The Governor's Commission On Training America's Teachers: Response From Pennsylvania's Secondary School Principals

Denise A Morelli

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THE GOVERNOR’S COMMISSION ON TRAINING AMERICA’S TEACHERS:
RESPONSE FROM PENNSYLVANIA’S SECONDARY SCHOOL PRINCIPALS

A Dissertation
Submitted to Instructional Leadership in Education at Duquesne
School of Education

Duquesne University

In partial fulfillment of the requirements for
the degree of Doctor of Education

By
Denise A. Morelli

December 2012
Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements For the Degree of Doctor of Education (Ed.D.) Instructional Leadership Excellence at Duquesne Presented by: Denise A. Morelli Bachelor of Science, Edinboro University 1978 Masters of Science in Education, Duquesne University, 1997 October 8, 2012 TITLE: THE GOVERNOR’S COMMISSION ON TRAINING AMERICA’S TEACHERS: RESPONSE FROM PENNSYLVANIA’S SECONDARY SCHOOL PRINCIPALS Approved by: ________________________________, Chair Joseph C. Kush, Ed.D. Associate Professor, Director, Doctoral Program in Instructional Technology Department of Instruction and Leadership in Education Duquesne University ________________________________, Committee Member Robert Furman, Ed.D. Executive Faculty, School Administration and Supervision Department of Foundations and Leadership Duquesne University ________________________________, Committee Member Linda J. Echard, Ed.D. Principal, Gateway School District
ABSTRACT

THE GOVERNOR’S COMMISSION ON TRAINING AMERICA’S TEACHERS:
RESPONSE FROM PENNSYLVANIA’S SECONDARY SCHOOL PRINCIPALS

By
Denise A. Morelli

December 2012

Dissertation supervised by Professor Dr. Joseph Kush

This study examines the perceptions of secondary school principals in Pennsylvania with respect to teacher preparation. A review of recent education literature clearly supports the understanding that there is a national concern regarding student achievement and its importance in assuring that the United States can maintain its current position of a leading industrial nation. Extensive research has clearly indicated that principals play a vital role in student achievement as a whole and in their buildings in particular. As the needs for education have changed, this role has become even more crucial in recent years. Given the importance of principals in hiring practices and student achievement, their perceptions regarding the level of preparation of teachers is of some importance.

The purpose of this research study was to determine the perceptions of Pennsylvania’s high school and middle school principals regarding the level of preparation of new teachers who are in the beginning of their careers. These perceptions were compared to those groups who were
included in the Governor’s Commission on Training America’s Teachers. In this study, high school and middle level principals in Pennsylvania were given the opportunity to respond to the same survey questions posed in the Governor’s Commission. The summaries of each of the hypotheses tested clearly indicate that high school and middle level principals have strong beliefs about the preparation levels of new teachers who have recently graduated from education programs. The knowledge obtained as a result of this study adds to the body of knowledge related to improving student achievement by preparing excellent teachers. This information can be used to impact teacher preparation and inform discussions related to professional development and teacher preparation courses.
DEDICATION

“You're off to Great Places!

Today is your day!

Your mountain is waiting,

So... get on your way!”

“You have brains in your head. You have feet in your shoes. You can steer yourself any
direction you choose. You're on your own. And you know what you know. And YOU are
the one who'll decide where to go...” — Dr. Seuss, Oh, the Places You'll Go!

The paths we follow from point of origin to our destination are often complex and
unexpected. As I write this acknowledgement, I serve as a Program Director for the
Allegheny Intermediate Unit, hold two masters degrees, four certifications, and now my
Doctorate in Instructional Leadership. When I began my educational path it was filled
with constant roadblocks to reading, long evenings struggling with homework, tears,
tutors, summer school, special reading programs/trainings/interventions, but always in the
midst of everything my loving mother, Dolores Turney. Dr. Seuss and my mother were
my support companions for years. It’s ironic that I would begin my career in education
as an elementary teacher and then spent the majority of my teaching career as a Special
Education teacher and Reading Specialist, passionate about the education of students who
struggle. During my educational path, I never received the ‘official’ Learning Disability
label for having a Reading Disability. I made Honor Roll and Dean’s List without
accommodations; it just took greater effort to climb ‘my mountain.’ There were special people along the journey to influence the choices I made, to sustain the efforts I put forth, and to bolster my persistence when confronted with obstacles. I acknowledge those, who at different points in my life, instilled in me a need to help others, especially those who struggled as I did. I acknowledge those, who at different points in my life, convinced me that, through hard work reinforced with tenacity, I can achieve anything I set my mind to accomplish.

Anything that I have accomplished in my life would not have been possible if it were not for my caring and supportive parents, Paul and Dolores Turney, who sacrificed so their children would have the opportunity to pursue higher education. The idea of obtaining an education and possessing knowledge that no one can take from you were powerful words of encouragement. I’m sorry my father passed away of Alzheimer’s Disease just a few short months ago and was not able to share in this defining moment with me.

I am not sure how to express my eternal gratitude for my loving husband Peter, who’s unwavering love, support, and ability to be both mother and father to our three wonderful children for so many years, made my dream possible. For all the times he carpooled to sporting events, cooked meals, attended cheerleading events, taught our children to wakeboard, picked out prom gowns, did homework, and became cheerleading ‘mom’, all while I studied, researched, and read, I am ceaselessly grateful.

For our children Michal, Marissa, and Callie who sacrificed most of all. I recognize their patience during week nights, weekends, holidays, and school events while I researched, read, outlined, and read again. I recognized the events in their lives which I
missed and will never be able to give back. I pray that from their extensive sacrifice they will at least come away with a clear understanding that anything is possible if you work hard, believe in yourself, and never ever give up.

For Sarah and Victoria, thank you both for being a friend, colleague, mentor, and role model. Without your words of encouragement, generous support, ability to listen, and the sacrifice of your valuable time to support me, through countless acts of kindness and motivation, I certainly would never have finished.

Without all my committee members this research would not have happened and they deserve my deepest appreciation for their strategic advice, encouragement, and professional assistance. Dr. Joseph Kush, for his constant support in seeing this effort through to fruition, and for putting up with me, I would like to thank you and owe you carrot cake WITH nuts. Thank you Dr. Robert Furman, you were one of the individuals who crossed my path and encouraged me to continue toward a doctorate after my principal K-12 certification. I didn’t believe this would be possible, but you did! Dr. Linda Echard who, through a conversation about teacher preparation, demonstrated such an inner passion and fire for the type of education reform that became contagious and led to this research.

A quote by Louisa May Alcott inspires me: “We all have our own life to pursue, our own kind of dream to be weaving…and we all have the power to make wishes come true, as long as we keep believing.” Thank you to all my family, friends, colleagues, mentors, and advisors whose belief in me has kept me believing in myself. I will always treasure your gift and pay it forward to those who may cross my path.
Dr. Seuss, it was not green eggs and ham that I did not like, it was reading.

Through your gift of imagination and writing, I learned to like reading.

You do not like them.

SO you say.

Try them! Try them!

And you may.

Try them and you may I say.

I do so like

green eggs and ham!

Thank you!

Thank you,

Sam-I-am
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Abstract</td>
<td>iv</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dedication</td>
<td>vi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>List of Tables</td>
<td>xiv</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>List of Figures</td>
<td>xv</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>List of Abbreviations</td>
<td>xvi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter I: Introduction</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Background</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concern for Student Achievement</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State Standards and Teacher Quality</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Principal’s Role</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mentoring and Induction</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle School Structure and Needs</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hiring and Recruitment</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conflicting Survey Results</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purpose of the Study</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Questions</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Definition of Terms</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter II: Literature Review</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Role of Building Principal in Hiring Teachers</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Impact of Principals’ Leadership Behavior on Teaching Staff</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Professional Development for School Principals ............................................. 43
Unique Needs of Adolescents ......................................................................... 45
Conclusion ....................................................................................................... 47

Chapter III: Methodology

Introduction ..................................................................................................... 49
Data Collection ............................................................................................... 50
Population ........................................................................................................ 54
Instrumentation .............................................................................................. 54
Data Analysis .................................................................................................. 57
Limitations ....................................................................................................... 57
Delimitations .................................................................................................... 58
Summary .......................................................................................................... 58

Chapter IV: Results

Introduction ..................................................................................................... 60
Description of the Sample Population ............................................................ 61
Results of Hypothesis Testing ......................................................................... 71
  Hypothesis 1 ............................................................................................... 71
  Hypothesis 2 ............................................................................................... 73
  Hypothesis 3 ............................................................................................... 77
  Hypothesis 4 ............................................................................................... 79
  Hypothesis 5 ............................................................................................... 81

Chapter V: Summaries, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Purpose of the Study ....................................................................................... 96
Purpose of the Current Study.......................................................................................... 94
Summary of Hypothesis Testing .................................................................................. 96
   Hypothesis 1 ............................................................................................................. 96
   Hypothesis 2 ............................................................................................................. 98
   Hypothesis 3 ........................................................................................................... 101
   Hypothesis 4 .......................................................................................................... 104
   Hypothesis 5 .......................................................................................................... 109
Other Reflections ........................................................................................................... 114
Conclusions .................................................................................................................. 117
Recommendations for Immediate Action ................................................................. 119
Recommendations for Further Study ......................................................................... 121
References .................................................................................................................... 124

Appendix A:
   Pennsylvania Accountability System ...................................................................... 134

Appendix B:
   What Teachers Should Know and Be Able to Do
   National Board for Professional Teaching Standards .............................................. 136

Appendix C:
   National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education Unit Standards .............. 139

Appendix D:
   Pennsylvania Accountability System: Inspired Leaders Program ......................... 142

Appendix E:
   Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC):
   Standards for School Leaders ................................................................................. 144
Appendix F:

NAESP Standards for What Principals Should Know and Be Able To Do ........ 146

Appendix G:

Program Standards for Middle Level Teacher Preparation ................................ 149

Appendix H:

Commonwealth of Pennsylvania Governor’s Commission on
Training America’s Teachers Superintendent Survey ............................................ 161

Appendix I:

Governor’s Commission on Training America’s Teachers: Response From
Pennsylvania’s Elementary School Principals Survey ............................................ 170

Appendix J:

Governor’s Commission on Training America’s Teachers: Response From
Pennsylvania’s Secondary School Principals Survey ............................................ 175

Appendix K:

Consent to Participate in Research ....................................................................... 179
LIST OF TABLES

Table                                                   Page
1.  Level of Principal in Current Position .................. 62
2.  Years of Service as Principal in Current Position .............. 63
3.  Principal Certification Held ...................................... 64
4.  Years Principal Certification Held .......................... 65
5.  School Size .......................................................... 66
6.  Communities Where Schools Are Located .................. 67
7.  Primary Duties as School Principal ......................... 69
8.  Pennsylvania Secondary Principals Roles in Hiring Teachers .......................... 70
9.  Preference When Hiring – All Factors Equal ............... 71
10. Preparation Level of New Teachers Hired .................. 72
11. Preparation of Graduates From Pennsylvania Schools of Education 75
12. Opinions of High School Principals (HSP) and Middle School Principals (MSP) as to the Specific Skill Preparation of New Teachers 76
13. Opinions of Secondary Principals (SSP) and Elementary School Principals (ESP) as to the Specific Skill Preparation of New Teachers 78
14. Opinions of New Teacher Preparation According to Groups of Educators ....... 81
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ABCTE – American Board for Certification of Teacher Excellence
AMLE – Association for Middle Level Education
AYP – Adequate Yearly Progress
ESEA – Elementary and Secondary Education Act
ISLLC – Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium
IU – Intermediate Unit
LEAD – Leadership Essentials for Administrators Development
NAEP – National Assessment of Educational Progress
NAESP – National Association of Elementary School Principals
NASSP – National Association of Secondary School Principals
NBCT – National Board Certified Teachers
NBPTS – Nation Board for Professional Teaching Standards
NCATE – National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education
NCEE – National Center on Education
NCES – National Center for Education Statistics
NCLB – No Child Left Behind
NCTAF – National Commission on Teaching & America’s Future
NCTQ – National Council on Teacher Quality
NISL – National Institute for School Leadership
NMSA – National Middle School Association
PAESSP – Pennsylvania Association of Elementary and Secondary School Principals
PD – Professional Development

