academy curriculum planning and program evaluation
- Use participant data to help ensure that academy infrastructure and curriculum is aligned to the professional learning needs of local school leaders

Participants

- 42 public school leaders participated
- Seven school districts represented
- Race – 35% (15) Black/ 65% (27) White
- Gender – 57% (24) Female/ 43% (18) Males
- Reported Age:
 - 5% (2) = 26-34
 - 95% (40) = 35-64
- Admin. Exp.
 - 50% (21) 0 - 3 years
 - 29% (12) 4 - 7 years
 - 21% (9) 8 or more years

Participants

- Current Position
 - 74% (31) Principal
 - 22% (9) Assistant Principal
 - 4% (1) Teacher
- School Type
 - 48% (20) Elementary
 - 22% (9) Middle
 - 30% (13) High
- School Setting
 - 13% (5) Urban
 - 70% (29) Suburban
 - 17% (8) Rural
- School SES
 - 17% (7) High (0-22% at/below poverty)
 - 39% (16) (Moderate (23-50% at/below poverty)
 - 43% (19) Low (51-100% at/below poverty)

Data Collection and Analysis

- Semi-structured interviews were conducted to ascertain superintendent's perception of the professional learning needs of school principals (2017)
- The major themes that emerged from superintendents were:
 - A balance of operational and instructional leadership
 - Time management
 - Critical conversation
 - Setting vision
 - Mentoring
 - Shared leadership
 - Professional learning

Data Collection and Analysis

Researchers used the themes from the superintendent data as the units analysis with principals:

Instrument

To obtain principal perceptions of the professional learning needs of school leaders, researchers designed a survey to gather demographic and perception data from academy participants. The survey was vetted for validity and recommendations by university faculty and participating school district superintendents.

Section I gathered demographic information from participants

Data Collection and Analysis

Section II assessed participants' perceptions of the professional learning needs of school leaders via a Likert-like scale.

To what degree is professional learning in the area essential for school leaders?

(1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree,
3 = neutral, 4 = agree, 5 = strongly agree)

Section III asked for participants to add any additional professional learning required to effectively prepare school leaders.

Results

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Questions	N(%)	N(%)	N(%)	N(%)	N(%)
Balance of Instr./Oper. Leadership	0	0	0	2 (5%)	40 (95%)
Time Mgt.	0	5(12%)	0	7 (17%)	30 (71%)
Critical Conv.	0	0	0	24 (57%)	18(43%)
Vision/Mission	0	1 (2%)	0	27 (64%)	14 (33%)
Mentoring	0	12 (29%)	0	19 (45%)	11 (26%)
Shared Leadership	0	6 (14%)	0	20 (48%)	16 (38%)
Professional Lrn.	0	3 (7%)	0	39 (93%)	0

Results

Combined Percentages

	Strongly Agree/Agree	Strongly Disagree/Disagree
Questions		
Balance of Instr./Oper. Leadership	100%	0
Time Mgt.	88%	12%
Critical Conv.	100%	0
Vision/Mission	98%	2%
Mentoring	71%	29%
Shared Leadership	86%	14%
Professional Lrn.	93%	7%

Discussion

- Overall, principal participants agreed with the professional learning needs identified by superintendents
- These themes, among other needs, are also supported in the literature on principal preparation
 - These findings have several implications on preparation efforts within school districts and higher education

Discussion

- How do leadership preparation program faculty teach candidates to balance these concepts?
 - Deliberate and intentional exposure to simulations and real settings (Interns, coaching, etc.)
 - Collaborate/partner with local school districts to inform principal preparation (guest lecturers, invitations to give input on curricula issues, etc.)

Discussion

- What do we do with these data?
 - Use it in the curriculum planning process for the 2019 academy
 - Further examine each professional learning area to develop meaningful ways to include the preparation strategies
 - Examine what other university and external principal preparatory programs are doing to prepare principals
 - Complete the data analysis and finalize the manuscript

Questions

Thanks for allowing us to present!