PDE – Pennsylvania Department of Education

PIL – Pennsylvania Inspired Leadership

PSSA – Pennsylvania System of School Assessment

SPSS – Statistical Package for the Social Science
CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

Background

In his book, *The World is Flat*, Thomas Friedman (2005) draws attention to an educational system which is ill prepared to educate students for jobs currently unimaginable in our knowledge-based society. He further warns that the United States is facing a crisis in terms of global economics, in which employment is being outsourced to foreign countries where individuals are eager to work at drastically lower wages. Friedman (2005) identifies our educational system as a testing and accountability regime which dilutes or “dumbs down” expectations and encourages the acquisition of only testable skills. Workers in Pennsylvania have learned the effects of relying on such employers as steel mill and coal mining companies, which have large sets of workers who possess only minimal literacy skill sets. It is a well-understood fact that the jobs which once existed and permitted students to enter the work force with minimal literacy skills are no longer available in the numbers they once were. Friedman proposes an educational system that not only encourages the learning of science, mathematics and engineering, but also equips students with the skills necessary to be adaptable to ever-changing global trends (Friedman, 2005).

Concern for Student Achievement

The testing and accountability regime to which Friedman refers is federal legislation, No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001, (P.L. 107-110, 115 Stra. 1425) signed on January 8, 2002, by President George W. Bush (http://www.ed.g
This federal mandate established new academic benchmarks and teacher quality requirements. The primary goal of NCLB is proficiency of all students in the areas of reading and mathematics by the 2013-2014 academic year. To measure these requirements, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania established the Pennsylvania Accountability System (PAS) (See Appendix A). This system is based on the state’s content and achievement standards using measures of academic achievement on the Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA) along with other key indicators of performance such as graduation rates and attendance rates. The key strategy for achieving this goal is accountability, which specifically holds school and district staffs responsible for student attainment of state standards in reading, mathematics, writing, and science as measured by state assessments. A rating of proficient on the state-mandated PSSA exams reflects satisfactory academic performance and indicates a solid understanding and adequate display of the skills included in the Pennsylvania Academic Content Standards. Students rated as advanced on the PSSA exams reflect superior academic performance. An advanced rating indicates an in-depth understanding and exemplary display of the skills included in the Pennsylvania Academic Content Standards.

Teachers and principals are mandated to meet the requirements of NCLB and while attempting to do so, focus primarily on teaching the basic standards that determine Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP). On March 13, 2010, the Obama administration released a blueprint for revising the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). This blueprint, first established in 1965, challenges the nation to adopt academic standards that would place America on a course of global leadership and prepare students
for college and employment (http://www2.ed.gov/policy.elsec/leg/blueprint/index.html).

The 21st Century brings a changing world. Our new world values and rewards knowledge and innovation. It values and rewards those who are able to use current resources in novel ways. It becomes the obligation of the public education system to ensure that all students are given equal opportunity and access to quality schools and effective teachers who understand the new world’s value system. In his observations, Friedman’s flat world rewards students who are able to change, work well in teams, and continuously seek knowledge (Friedman, 2005). The flat world rewards teachers who are able to develop learning communities, promote communication skills, and prepare students with problem-solving skills that they are able to utilize throughout their lives.

Research demonstrates that effective teachers are central to student success and provide greater influence than a mere subject area or course. Effective teachers need:

- Universal high-quality teacher education, typically three or four years at government expense, featuring extensive clinical training and coursework
- Mentoring for all novice educators provided by expert teachers and coupled with reduced teaching load and shared planning time
- On-going professional learning embedded in 15 to 25 hours a week of planning and collaboration time, plus two to four weeks per year to attend institutes and seminars, and to visit other schools/classrooms
- Extensive leadership development which engages expert teachers in developing curriculum, creating assessments, engaging in mentoring and coaching, and leading professional development, as well as designing pathways that recruit
strong teachers into programs that prepare them as not only school principals, but also as instructional leaders

- Equitable, competitive salaries with additional stipends paid for hard-to-staff locations (Fulan & Miles, 1992).

State Standards and Teacher Quality

The federal government, national education agencies, and state agencies, have all taken turns at developing initiatives designed to reform classroom practices and improve teacher quality. Today, more than one million teachers are entering their retirement years, leaving the field of education and taking with them years of experience and skillful teaching. In 1994, former United States Secretary of Education Richard W. Riley announced that two million teachers would need to be hired within ten years to replace those retiring. While schools continue to engage in the high cost of recruitment, they also continue to lose these recruited teachers at a faster pace.

In addition, schools are experiencing the greatest influx of immigrants since the early 20th Century. The United States Department of Homeland Security reports that roughly five million immigrants entered the country between 1999 and 2004 while an estimated seven million entered between 2005 and 2011 (United States, 2011). At the same time student population is increasing and presenting with more diverse learners, the experienced teacher workforce is being replaced with a less stable workforce in the form of inexperienced teachers. School staffing which includes a by large numbers of inexperienced educators can promote a variety of conflicts and issues that can negatively impact the productivity of administrators and the achievement of students.
Hiring, one of the most important responsibilities of principals, will not result in student achievement if those who are hiring do not know the characteristics of effective teachers. Teacher quality has long been characterized as one of the most important factors in student achievement (Darling-Hammond, Holtzman, Gatlin, Heilig, (2005); Haycock, 1998; Stronge, 2007).

Although research on teacher quality and its relationship on student achievement over the past 20 years warrants attention, there are those who criticize the findings (Walsh, 2002). The NBPTS (2002) developed standards in 27 different fields of teaching which are based on five core propositions pertaining to what teachers should know and be able to do. The five core propositions are as follows:

• Teachers are committed to students and their learning.
• Teachers know the subjects they teach and how to teach those subjects to students.
• Teachers are responsible for managing and monitoring student learning.
• Teachers think systematically about their practice and learn from experience.
• Teachers are members of learning communities (See Appendix B).

The notion of teacher quality is increasingly viewed in terms of student achievement, value-added assessment, and certification. NCLB, which encompasses the primary goal of improving student achievement by raising teacher quality, refers to the term “highly-qualified” to outline the requirements for appropriate teacher certification. These criteria include a bachelor’s degree, state certification, and the ability to demonstrate content and competency in subjects taught. At the secondary level in Pennsylvania, teachers must pass a state approved test in each subject area to become
highly-qualified. Secondary special education instructors must also pass an exam for each subject of which they are the teacher of record (Trahan, 2002).

During the middle school years, many students begin to fall through the cracks because numerous states do not distinguish specific skills required by middle school teachers, who prepare students for transition to secondary schools, from those needed by elementary teachers. The National Council on Teacher Quality (NCTQ) in its 2009 State Teacher Policy Yearbook observed that 16 states permit teachers to teach middle school with a generalist PreK-8 certificate, suggesting the skills needed to teach adolescents are not different from those needed to instruct kindergarten pupils (http://www.nctq.org/stpy09/updates/primaryFindings.asp). This rationale is contrary to current best practices in early childhood and adolescent development, as the former Secretary of Education suggested in Meeting the Highly Qualified Teachers Challenge (Paige, 2002). “Yet even as research demonstrates the importance of content knowledge, new data from the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) suggests that too many students, especially in the middle-school grades, have teachers who are not fully qualified in their subject areas” (p. 8).

The paths that teachers take to the classroom can vary greatly depending upon the state, the subject taught, and the needs of the hiring school district. Although one would think that strict certification requirements regarding preparation programs would be in place, this is not necessarily the case. Teacher qualifications are important, but the successful completion of mandatory courses or other requirements do not predict or ensure that a teacher will increase student achievement (Goldhaber & Brewer, 2000; Hanushek, 1997; Toch & Rothman, 2008). In fact, many teachers are ill prepared by their

One pathway that has drawn the ire of many teacher-educators is the Passport to Teaching program. Developed by the American Board for Certification of Teacher Excellence (ABCTE), the Passport to Teaching program is primarily exam-based and aims to remove some requirements for entering the teaching profession such as student teaching and or specific courses (Glazerman, Tuttle & Baxter, 2006). Against the recommendations of some educators who deem it as a threat to degree-granting programs, Pennsylvania is one of five states that have adopted the Passport to Teaching program.

Many of these degree-granting programs have earned accreditation from NCATE, the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education, an accrediting body officially recognized by the U.S. Department of Education (National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education, 2007). NCATE reviews programs offered by degree and certificate-granting institutions to ensure that graduates are competent, qualified professionals who meet NCATE Unit Standards and are prepared to help all students learn (See Appendix C). NCATE ensures that accredited institutions remain current and that graduates have a positive impact on PreK-12 learning (National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education, 2007).

Ohio, Mississippi, Arizona and Pennsylvania are among a growing number of states which have published reports on improving teacher quality. In November 2001, Ohio Governor Robert Taft assembled the Governor’s Commission on Teaching
Success. The members of this committee were charged with several tasks including the responsibility of improving preparation, recruitment, and professional development of teachers, and increasing the capability of principals to become instructional leaders who are able to inspire excellence in teaching. As part of their research, the Ohio commission investigated perceptions of teacher quality by surveying higher education faculty, school principals, superintendents, school board members, novice teachers, and experienced teachers. The Ohio Governor’s Commission on Teaching Success findings, published in its report *Achieving More: Quality Teaching, School Leadership, Student Success* (2002) outlined 15 recommendations. Many were similar to those found by other state commissions. The recommendations included setting clear standards for teachers and principals, holding teacher preparation programs accountable based upon the performance of their graduates, allowing for alternative routes of qualified candidates, establishing standards for induction and professional development, involving some measure of student achievement in teacher evaluation, and modifying the principal’s role to allow more time for instructional leadership.

Following Ohio’s lead on August 10, 2005, then Pennsylvania Governor Edward G. Rendell convened the Governor’s Commission on Training America’s Teachers. Rendell instructed the members of the commission to examine and make specific recommendations on how to enhance teacher preparation programs in Pennsylvania, to link these programs to PreK-12 education, and to position Pennsylvania’s teacher preparation institutions as educational magnets that produce quality candidates for other states. In September 2005, the committee, in consultation with governor’s office,
developed a work plan which included five goals to guide the commission’s discussions. The goals were:

- All teacher education programs promote world class excellence for their students by providing them with the academic knowledge and pedagogical skills to be effective in the classroom.

- All teacher education graduates are life-long learners so they communicate this core value to their students while they continue to increase their effectiveness in delivering high-quality classroom instruction.

- The teacher education system as a whole provides quality teachers for all students in all school districts and responds to shortages and imbalances in the education marketplace.

- Pennsylvania meets the need for high quality teachers within the state and enhances its ability to meet the teacher education needs of the nation as a strategic economic development initiative.

- State laws, regulations, and policies are aligned to achieve these goals.

In an attempt to gather input, regional meetings, teleconferences and surveys were conducted throughout the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. An array of state and national organizations were included in meetings so that all viewpoints could be voiced and examined. Because California, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Maryland, North and South Carolina, Virginia, and Texas recruit heavily from Pennsylvania’s pool of surplus teachers, estimated to be about 6,000 each year, representatives from school districts in these states were also interviewed by the commission. Interestingly, in its research, the
commission did not consider one of the most influential roles in actual student learning: that of the school principals.

The Principal’s Role

In many respects, principals are the heart of a school building. They are responsible, sometimes ultimately so, for the successful implementation of every system within the school’s structure. In addition to managerial and supervisory duties, they must be creative educational leaders with the vision to design and sustain academic growth and change. The call for a coherent transformational strategy to improve student learning and affect student achievement by the Strategic Management of Human Capital in Education Project (SMHC) demonstrates the importance of the principal as a change agent and instructional leader (Odden, 2009). The strategy includes rigorous curriculum, professional learning communities, analysis of data to improve teacher performance, improved use of teaching and assessment technologies, assistance for struggling students, and teacher and administrator instructional leadership.

“There are no good schools without good principals,” stated United States Secretary of Education Arne Duncan (2009) during his address to school administrators at the National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP) – National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP) National Leaders’ Conference (http://www.saanys.org/viewarticle.asp?id=2172). With this statement, there is evidence that even at the highest levels of government, the importance of quality principals and their influence on schools is understood.
Principals today are guided by three areas for school success. First, they must set a clear vision with high expectations for all using data to monitor progress and improve performance. Second, principals must cultivate people who can succeed by providing the necessary supports and trainings to sustain professional growth. Third, they must ensure that the organization is operational and establishes conditions which reinforce the most important aspect of education – teaching and learning.

The principal’s role is currently in a state of flux. While principals still serve in administrative and management capacities, they are now responsible for student achievement, staff development, recruitment and retention of staff, adherence to state and federal regulations, and the cohesion of disjointed demands and policies, along with the continuous responsiveness to all parents, teachers, students and community members. Principals, who once assumed a more executive role and were responsible for the smooth running of the school, now find themselves ill prepared to meet the demands as change agents and instructional leaders.

Professional development that is focused on developing the knowledge and skills necessary to become effective in improving the academic environment for teachers and students is needed to support the changing role of principals. In response to these changing roles, a statewide, standards-based leadership development support system, known as the Pennsylvania Inspired Leadership (PIL) program, was established in 2008 by the Pennsylvania Department of Education (See Appendix D). PIL was developed for school leaders at all levels and offers a thorough curriculum developed by the National Institute for School Leadership (NISL) (Lachowicz, 2011). Based upon research on how school leaders impact student achievement, these standards were developed by
superintendents, principals, university administrators and instructors, and association leaders. In addition, state law directs the state’s Department of Education to establish a Principals’ Induction Program. The Principals’ Induction Program covers six corollary standards and is designed for administrators with fewer than five years of administrative experience. The Leadership Essentials for Administrator Development (LEAD) coursework covers three core standards and is designed for experienced administrators (Lachowicz, 2011). Both NISL and PIL coursework flowed from the ISLLC standards. ISLLC standards were originally published in 1996 and then revised in 2008. In addition to recent research on leadership the ‘footprints’ of the original standards were used. Standards provide states and policymakers with a foundation for developing supportive policies and activities to facilitate professional growth throughout the career of an education leader (See Appendix E).

Mentoring and Induction

As a teacher begins her/his career, other than students, the principal is viewed as the most significant individuals in the school (Wilson, 2009). In an effort to examine the issue of teacher attrition, Littrell, Billingsley, & Cross, (1994) identified four dimensions of support used by House (1981) in his modification of the social support theory: appraisal support, emotional support, informational support and instrumental support (Wilson, 2009). In its quest to increase teacher retention, the University of North Carolina Board of Governors’ Task Force identified administrative support as one of the guiding principles for retaining teachers (UNC Board of Governors’ Task Force, 2004). Existing support includes a variety of mentor and induction programs.
According to the United States Department of Education (1998), induction support programs should be designed to offer tools that help new teachers to be effective while insuring that they meet certification or licensure requirements. As the term suggests, induction programs introduce teachers to a new system or school in a fashion similar to orientation programs. One of the key components of induction is mentoring, defined as “personal guidance provided, usually by seasoned veterans, to beginning teachers in schools” (Ingersoll & Kralik, 2004, p. 3). Newly hired educators are typically assigned to mentors who are in the same subject field and who have several years of practical experience in the classroom. Ingersoll and Kralik’s (2004) indicated that these programs have a positive influence on new teachers. These findings support the assertion by the National Education Association (1999) that identified quality mentoring is an excellent source of support for novice teachers.

Middle School Structure and Needs

While there is an understanding that principals are in need of quality professional development to be prepared for their duties, high-quality teachers are also an essential factor in the academic success of a student. There is also agreement that teachers of young adolescents need specialized preparation to be highly successful (AMLE, http://www.amle.org/AboutAMLE/PositionStatements/ProfessionalPreparation/tabid/287/Default.aspx). According to the Association for Middle Level Education, it is vital that middle school teachers have an expertise in the development and needs of adolescents. They should “know how developmental realities play themselves out against
a context of race, ethnicity, religion, gender, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, family and community” (AMLE, 2006).

As such, it is essential that students at this vulnerable age are in a structure which is sensitive to the rapid changes going on around them. Middle school programs are by their nature very different from secondary programs, and must be if children are to be successful at this level. This flexibility extends to the teaching staff. At this middle school level, the most desirable candidates are dual-certified implying that teachers will integrate subject areas more effectively and make interdisciplinary connections in their teaching (McEwin, Dickinson & Smith, 2003). In addition, the National Middle School Association (NMSA) posits that successful middle level schools enable adolescents to form relationships, especially with adults who they perceive as caring (NMSA, 2006).

Regarding instruction, NMSA also states that a fully-funded national effort is needed to ensure that all middle school teachers receive the proper instruction and professional development. Additional research is needed to determine the very best curricular and organizational components, but there are already promising practices, such as deep corroboration between teachers and principals, that has demonstrated promising results (NMSA, 2006). In addition, the National Middle School Association established standards for middle level teacher candidates who are completing teacher preparation programs. These standards are used by the National Commission for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE, 2008) in the review process of teacher preparation programs.

It has been concluded by both NMSA and now the Association for Middle Level Education (AMLE, 2011) that specialized preparation is needed for teachers who desire
to teach at the middle school level. In addition to a thorough understanding of the
development stages of an adolescent, educators need a structured system that meets the
unique needs of this age group while providing the flexibility need by the staff to
maintain a safe, nurturing environment which engages students and promotes
achievement.

Hiring and Recruitment

The principals’ most important task, which has the greatest impact on student
achievement, is the hiring of quality teachers (Ebermeier & Ng, 2006; Peterson, 2002;
Stronge & Hindman, 2006). Districts increasingly seek principals’ input in the hiring
practice; however, current teacher shortages, attrition rates, challenging urban
environments and hard-to-staff subject areas prove to be obstacles in hiring the strong
educators needed to improve student achievement and prepare youth for a “flat”
world. Flawed hiring practices have a harmful effect on community perception, school
culture and morale, administrators’ time, and student achievement. Newly hired teachers
without adequate skills have a negative residual impact on students and their achievement
(Peterson, 2002). A revolving door of teachers costs a district financially and
academically, with urban schools often the most affected. Schools with high poverty,
high minority enrollment, and high academic need are most often impacted by this
revolving door (Peterson, 2002).

Within the first three years of teaching 29 percent of teachers leave education,
with an increase to 39 percent by the end of five years (Heller, 2004). The average yearly
turnover rate in most professions is 11 percent compared to 13.2 percent in education

15
(Heller, 2004). Principals must set a priority of recruiting, nurturing, developing, and retaining quality teachers. What is at stake is too essential to ignore: the future prosperity of our nation in a global society.

When teachers who have been hired are found to be ineffective, evidence indicates that principals are not likely to dismiss the teacher for fear that a replacement will be too difficult to find, or for concern that the dismissal process will be too cumbersome and time consuming (Heller, 2004). In its 2009 State Teacher Policy Yearbook, the National Council on Teacher Quality (NCTQ) noted that 47 states have laws governing teacher dismissal. However, most states are more likely to consider sexual and criminal acts rather than teacher effectiveness as grounds for dismissal (http://www.nctq.org/stpy09/updates/primaryFindings.asp). “Only one state articulates separate policy for dismissal based on poor performance” (NCTQ, 2009, p.215), and others rely on dismissal procedures fraught with appeal processes. NCLB in theory banned the practice of hiring teachers under emergency certification. However, 40 states still allow teachers to enter the classroom without proper certification, many for undefined timeframes. Communities where students’ needs are the greatest are forced to settle for teachers who in many cases do not hold the correct certification, or who are not qualified to teach in the areas for which they have been hired. Urban area schools report high numbers of emergency certification and the use of substitute teachers to fill vacant classrooms. As a direct result, those schools with the greatest academic need receive the least experienced and least skilled teachers.

A recent study of North Carolina teachers reported that effective educators were more likely to transfer from schools with higher percentages of economically needy and
African-American students to schools with lower percentages of these groups, leaving students with the greatest need with the least experienced teachers (Goldhaber et al., 2009). Students in impoverished schools are twice as likely to be taught core subjects by teachers without certification or majors in the subjects being taught (Jerald, 2002).

Conflicting Survey Responses

In order to garner further information concerning views of how well teachers are prepared upon entering the profession, the Pennsylvania Governor’s Commission on Training America’s Teachers (2006) surveyed a variety of professionals: deans and department chairs of Pennsylvania’s 94 teacher preparation programs, superintendents and human resource directors from the then 501 school districts, distinguished veteran teachers from specific groups, including National Board for Professional Teaching Standards and Pennsylvania’s Teacher of the Year organization, and novice teachers in their first three years of teaching. Echard (2007) noted the Governor’s Commission did not include principals. In The Governor’s Commission on Training America’s Teachers: Response from Pennsylvania’s Elementary School Principals, she noted the importance of principals’ role in teacher employment and responsibility regarding accountability for student achievement in the Pennsylvania Accountability Plan (Echard, 2007).

It is interesting to note the results of the survey of those who oversee educational programs as compared to the results of the surveyed teachers. Predictably, of the education deans who responded to the survey, 95 percent rated the overall preparedness of new teachers as either excellent or good. This directly conflicts with responses given by superintendents, veteran teachers, and new teachers. Of the superintendents who
participated in the study, only 79 percent rated new teachers overall preparedness as excellent or good. Ironically, it is teachers who were the most critical of their college preparation, with only 74 percent of new teachers and 62 percent of veteran teachers rating their preparedness level as excellent or good (Final Report of the Governor’s Commission on Training America’s Teachers, 2006).

It is apparent from these reported results that teachers, and other school leaders, believe that teacher preparation is insufficient and does not adequately reflect current achievement demands in Pennsylvania’s school districts. The respondents indicated that shortcomings could be identified in a wide variety of areas including, but not limited to, the ability to use assessment data to improve instruction, to integrate technology into instruction, classroom management and, perhaps most importantly, the ability to help students achieve academic standards measured on standardized tests (Final Report of the Governor’s Commission on Training America’s Teachers, 2006). Not surprisingly, education deans and department chairs did not identify shortcomings in these areas.

In its findings, the commission makes it clear that one of the goals of the study is to add to a body of knowledge that will improve the education of future teachers so that they in turn are better prepared to assist students achieve academically (Final Report of the Governor’s Commission on Training America’s Teachers, 2006). If this is indeed the case, it is puzzling why the authors chose to exclude that group of educators who, more than any other, are able to provide concrete and accurate feedback to the overall preparedness of today’s teachers in Pennsylvania. That group is elementary and secondary principals.
Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the current study was to determine whether there are significant differences between the belief systems of secondary principals and those of deans/department chairs of Pennsylvania’s 94 teacher participation programs, school superintendents/human resource directors, distinguished veteran teachers, and novice teachers surveyed by the Governor’s Commission on training America’s Teachers, regarding freshman teachers’ skill levels. The significant changes in Pennsylvania’s certification of middle and secondary teachers as a result of the highly qualified requirements of NCLB, as well as the increased focus on teacher effectiveness and its link to student achievement, underscores the importance of the perceptions of building principals in teach hiring and effectiveness. The current study also determined whether there are significant differences in the belief systems of elementary principals surveyed in Echard’s study and identified principals on the secondary level.

Research Questions

The following questions will be addressed with the design of this study:

1. Based on their observations, how do Pennsylvania secondary principals perceive the quality of initial teacher preparations programs?

2. Are there differences between the beliefs of principals of secondary schools and principals of elementary schools with respect to the preparation of new teachers in Pennsylvania?

3. Are there differences between the beliefs of the secondary principals in Pennsylvania compared to the beliefs of the superintendents, deans from schools
of education, novice teachers, and experienced teachers reported by the Governor’s Commission on Training America’s Teachers?

4. Are there differences between the beliefs of principals of middle schools and principals of high schools with respect to the preparation of new teachers in Pennsylvania?

5. Do the open-ended responses by Pennsylvania secondary principals confirm or deny their perceptions of about the quality of teacher preparation programs?

**Definition of Terms**

**Alternate Route Programs**
Post-baccalaureate programs designed for individuals who did not prepare as educators during their undergraduate studies. These programs, which usually lead to a unit’s recommendation for a state license, accommodate the schedules of adults and recognize their earlier academic preparation and life experiences. In some instances, candidates may be employed as educators while enrolled. Examples include MAT programs, programs that operate in professional development schools, and Troops to Teachers programs. They are sometimes called nontraditional programs. (NCATE, 2012).

**Adequate Yearly Progress**
It is an individual state’s measure of yearly progress toward achieving state academic standards. “Adequate Yearly Progress” (AYP) is the minimum level of improvement that states, school districts, and schools must achieve each year. Aims for 100 percent proficient or above by 2014. (Pennsylvania Accountability System, 2012).
**Assessment**  
An evaluated activity or task used by a program or unit to determine the extent to which specific learning proficiencies, outcomes, or standards have been mastered by candidates. Assessments usually include an instrument that details the task or activity and a scoring guide used to evaluate the task or activity (NCATE, 2012).

**Certification**  
The process by which a non-governmental agency or association grants professional recognition to an individual who has met certain predetermined qualifications specified by that agency or association. (The National Board for Professional Teaching Standards grants advanced certification.) (NCATE, 2012).

**Content**  
The subject matter or discipline that teachers are being prepared to teach at the elementary, middle, and/or secondary levels. Content also refers to the professional field of study (e.g. special education, early childhood, reading, math, science) (NCATE, 2012).

**Effective Teacher**  
In this study effective teacher will be defined as teachers who employ strategies and procedures that have been proven to have a positive effect on student achievement (Echard, 2007).

**Experienced Teacher**  
For the purpose of this study an experienced teacher is one who has more than three years of experience and/or possesses outstanding credentials, such as multiple degrees or National Board Certification (Echard, 2007).
**Distinguished Veteran Teachers**

In this study distinguished veteran teachers are described as teachers who are members of the Pennsylvania Teacher of the Year organization, teachers certified by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, and Keystone Technology Teachers (Echard, 2007).

**Field Experience**

A variety of early and ongoing field-based opportunities in which candidates may observe, assist, tutor, instruct, and/or conduct research. Field experiences may occur in off-campus settings (NCATE, 2012).

**Initial Teacher Preparation Programs**

Programs at the baccalaureate or post-baccalaureate levels that prepare candidates for the first license to teach. They include five-year programs, master’s programs, and other post-baccalaureate and alternate route programs that prepare individuals for their first license in teaching (NCATE, 2012).

**INTASC**

The Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium, a project of the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) that has developed model performance-based standards and assessments for the licensure of teachers (NCATE, 2012).

**Intermediate Unit**

Established in 1971 by the Pennsylvania General Assembly, intermediate units operate as regional educational service agencies providing cost-effective, management-efficient programs to Pennsylvania’s 500 public school districts and over 2,400 non-public and private schools. In addition, intermediate units serve as liaison agents between the school districts and the Pennsylvania Department of Education. There are 29 Intermediate units in the Commonwealth (PAIU, 2012).
| **Licensure** | The official recognition by a state government agency that an individual has met certain qualifications specified by the state and is, therefore, approved to practice in an occupation as a professional (NCATE, 2012). |
| **NBPTS** | The National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, an organization of teachers and other educators, which has developed both standards and a system for assessing the performance of experienced teachers seeking national certification (NCATE, 2012). |
| **Novice Teacher** | In this study the term novice refers to a teacher with three or less years of experience (Echard, 2007). |
| **Pedagogical Skills** | In this study the pedagogical skills referred to are the following:  
  - Developing and implementing lesson plans  
  - Delivering the appropriate content knowledge  
  - Helping student perform well on standardized tests  
  - Providing appropriate instruction for students with differing abilities, including gifted students, average students, and slower learners  
  - Using the results from tests and other student assessments to address students’ needs  
  - Integrating technology into instruction  
  - Managing classrooms and dealing with discipline  
  - Helping students master state content standards  
  - Asking questions to encourage critical thinking  
  - Teaching decision-making skills  
  - Encourage students to work together to
solve problems (Echard, 2007)

**Pedagogical Content Knowledge**

The interaction of the subject matter and effective teaching strategies to help students learn the subject matter. It requires a thorough understanding of the content to teach it in multiple ways, drawing on the cultural backgrounds and prior knowledge and experiences of students (NCATE, 2012).

**Pedagogy**

The National Board for Professional Teaching Standards defines pedagogy as follows: Content pedagogy refers to the pedagogical (teaching) skills teachers use to impart the specialized knowledge/content of their subject area(s). Effective teachers display a wide range of skills and abilities that lead to creating a learning environment where all students feel comfortable and are sure that they can succeed both academically and personally. This complex combination of skills and abilities is integrated in the professional teaching (see http:www.nbpts.org).

**Professional Development**

Opportunities for professional education faculty to develop new knowledge and skills through activities such as in-service education, conference attendance, sabbatical leave, summer leave, intra- and inter- institutional visitations, fellowships, and work in P-12 schools (NCATE, 2012).

**Proficiencies**

Required knowledge skills, and professional dispositions identified in the professional, state, or institutional standards.

**Quality Teaching**

In this study quality teaching refers to teaching that has a positive impact on student achievement (Echard, 2007).

**Standards**

Written expectations for meeting a specified level of performance. Standards exist for the content that P-12 students should know at a certain age or grade level (NCATE, 2012).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>State Standards</strong></th>
<th>The standards adopted by state agencies responsible for the approval of programs that prepare teachers and other school personnel. State standards may include candidate knowledge, skills, and dispositions (NCATE, 2012).</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Student Teaching</strong></td>
<td>Pre-service clinical practice for candidates preparing to teach (NCATE, 2012).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Traditional High School</strong></td>
<td>In this study a traditional high school refers to a school which contains grades 9-12.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Traditional Middle School</strong></td>
<td>In this study a traditional middle school refers to a school which contains grades 5-8.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER II
LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

Throughout the last century, a multitude of reform movements designed to improve academic achievement and the quality of teaching were implemented in the American public education system. The basic tenants of these movements often reflected the political and societal landscapes of the time, and were often a reaction to preceding reform efforts.

Under the Reagan administration of the 1980’s, the United States Department of Education issued its now infamous opinion entitled, *A Nation at Risk: The Imperative for Educational Reform* (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983). The report, which cited a decline in academic standards and performance as well as an increase in functional illiteracy in adults, was the first of many large-scale research efforts which have been released in the last three decades sponsored. Funded by a variety of government, non-profit, and business groups, findings of many of the reports have repeatedly criticized the country’s high schools, specifically targeting the curriculum, academic expectations, and central guiding philosophy of the secondary institutions (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983).

In a more recent effort to examine local public education systems, several state education agencies, including those in Arizona, Mississippi, and Ohio, have been instructed to organize commissions tasked to study a variety of issues affecting public education. After their research was completed, these commissions made remedial recommendations which may or may not have been incorporated by local school systems.

In similar fashion, in August 2005, former Pennsylvania Governor Edward G. Rendell convened the Governor’s Commission on Training America’s Teachers in order to, among other efforts, enhance teacher preparation programs and link them to public education systems. During the process of its research, the commission, chaired by Richard Kneedler, collected survey information regarding teacher preparation levels from four groups of respondents: superintendents/human resources directors, distinguished veteran teachers, new teachers with less than three years of experience, and university education deans/chairs (Final Report of the Governor’s Commission on Training America’s Teachers, 2006). In addition, the commission interviewed educators from various states which actively recruit Pennsylvania-prepared teachers. The report did not indicate whether school building leaders, namely principals, were consulted during these interviews. In addition, school building leaders were not targeted survey participants.

According to the report, survey results indicated, that 95 percent of university education deans/chairs surveyed believed that the overall preparedness of new teachers was either excellent or good. Of those groups employed in school systems, only 79 percent and 74 percent of superintendents and new teachers respectively responded that the level of teacher preparedness was either excellence or good. The final group, veteran teachers, rated preparedness levels much lower, at 62 percent for the combined excellent
and good categories (Final Report of the Governor’s Commission on Training America’s Teachers, 2006). In addition to addressing broad levels of preparedness, the survey also addressed the specific skill sets required by successful teachers. These included: classroom management, proficiency on tests, differentiated instruction, standards instruction, technology use, and assessments to improve instruction.

Pennsylvania’s commission released its findings in July 2006, and provided a variety of recommendations to improve professional development and teacher induction, respond to the shortage of high quality teachers, increase the economic competitiveness of teacher education, and improve data for state policy purposes. Several of these recommendations, if implemented, would directly impact the role of school building leaders, especially principals.

Since the early half of the 20th century, principals’ duties have shifted dramatically. Whereas the role of the principal was once just managerial in nature, this has changed in the last several decades to include tasks pertaining to instructional leadership and teacher collaboration. According to Protheroe (2006), the principal, in most cases, is the direct supervisor of newly hired faculty and thus plays a vital role in success or failure during their first year in the classroom. As such, it is important that principals possess the instructional leadership skills necessary to encourage professional growth of teachers and academic achievement of students.

In this literature review, research associated with school principals’ accountabilities will be highlighted, as well as research involving the degree to which principals impact staff. Principal preparation and professional development courses will also be discussed. As instructional and building leaders, principals are intimately
involved with the selection and hiring process of teachers and also serve as supervisors, evaluators, and mentors. Since principals play such a vital role in shaping the course of instruction, it is logical that their perceptions of teacher preparedness should be considered.

Role of Building Principal in Hiring Teachers

One responsibility which is included in this administrative role is the principal’s responsibility to hire well-qualified teachers who will increase student achievement and make a positive contribution to the school’s culture. As such, principals are typically an important part of the hiring process, regardless of whether the school system is public or private.

In 2001, The National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP), a professional organization serving elementary and middle school principals, published a guide for school leaders entitled Standards for What Principals Should Know and Be Able To Do (See Appendix F). In this guide, the authors discuss a variety of skills required by today’s principals including the ability to use data to make informed decisions, to engage the school’s community and focus on providing high-quality instruction in the classroom. A tenet of the latter discussion specifically states that principals who provide high-quality leadership “hire and retain high-quality teachers and hold them responsible for student learning” (National Association of Elementary School Principals, 2001). The authors state that principals must harness all of their powers of influence to ensure that students have teachers who are not only properly certified but also have the ability and desire to help students learn. At the end of the section, the
authors pose a series of reflective questions designed to help school leaders determine how they can improve their current practices. In the segment regarding hiring practices, the authors ask the readers to reflect on their current hiring practices and envision new ways for attracting and hiring effective faculty members. Readers are then asked to rate their answer on a scale of one to four, with four being the best outcome.

It is evident in this work that elementary and middle school principals assume that hiring is a common responsibility of school principals, and is extremely important to the overall academic and instructional success of a school. Given that principals are the instructional leaders of their buildings, their strong influence in hiring and the hiring process is a given.

In their study of the changing role of the secondary principal, researchers Goodwin, Cunningham, and Childress (2003) analyzed four themes of building leadership and the conflict in which principals experience on a daily basis. All of the themes, along with their 45 role descriptors which emerged from the study, reinforce the forgone conclusion that the role of the school principal has increased in complexity and that principals are constantly shifting gears between the activities of managers and leaders.

The authors conclude their results citing other pieces of scholarship that indicate that “principalship is the key position in an effective school” (Goodwin, Cunningham, & Childress 2003). One of the four themes examined was that of autonomy conflict, in which principals, and other school leaders, expressed frustration at the tasks associated with their responsibilities and the level of bureaucracy, such as paperwork and safeguards.
from litigation, which were necessary. Specifically, participants identified the conflict between necessary items associated with mandates and the desire to be autonomous.

According to the results, “principals emphasized the need for increased responsibility and autonomy in resource management, including hiring teachers” (Goodwin, et al., 2003). Participants identified a frustration with lack of autonomy in several key areas but nevertheless saw the need to be more collaborative within school and community circles of influence. Although the principal’s power was at one time without restraint, this is no longer the reality of today’s principals, who are seen as the instructional leaders of their buildings and directly responsible for academic achievement of students.

In addition to autonomy conflict, Goodwin and his colleagues also identified other themes such as role conflict, accountability conflict, and responsibility conflict. Regardless of these areas of disruption, participants overwhelmingly reported that the key to school success was inherent in the role of the principal (Goodwin, et al., 2003).

The theme of autonomy was also apparent by DeArmond, Gross, and Goldhaber (2010) in Educational Administration Quarterly regarding the process of teacher selection in a large Midwestern school district. Principals and teachers from 10 elementary schools were interviewed regarding their individual school’s process for recruiting and hiring teachers. Since the districts were relatively decentralized, school administrators adopted a variety of techniques for attracting and retaining high-quality classroom teachers.

The authors began the study by establishing the importance of hiring effective teachers and highlighting the substantial academic gains or losses that can occur as a result of an individual instructor (DeArmond, Gross, & Goldhaber, 2010). As a result of
in this wide fluctuation, it is extremely important that school administrators hire teachers who are not only effective but who also fit the culture of the individual school. In a separate note, this supports Goodwin’s assertion that principals are responsible for the academic success of an individual school.

In the study of this decentralized school, the authors noted several hiring challenges faced by building administrators regarding turnover and accurate identification. At this particular location, while it is stated that school-wide policies do address some challenges, principals and their committees still face several obstacles in the hiring process. It is noted that principals in this case have better information than central office administrators regarding teacher needs.

It is interesting that in the DeArmond study the researchers specifically identified the key school personnel who were involved in hiring. “As a matter of district policy, every schools’ interview committee included the principal, three teachers, and at least one parent” (DeArmond, et al., 2010, p.5). Again, this indicates the importance of the principal in the hiring process of teachers, even at the elementary level where instruction can be defined as more general than that found in secondary institutions. In addition to a hiring committee, prospective teachers at this Midwestern school district were individually introduced to the school by way of a presentation and/or a tour conducted by the principal and/or selected staff members.

Among the authors’ findings are included themes or modes by which schools recruited and screened educational applicants. Some of the elementary schools were active in their recruiting methods and had very specific and concrete expectations for applicants. Other administrations were more passive in nature and their hiring
expectations were more general. Regardless of the tenor, the overall mood was established by the building principal and followed or repeated by teachers and parents on the corresponding hiring committees.

Principals were interviewed extensively for this study and it was clear that their individual staff philosophies permeated the recruitment and selection process. Building administrators preferred the relative autonomy of their district’s hiring practices and some even advocated for an increase in local authority.

In an effort to determine the preferred characteristics that principals seek in new teachers, Harris, Rutledge, Ingle, and Thompson (2010) conducted extensive interviews of school principals from a mid-sized Florida school district, in which building leaders have extensive input into hiring decisions. While there have been several studies that have examined the qualities identified in preferred teachers, most of these characteristics are not consistent throughout documented literature. According to the authors, school leaders consistently want educators who have strong communication skills and also enthusiasm. Other preferences included those who can establish a positive classroom climate, are student-centered, and have the ability to work well with others. They note that even though policy makers have in recent years focused on professional criteria such as content knowledge, teacher experience, and intelligence, the studies which were reviewed indicate that principals omit at least one of these in preference of other characteristics (Harris, Rutledge, Ingle, & Thompson, 2006).

In their study of principals, the researchers discovered that while principals ranked general intelligence as lower in importance than content knowledge and teaching skills, it was assumed that potential hires met a threshold of intelligence because of the
successful completion of university or teacher preparatory programs. In addition, having once been teachers themselves, the principals may have had a bias toward those entering their same profession. The study concludes with the assumption that principals are valuable members of a system’s administrative team and that their ideas and perceptions should not be discounted.

“Hiring teachers is arguably the most important task of school leaders and school principals are typically at the center of it. To design effective policies (e.g., certification and hiring processes), we need to know more about how principals make these decisions and to what degree the conventional wisdom reflects reality” (Harris, et al., 2006).

In an attempt to put the role of the United States principal in a strictly historical perspective, Kafka reviews how over the course of several decades the role of the school principal has changed from head teacher to that of a manager with substantial administrative responsibilities (Kafka, 2009). There are several reasons for this shift. As public education became compulsory in many states, schools were established with a varying number of students. While these schools remained small, indirect supervision from an offsite superintendent was adequate. However, as the populations of industrial centers grew, so did enrollment at public schools. As early as 1871, William T. Harris, superintendent of the St. Louis School System, recognized that the autonomy of a building principal was essential and further established the practice of elevating the school principal to be the primary on site authority responsible for all administration duties, including hiring and supervision of teachers (Kafka, 2009).
Pierce (1935) found the following:

…When there are only 5,000 pupils, the schools can be frequently visited by the superintendent and much stimulated by his personal presence: petty cases of discipline can be settled by him; he can examine methods of discipline and instruction and the proficiency of the pupils in each department. With 20,000 pupils, this becomes impossible and the system of supervision must expand so as to leave the local supervision to independent principals in a large measure (pp.7-8) (Kafka, 2009).

The critical role that the school principal played in administrative and hiring practices grew throughout the late 19th and early 20th centuries. By the mid 1930’s, approximately 70 percent of principals no longer held direct teaching duties and were elevated to the position of supervisor and instructional leader (Kafka, 2009). In addition, this role, until relatively recently, was reserved for white, male educators. While the shift in American society throughout the last 140 years has compelled building leaders to respond to a growing number of societal expectations and demands, one thing remained constant: the critical role that the principal plays not only in student achievement and instructional leadership, but also in the administration and management of facilities and staff.

Impact of Principals’ Leadership Behavior on Teaching Staff

As noted above, the principal’s role has become even more important in recent years. Historical insight on the roles of principals provided by Hallinger, (1992) has asserted that principals have always been considered instructional leaders. Walker and
Slear (2011) extended this research by examining the specific patterns of leadership behavior exhibited by principals and their effects on new and experienced middle school teachers. They wrote, “Strong principals contribute to the success of their schools, in large part, through their instructional expertise, their management skills, and their interpersonal skills” (Walker & Slear, 2011). While the authors note that the relationship between principal behaviors and student achievement has been thoroughly explored, they assert that one of the most important responsibilities that a building leader has in regards to student achievement is staff supervision. This is especially true in the case of new teachers who do not have practical experience in classroom management and or instructional techniques in spite of having successfully completed certification programs or other preparatory efforts (Walker & Slear, 2011).

During the study, 11 leadership behaviors or characteristics were identified that influence teacher efficacy: communication, consideration, discipline, staff empowerment, flexibility, influence with supervisors, group purpose, inspiration, instructional expectation modeling, instruction monitoring and evaluation, contingent rewards provision, and situational awareness. Representatives from six school districts participated in the study. These districts were located in a mid-Atlantic state and were diverse in geographic socio-economic design. Approximately 20 percent of middle school teachers were sought to participate in the study. Results of the study indicate that middle school principals’ behaviors had less impact on teachers who were either highly effective, had extensive experience in the field, or both. However, teachers with less than three years of experience in the classroom were definitely and directly affected by the leadership, or lack thereof, of their immediate supervisor – the building principal (Walker
A positive relationship was demonstrated regarding modeling instructional expectations and predicting teacher efficacy. In this study, participating teachers indicated that they favored teaming with principals who are willing to provide more structure regarding expectations (Walker & Slear, 2011).

For teachers with more practical experience, other behaviors were deemed to be statistically significant, including communication, consideration, and group purpose inspiration. It is interesting to note that even though the principal typically has more of an impact on novice instructors, the principal’s influence can be felt throughout the ranks of the teaching staff, regardless of level of experience or school culture. While the role of the building leader may have shifted throughout the years, it is still quite clear, at least from this study, that the building leader is vital in shaping the direction and vision of teaching staff (Walker & Slear, 2011).

An additional study by Youngs (2007) sought to fill a research gap regarding the effects of principals on new teachers and to examine the ways in which elementary principals influenced first and second-year teachers during a state sponsored induction program. In addition to studying direct interactions with new teachers, induction and evaluation was also measured. A variety of factors seem to have influenced the positive or negative impact teachers experienced, with most variable related to the professional background of the principals, their leadership beliefs, and their belief in mandated policy.

Previously published literature indicates that school leaders can have substantial effects on the learning opportunities of teachers with a variety of seniority, especially if school leaders have knowledge of a specific content area (Burch & Spillane, 2003; Stein & D’Amico, 2002). These early experiences can strongly affect new teachers. Periodic
meetings that provide regulated structure were deemed to be significant in addition to the establishment of trust between young teachers and their supervisors (Bryk, Lee & Holland, 1993; Bryk & Schneider, 2002; Smylie & Hart, 1999). In addition, some literature also suggests that building principals who value instructional leadership, and who perceive themselves as instructional leaders, are more likely to facilitate work with mentors and directly address instructional issues specifically (Carver, 2003; Spillane, 2001; Youngs & King, 2002).

Since Youngs’ study focused on such a small group of educators (only six principals participated), he related primarily qualitative data relative to the direct experiences of new teachers and mentors. In spite of this, his findings concluded that those principals who did not place emphasis on providing direct assistance to novice teachers experienced a variety of pushback issues leading to the resignation of a large majority of new teachers and low morale in general (Youngs, 2007). While the study was not widely administered in nature, it does nevertheless illustrate the profound effect that principals’ leadership behaviors can have on a teaching staff.

Since the 1970’s, educational scholars have focused on a variety of topics, including the role of the school principal in instructional leadership. With the introduction of school improvement programs, the activities and leadership roles that principals play have been studied with great vigor (Hallinger, 1992). Some studies have indicated that principals who focus more on accountability responsibilities as opposed to instructional leadership led to more successful schools (Marsh, 2000). However opposing research by Newmann, King, & Rigdon (1997) suggests that such focus is unrealistic because it prevents principals from responding to school practicalities by
adequately employing educational changes. More successful principals provided focus on daily classroom activities. Several large scale studies have been conducted regarding instructional leadership and how the approaches principals undertake educational responsibilities differ from other categories of leaders (DuFour, 2002; Fiore, 2004; Hoy & Hoy, 2003, Ruebling, Stow, & Kayona, 2004). As such, there are several contradictory theories regarding the role, if any, that a principal has as instructional leader (e.g. Grimmett, 1996; Reitzug, 1997; Sergiovanni & Starratt, 1998) and argue the role is more of a facilitator and promoter of critical inquiry. Other researchers contend that the active involvement of the principal in instructional improvements was enormously essential (Hannay & Ross, 1997).

Mitchell and Castle (2005) sought to bring greater visibility to the instructional leadership of the principal’s role. This study built upon the results of previous research which indicated that it was crucial that principals play key role in daily systems and activities and that they have a great impact on the teaching staff (Castle, Mitchell, & Gupta, 2002). Of the 12 elementary school principals from southern Ontario who participated, eight continued throughout the duration of the study, and four were replaced due to resignations or reassignments. All had reputations for building instructional capacity and implementing school improvement strategies (Mitchell & Castle, 2005). The researchers, recognizing that instructional leadership is tied to personal style and persona, focused on the specific activities and thoughts of the study group.

Not surprisingly, the activities of the principals had a direct and dramatic effect on the building’s teaching staff. Participants indicated that in many cases they saw their role as an instructional leader providing structure and guidance to teachers while
simultaneously encouraging a cooperative culture that appreciated critical thinking and problem-solving. Principals reported a variety of conflicting emotions and issues, which often caused tension in their daily activities. Many indicated that while planning and scheduling did occur during certain parts of the year, because of the rapidly changing nature of a day’s events, internal systems were often relied upon, causing participants to fluctuate between the need of being proactive and reactive. A second articulated tension included the pull between being facilitative or directive toward teaching staff in regards to learning climates, while a third tension was that between building consensus or gaining compliance (Mitchell & Castle, 2005). While the data did not indicate that direct open confrontation was used, participants did agree that some situations did require a firm assertion of authority. However, all participants expressed the desire to be perceived as one who builds consensus.

This perception led to discussions regarding school climate and the most effective means to establish a positive culture amongst teaching staff. All participants indicated that regardless of their perceived effectiveness, all wished that they had more resources to dedicate to each group in the school community. Researchers also looked at participants’ style, consistency or coherence, and organizational structure to determine the effectiveness of the individuals’ instructional leadership methods. Regardless of the differences in these three approaches, teachers responded by adopting the priorities of the principals as their own (Mitchell & Castle, 2005). As a general finding, the authors concluded that there were many ways of exhibiting successful instructional leadership behaviors, and that each would vary depending upon the individual needs and context of the school. “In the final all-participant group session, as we listened to the principals
share their thoughts on the study, we all came to understand that no right or wrong way exists to enact instructional leadership.” (Mitchell & Castle, 2005, p.430).

One of the most daunting challenges that faces school systems today is the specter of attrition and the difficulty of finding adequate replacements in the teaching staff. Research has repeatedly indicated that schools in challenged communities have a more difficult time attracting and retaining high-quality educators, leaving needy students with even fewer resources than they require. In addition, continuous vacancies are costly to school districts in terms of student achievement and school improvement (Ingersoll, 2003). While the cost of new recruitment is often considered in teacher turnover, the hidden costs of advertising vacancies along with hiring incentives and bonuses are often overlooked. These hidden costs were estimated to be more than $7 billion in 2007 (Nixon, Douvanis, & Packard, 2009).

While it has been well documented that given a choice, many teachers take advantage of hiring opportunities at school districts that have comparatively low numbers of students who are poor and/or non-white (Boyd, Lankford, Loeb, & Wyckoff, 2005; Hanushek, Kain, & Rivkin, 2004; Scafidi, Sjoquist, & Stinebrickner, 2005). In an effort to build upon this research, Boyd and his colleagues lead a study to understand and document the reasons for teacher attrition, other than retirement (Boyd, Grossman, Ing, Lankford, & Wyckoff, 2009). Every year several hundred thousand teachers voluntarily transfer from their assigned schools or leave the teaching profession (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2008). Previous literature links teacher background characteristics and age with turnover (Allensworth, Ponisciak, & Mazzeo, 2009; Guarino, Santibanez, & Daley, 2006; Johnson, Berg & Donaldson, 2005). Additional literature documents that
professional experience is also a contributing factor (Ingersoll, 2001; Marvel, Lyter, Peltola, Strizek, & Morton, 2006). A sundry of other variables, such as preparation experiences, early-entry routes, quality measures and qualifications have also been noted (Boyd et al., 2009).

In 2005, researchers initiated a far-reaching study to determine, other than the above mentioned factors, what might contribute to teacher attrition. Surveying 4,360 teachers of the New York City School System, Boyd and others devised a survey of more than 300 questions grouped into four categories including preparation experiences, school characteristics, teaching practices and goals (Boyd et al., 2005). After previously identified attrition predictors such as poverty level and academic performance were factored out, the survey revealed that teachers who resigned consistently indicated that working conditions and administrative support were factors in their decisions. While the authors freely noted the imperfections of their study, they do nevertheless contribute to the understanding that principals do have a profound influence on their teaching staff.

While factors that predict faculty vacancies have been examined and reported, retention factors have also been discovered, which include collaboration, professional development, teacher autonomy, supportive leadership and student-learning outcomes (Charlton & Kristsonis, 2009). Several of these factors can be positively influenced by the use of teacher leaders, who are, very generally speaking, defined as experts in instruction who are willing to share their knowledge with others. In addition, they continually engage in professional development and participate in school decision-making (Searby & Shaddix, 2008). It has been posited that if principals enhance the position of teacher leaders that retention rates amongst teaching staff can and will
improve (Kohm & Nance, 2009). By seeing themselves as part of the solution to a variety of issues that schools today face, teacher leaders represent a relatively democratic effort of school administration to share authority and to fully participate in the process of student learning and self-actualization (Dauksas & White, 2010).

**Professional Development for School Principals**

Recognizing the importance of the principal in the results of student achievement, professional development programs designed specifically for school leaders continue to be developed and implemented. In Pennsylvania, Act 45 of 2007 directed the commonwealth’s Department of Education to establish a Principal’s Induction Program (http://www.paleadership-region2.org/act45.shtm). Under the requirements of the legislation, the program must address nine school leadership standards and three core leadership standards that have been developed by the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE). In response to this mandate, PDE created the Pennsylvania Inspired Leadership (PIL) program, professional development coursework required of principals and assistant principals who were first certified on or after January 2008. The program is divided into two segments: “Grow” for principals with one to three years of experience and “Support” for more seasoned administrators (http://www.paleadership-region2.org/act45.shtm). The establishment of this coursework and its corresponding legislation, underscores the principal’s importance in student achievement and the overall operation of a successful school building.

On the national level, in 2005 the National Center on Education and the Economy (NCEE) launched the National Institute for School Leadership (NISL) to provide
leadership training and professional development to school principals
(http://www.nisl.net/research/). Four separate foundations invested approximately $11
million to fund the initiative that focuses attention on the principal as a strategic and
instructional leader. NISL is one of two curriculum providers of Pennsylvania’s PIL
program (http://www.nisl.net/results/statewide/php), and focuses on, among other
concepts, expanding principals’ understanding of key leadership concepts

In an effort to determine the effectiveness of these and similar professional development
programs for principals, Fuller, Young and Baker (2010) examined the characteristics of
preparation and induction programs and whether school achievement was
influenced. The study was primarily concerned with a program’s specific characteristics
and whether principals who have undergone this training had the knowledge and ability
to build teams of well-qualified teachers who could have a positive effect on student
achievement. School achievement data over a four-year period was examined.

Ilknur (2009) investigated the relationship between principal leadership and
teacher efficacy. This analysis contributed to efforts to understand how the actions of
building leaders affect teacher commitment to the profession and student
achievement. The study concluded that there was a positive relationship between the
ability of principals to develop and maintain a structured system of operations and the
ability of teachers to successfully perform. While there was not a relationship between
principal leadership and teacher commitment to the profession, the study underscored the
impact that principals have on the teachers whom they supervise.
Unique Needs of Adolescents

In June of 1989, the Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development released its task force report entitled *Turning Points Preparing American Youth for the 21st Century* (1989). In its report, the authors concluded that early adolescence is a period of opportunity for intellectual and emotional growth, yet simultaneously fraught with vulnerability and risk. The authors reported that students in middle schools are often paired in school systems that do not adequately meet their needs. Large schools which do not support flexibility and variability often do not match typical adolescents’ need to explore their own personalities as they begin to grow into young adulthood. Among its findings, the task force noted that due to the unique characteristics of the age group of middle school students in particular, it was imperative that teachers for middle grades receive specific preparation. It was reported that assignment to a middle grade school is “the last choice of teachers” due to their preparation for either elementary or secondary assignments (Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development, 1989). While some cite lack of confidence in their preparedness to teach the middle school group, others cite lack of training. The task force specifically recommended the development of experts on adolescent development and the education of middle school students, with preparation beginning during undergraduate study.

The Association for Middle Level Education (2009), formerly known as the National Middle School Association, posits that there is consensus among educators that middle school teachers do indeed require specialized training due to the unique attributes of young adolescents (See Appendix G). According to the National Middle School Association Middle Level Teacher Preparation Standards (National Middle School
Association, 2006), there are several elements that are vital to include in middle school programs. These elements state that middle school teachers should be experts in adolescent development as well as in curricula that successfully impart core subject matters for all children. In addition, the association also asserts that because young adolescents need specialized instructors, so too must their schools be specifically designed to meet their unique needs, and different from comparative programs at the elementary and high school levels (Association for Middle Level Education, 2009).

Teachers should have a thorough understanding of the origins and development of junior high and middle schools as well as the middle level philosophy which underpins the development of these structures (Association for Middle Level Education, 2009).

In an earlier guide developed by the National Middle School Association, the group sought to make middle school education a national priority by citing that adolescents are vastly underserved both from a policy and educational perspective (National Middle School Association, 2006). In its report, entitled *Success in the Middle: A Policymaker’s Guide to Achieving Quality Middle Level Education*, the association announced a call to action that included a significant improvement in middle school education and more support for middle level schools. The authors of the guide posit that there are several necessary steps to implement a coordinated and strategic plan, to raise academic achievements, and to support 10- to 15-year olds. These steps include:

- Ensuring that all middle level students participate in challenging, standard-based curricula
- Supporting the recruitment and hiring of educators who have a strong content knowledge who can use appropriate instructional strategies
• Supporting organizational structures with high expectations
• Developing ongoing family and community partnerships
• Facilitating the generation, dissemination and application necessary research

(National Middle School Association, 2006).

Conclusion

Since the Governor’s Commission on Training America’s Teachers (2005) focused on the responses for superintendents, college and university deans from schools of education and teachers, the next logical step was to extend this research and solicit feedback from principals. Since principals play a vital role in student achievement, have a direct effect on hiring decisions, and ultimately directly supervise teachers, they can provide valuable insights into the state of teacher preparation programs in Pennsylvania. In addition, the information collected from this extension of the study could prove to be very valuable. As school districts throughout the country become increasingly associated with the measurement of student achievement on standardized tests, it is increasingly important that principals provide teachers with the resources necessary to succeed in increasing student achievement. To accomplish this task, principals must have a thorough understanding of the ability levels of each member of her entire teaching staff, but especially the newly-minted teachers who are fresh from preparation programs.

In its findings, the commission made it clear that one of the goals of the study was to add a body of knowledge that will improve the education of future teachers so that they in turn are better prepared to assist students to achieve academically. It is then vital that
the opinion of middle and secondary principals is documented so that present and future educators can have a more complete and robust understanding of the realities of the strengths and challenges of current teacher preparation courses and methods. By gathering this data, the profession is now one step closer to ensuring that there is a highly-qualified, and capable teacher in every classroom.
CHAPTER III
METHODOLOGY

Introduction

Despite the fact that the federal statute, No Child Left Behind Act, continues to be a lightning rod in the education arena, school districts throughout Pennsylvania are nevertheless mandated to meet the act’s requirements and demonstrate that students have meet specific levels of competency on standards-based, criterion-referenced assessments. These assessments, known as the Pennsylvania System of School Assessment, or PSSA’s, are often referred to as high-stakes testing due to the significant consequences associated with the assessments. Given the emphasis placed on the test scores, both by the public and education government agencies, school administrators experience an enormous amount of pressure to deliver high scores. In an effort to insure that these levels are met, administrators, and school principals in particular, seek every opportunity to ethically meet the expected standards of achievement. As the literature in the previous chapter documented, well-prepared teachers are essential to high academic achievement and acceptable PSSA scores. Given that school principals are directly involved with the hiring, supervision, and professional development of classroom teachers, their ideas and perceptions of the level of preparation of new hires is extremely important.

As noted earlier, Echard (2007) observed that the Pennsylvania Governor’s Commission on Training America’s Teachers (2005) did not include principals. In The Governor’s Commission on Training America’s Teachers: Response from Pennsylvania’s Elementary School Principals, Echard explored the importance of the principals’ role in
teacher employment and their responsibility regarding accountability for student achievement in the Pennsylvania Accountability Plan.

As a continuation of Echard’s work, this study examined the perceptions of secondary principals in regards to teacher preparation. These perceptions were compared to those groups who were included in the Governor’s Commission on Training America’s Teachers (2005), namely teachers, school district superintendents, and deans of schools of education. Because principals were not included in the Commission’s original work, this study contributes to the general body of knowledge regarding this topic. The current study also examined whether there are significant differences in belief systems of elementary principals surveyed in Echard’s study with those principals on the secondary level. As anticipated, the data collected during the course of this study is exceedingly enlightening and is expected to contribute to the on-going conversation between school districts and the variety of entities that are approved by the Pennsylvania Department of Education to provide professional development.

Data Collection

Identification of potential respondents initially began through the collection of school district directories compiled by several Intermediate Units. Intermediate Units are branches of the Pennsylvania Department of Education and provide specialized education services to school districts in an assigned geographic area. Many Intermediate Units publish an annual directory that includes contact information for the administrations of their member school districts. Although these directories proved to be helpful, they did not provide complete information. Following the analysis of the directories, data was
sought through the Pennsylvania Department of Education’s website (www.pde.net). While a database on the site provided more contacts, follow up telephone conversations with officials at the state level were required.

Sources at the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) in the Division of Data Quality were contacted. The division maintains and shares databases containing a variety of contact information for all schools. A file containing contact information for approximately 3,136 principals was procured. Unfortunately, the department does not require e-mail addresses when districts report and the file contained elementary school principals along with secondary principal (Brian A. Truesdale, Personal Communication, July 29, 2011). The initial excel file was created on June 28, 2011, using 2009-10 staff data from the institution database known as EdNA. The initial contact database from PDE was then scrubbed to eliminate all vocational and elementary school data along with duplicate names.

Finally, a variety of contact information was acquired from school district website searches. While these searches did not always provide the name(s) of a school district’s secondary principal(s), enough data was gathered to enable an initial, direct contact, via fax, to gather the necessary, specific information. Approximately 50 districts, including the Pittsburgh Public Schools and the School District of Philadelphia, were contacted via email with an attached Right-To-Know Form requesting middle school and high school principal names, their respective school building names, and their school e-mail addresses. In spite of following appropriate policies and procedures regarding the submission of Right-To-Know requests, both the Pittsburgh Public and the Philadelphia School Districts refused to release the requested the information. As a result, the
researcher located the names of each high school and middle school principal from those
districts using the Philadelphia and Pittsburgh Public Schools websites. From the
information gathered online, the standard e-mail protocol, or template, was used.

Through direct communication with school districts, contact information was
gathered for 1,113 potential respondents of the study. In order to be statistically
significant, at least 286 responses were required to obtain an appropriate (p < .05) level of
power. In addition to the total group of principals, two subgroups were studied: middle
school principals and high school principals. Data collected from these subgroups were
compared with the larger group, the results from Echard’s earlier study of elementary
principals, and also the original responses collected by the Commission.

The following questions were addressed by the design of this study:

1. Based on their observations, how do Pennsylvania secondary principals perceive
   the quality of initial teacher preparations programs?

2. Are there differences between the beliefs of principals of middle schools and
   principals of high schools with respect to the preparation of new teachers in
   Pennsylvania?

3. Are there differences between the beliefs of principals of secondary schools and
   principals of elementary schools with respect to the preparation of new teachers in
   Pennsylvania?

4. Are there differences between the beliefs of the secondary principals in
   Pennsylvania compared to the beliefs of the superintendents, deans from schools
   of education, novice teachers, and experienced teachers as reported by the
   Governor’s Commission on Training America’s Teachers?
5. Do the open-ended responses by Pennsylvania secondary principals confirm or deny their perceptions of the quality of teacher preparation programs?

The research questions stated above tested the following hypotheses:

1. Based on their observations, Pennsylvania secondary principals do not have a positive perception of initial teacher preparation programs.

2. There are no differences between the beliefs of principals of middle level schools and principals of high schools with respect to the preparation of new teachers in Pennsylvania.

3. There are no differences between the beliefs of principals of secondary schools and principals of elementary schools with respect to the preparation of new teachers in Pennsylvania.

4. Secondary principals in Pennsylvania do not share the same beliefs of the superintendents, deans from schools of education, novice teachers, and experienced teachers reported by the Governor’s Commission on Training America’s Teachers.

5. The open-ended responses by Pennsylvania secondary principals confirm or deny their perceptions of the quality of teacher preparation programs.

6.

Population

In total, contact information was gathered for 1,113 potential respondents of this study. All respondents are principals employed in public school districts throughout Pennsylvania. All 500 school districts in the Commonwealth are represented. The data is
divided into two subgroups: middle school principals and secondary school principals. This database contains information available for the 2011-2012 school year.

Instrumentation

In an effort to remain consistent with the work of both the Commission and Echard, similar steps have been taken to ensure that prior research could be utilized to the fullest extent possible. First, permission was granted by Echard to use her research of elementary principals as a guide through this exploratory process (Linda Echard, Personal Communication, May 5, 2011). Second, permission was granted by the executive director of the Governor’s Commission on Training America’s Teachers, Robert Feir, to use any appropriate portion of the superintendent survey (See Appendix H) used by the Commission as the data collection tool for this study (Robert Feir, Personal Communication, June 26, 2011). Finally, permission was granted by Emma Freeman, Administrative/Research Assistant at the consulting firm Beldon, Russonello, and Stewart to utilize survey components (Emma Freeman, Personal Communication, May 14, 2012). The consulting firm developed the initial surveys used by Ohio Governor’s Commission on Teaching Success (2004) to compile data of its teacher preparation system. These surveys were used as models for the Governor’s Commission on Training America’s Teachers (2005).

Echard (2007) through personal communication with Nancy Beldon, of the consulting firm Beldon, Russonello, and Stewart, January 17, 2007 stated:

The consultants drafted a survey in collaboration with staff and consultants to the Ohio Governor’s Commission on Teaching Success. Although the majority of the questions were asked of all four populations which were superintendents,
principals, teachers, and school board members, the questions’ wording varied slightly to match the type of respondent. Also, some questions were not appropriate for all types of respondents and were not asked of everyone. Each respondent was asked screening questions to ensure his or her qualification to participate in the study. Once finalized, the surveys were subjected to pretests, resulting in slight modifications in terms of question wording and questionnaire length.

The Governor’s Commission on Training America’s Teachers followed Ohio’s lead and also surveyed superintendents and teachers, however, as reported by Echard for reasons unclear, they did not incorporate principals in their research. In Pennsylvania the superintendent group was also comprised of human resource directors. Of the four groups surveyed, teachers comprised two: novice teachers, defined as teachers with three or less years of experience, and experienced teachers, who had more than three years of experience and/or possessed outstanding credentials, such as multiple degrees, National Board Certification, member of Pennsylvania Teacher of the Year organization, and Keystone Technology Teachers.

For the purpose of this study, the elementary principal survey used by Echard (See Appendix I) was adapted to survey secondary principals (See Appendix J). In an effort to collect pertinent information, the researcher added three questions to the study. These questions were:

- How long have you held a principal certification?
- Which principal certification do you hold?
- What are your primary duties as school principal?

These three questions were numbered from three to five respectively. The fifth question also included the following response choices: Building & Grounds, Curriculum, Discipline, Instruction & Assessment, Managerial, Personnel, Professional Development,
Public Relations & Community Involvement, Staffing, Student Affairs, Teacher Evaluation, Induction/Mentoring, Special Education, Other (please specify). Additional adaptations included the insertion of the words “high school” for elementary and the deletion of questions 12 and 13 regarding principals who were affiliated with professional development schools.

Once permission was granted to conduct this study, contact was made with principals in both subgroups in the form of electronic mail. The questions were contained in a web-based survey program through Survey Monkey and also include an explanation of the purpose of the survey along with a consent form (See Appendix K). The consent form was sent directly through e-mail for completion of the survey. This consent form instructed respondents, that by clicking on the link provided, they were consenting to participate, and that the data they supplied would be used for the purposes of this study. Any identifying information shared in open-ended responses was stripped from the response. The data had been secured through Survey Monkey and with the researcher. Once respondents began the survey, they also, by default, agreed that they have read and agreed to the provided consent form and that the data they supply can be used for the purposes of this study.

In addition to this initial contact, a follow-up reminder electronic mail was sent within two weeks of the original communication. This additional contact was to ensure that enough responses are received to be statistically significant.

Once principals begin their survey they found that it is divided into four sections. The first contained demographic information. The second section probed the school district’s hiring practices. The third section asked whether principals believe that
new teachers are adequately prepared when they begin their careers. The fourth section provided the respondents with the opportunity to write additional comments.

In an effort to be consistent with previous research on this topic, a portion of this survey was presented in a Likert Scale Format and required participants to rate the overall preparedness of new teachers. Possible responses included “very well prepared,” “somewhat prepared,” “not very well prepared,” and “not at all prepared.”

Data Analysis

The design of this quantitative study extended the research of the Governor’s Commission on Training America’s Teachers (2005) and Echard (2007). Descriptive and inferential statistics were used. Responses were collected and entered into the computer program Statistical Package for the Social Science (SPSS 20.0). A series of independent-measure t-tests were performed and summary data was developed in a narrative form. Each pedagogical skill statement was tested to determine whether there is a significant mean difference between the samples of the two subgroups.

Limitations of the Study

1. Principals participating in NISL / PIL training may have impacted survey response.

2. The experience level of the principal may have impacted the survey response of how well teachers are prepared.
3. Dwindling budgets of low socio-economic school districts may have deterred well-prepared teachers from applying for positions. These phenomena, in turn, may have impacted the perception of the principal who participated in this study.

4. Verification of the amount of time a principal spends supervising teachers may not be possible.

5. There is no control over continuum of teacher preparation programs involved in training new teachers.

Delimitations of the Study

1. This study was limited to only secondary teachers who have been hired between 2001-2012.

2. The participants who were surveyed in this study were limited to public school principals in the 500 school districts in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

3. Several school districts employ principals to cover both middle school and high school, thus blurring the perception between each group.

Summary

The purpose of the current study was to determine whether there are significant differences between the belief systems of secondary principals and those of deans/department chairs of Pennsylvania’s 94 teacher participation programs, school superintendents/human resource directors, distinguished veteran teachers, and novice teachers surveyed by the Governor’s Commission on training America’s Teachers, regarding freshman teachers’ skill levels. The significant changes in Pennsylvania’s
certification of middle and secondary teachers as a result of the highly qualified requirements of NCLB, as well as the increased focus on teacher effectiveness and its link to student achievement, underscores the importance of the perceptions of building principals in teacher hiring and effectiveness. The study also shed light on whether there are indeed significant differences in belief systems of elementary principals surveyed in Echard’s study with those principals on the secondary level.
CHAPTER IV
RESULTS

Introduction

The 21st Century brings a changing world, infused with technology and instantaneous communication on a global level. Principals are keenly aware of this need and understand that the hiring of quality teachers can have the greatest impact on student achievement (Ebermeier & Ng, 2006; Peterson, 2002; Stronge & Hindman, 2006). The purpose of this study was to determine the perceptions of Pennsylvania’s high school and middle school principals regarding the level of preparation of new teachers who are at the beginning of their careers. These perceptions were compared to those groups who were included in the Governor’s Commission on Training America’s Teachers, namely teachers, school district superintendents, and deans of schools of education (2005).

The sample population consisted of 300 secondary principals from school districts throughout Pennsylvania. Evaluation tools described in Chapter 3 were used to test the following research hypotheses:

1. Based on their observations, Pennsylvania secondary principals do not have a positive perception of initial teacher preparations programs.

2. There are no differences between the beliefs of principals of middle level schools and principals of high schools with respect to the preparation of new teachers in Pennsylvania.

3. There are no differences between the beliefs of principals of secondary schools and principals of elementary schools with respect to the preparation of new teachers in Pennsylvania.
4. Secondary principals in Pennsylvania do not share the same beliefs of the superintendents, deans from schools of education, novice teachers, and experienced teachers reported by the Governor’s Commission on Training America’s Teachers.

5. The open-ended responses by Pennsylvania secondary principals confirm or deny their perceptions of the quality of teacher preparation programs.

Description of the Sample Population

Identification of potential respondents initially began through the collection of school district directories compiled by several Intermediate Units. Sources at the Pennsylvania Department of Education in the Division of Data Quality were also contacted. Additional information was acquired from school district website searches, and approximately 50 districts, including the Pittsburgh Public Schools and the School District of Philadelphia, were contacted via email with an attached Right To Know Form. In total, contact information was gathered for 1,113 potential respondents of this proposed study. All potential respondents were either high school or middle level principals employed in public school districts throughout Pennsylvania. All 500 school districts in the Commonwealth were represented.

After approval was obtained, the survey and additional corresponding information were emailed to all potential respondents. A total of 300 completed surveys were collected from high school and middle level principals in Pennsylvania. Each of the state’s 29 Intermediate Units was represented. Respondents successfully completed questions regarding the following demographic information: current level, number of
years in current position, number of years in which certification held, certification type, school size, community setting, and socio-economic status of school community. These responses indicate that participants represent a variety of experiences and hail from diverse school districts.

Table 1 illustrates the number of years individual principals have held their current positions. Of the 300 respondents, 111, or 37 percent, held positions at the middle level, while 189, or 63 percent, held positions at high schools.

Table 1

Level of Principal in Current Position

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Response Percent</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Middle Level</td>
<td>37.0%</td>
<td>111</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High School</td>
<td>63.0%</td>
<td>189</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2 indicates the number of years the respondents have served in their current positions. The survey included four potential answers: less than 1 year, 1 to 5 years, 6 to 10 years, and over 10 years. Of the 300 respondents, 167, or 55.7 percent, indicated that they have held their current positions from one to five years. In addition, 116 respondents, or 38.7 percent indicated that they have held their current position for six years or more.
Table 2

Years of Service as Principal in Current Position

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years of Service</th>
<th>Response Percent</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than 1 year</td>
<td>5.7%</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 to 5 years</td>
<td>55.7%</td>
<td>167</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 to 10 years</td>
<td>23.7%</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over 10 years</td>
<td>15.0%</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3 reveals the number of years principal certifications have been held by the 300 respondents. The survey included three potential answers: K-12, secondary, and elementary. Of the 300 respondents, 188, or 62.7 percent, indicated that they held a K-12 certificate while 101 or 33.7 percent held a secondary certificate. Even though 11.3 percent indicated that they possessed an elementary certificate, because of the parameters of this study, not one respondent would possess an elementary certificate alone.
Table 3

Principal Certification Held

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Certification</th>
<th>Response Percent</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>K-12</td>
<td>62.7%</td>
<td>188</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elementary</td>
<td>33.7%</td>
<td>101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary</td>
<td>11.3%</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4 establishes the length of time that respondents have held their respective certifications. The survey included four potential answers: less than 1 year, 1 to 5 years, 6 to 10 years, and over 10 years. Of the total responses, 237, or 79 percent, have held their certifications for six years or longer. The remaining 21 percent of the respondents have held their certifications for five years or less.
Table 4

Years Principal Certification Held

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years of Service</th>
<th>Response Percent</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than 1 year</td>
<td>0.3%</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 to 5 years</td>
<td>20.7%</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 to 10 years</td>
<td>31.7%</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over 10 years</td>
<td>47.3%</td>
<td>142</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5 presents the size of the principals’ student population. The survey gave respondents five possible answers: 100-200, 201-300, 301-400, 401-500, and greater than 600. A total of 201 respondents, or 67.7 percent, indicated that they were responsible for student populations of greater than 600. An additional 71 respondents, or 23.7 percent, indicated that they were responsible for student populations of between 301 and 500.
Table 5

School Size

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Students</th>
<th>Response Percent</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>100-200</td>
<td>4.3%</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>201-300</td>
<td>4.3%</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>301-400</td>
<td>11.7%</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>401-500</td>
<td>12.0%</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greater than 600</td>
<td>67.7%</td>
<td>201</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6 indicates the type of community in which the principals’ schools are located. Three potential responses were available: urban, suburban, and rural. These choices represent the same categories as detailed by the Pennsylvania Partnership for Children (http://www.papartnerships.org/pdfs/methodology.pdf, retrieved August 13, 2012). Of the 300 respondents, 144, or 48 percent, indicated that their schools were located in suburban communities, 35.7 percent were in rural communities while 16.3 percent were in urban communities. These percentages indicate that the diversity of the responses was similar to those categories detailed by the Pennsylvania Partnership for Children, a source which describes the communities of school districts in the state. The
partnership categorizes 6 percent of districts as urban, 42 percent as suburban, and 52 percent as rural (http://www.papartnerships.org/pdfs/methodology.pdf, retrieved August 13, 2012).

Table 6
Communities Where Schools Are Located

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Community</th>
<th>Response Percent</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>16.3%</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suburban</td>
<td>48.0%</td>
<td>144</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>35.7%</td>
<td>107</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Additional demographic information was collected regarding the socio-economic status of the community in which the principals worked. This was obtained by asking respondents for population size of their schools’ free and reduced lunch recipients. A total of 300 respondents indicated that the free and reduced population in their schools was less than 40 percent. Another 19 percent reported a population of 41 to 60 percent.

As indicated earlier, principals are intensely involved with the hiring, mentoring, and evaluating of new teachers. The lack of principals’ participation in the Governor’s Commission on Training America’s Teachers (2005) created a gap in knowledge that could be used to inform the discussion of student achievement, teacher preparation, and
professional development. In an effort to glean the level of the principals’ participation in activities related to teacher preparedness, the survey sought information about principals’ primary duties. Principals were asked to check all tasks that they considered to be a primary responsibility. The survey listed the following tasks: Building & Grounds, Curriculum, Discipline, Instruction & Assessment, Managerial, personnel, Professional Development, Public Relations & Community Involvement, Staffing, Student Affairs, Teacher Evaluation, Induction/Mentoring, and Special Education. Table 7 summarizes the results. Of the 300 respondents, 297, or 99 percent, indicated that Teacher Evaluation was a primary duty. At least 240, or at least 80 percent, of respondents also indicated that seven duty types, Instruction & Assessment, Managerial, Discipline, Staffing, Professional Development, and Curriculum, fell within their prevue. Of these, Curriculum, Professional Development, and Staffing all correspond with student achievement. Interestingly, Induction/Mentoring only received a response rate of 58.3 percent. Table 7 recaps the results.
Table 7

Primary Duties As School Principal

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Duties</th>
<th>Response Percent</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teacher Evaluation</td>
<td>99.0%</td>
<td>297</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instruction &amp; Assessment</td>
<td>92.7%</td>
<td>278</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Managerial</td>
<td>90.3%</td>
<td>271</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discipline</td>
<td>83.7%</td>
<td>251</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staffing</td>
<td>82.0%</td>
<td>246</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional Development</td>
<td>81.0%</td>
<td>243</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curriculum</td>
<td>80.0%</td>
<td>240</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personnel</td>
<td>79.3%</td>
<td>238</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Affairs</td>
<td>78.0%</td>
<td>234</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Relations &amp; Community Involvement</td>
<td>77.7%</td>
<td>233</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special Education</td>
<td>66.0%</td>
<td>198</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Induction / Mentoring</td>
<td>58.3%</td>
<td>175</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building &amp; Grounds</td>
<td>42.0%</td>
<td>126</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Given principals’ participation with the staffing process, it was important to gain an understanding of their level of involvement. Table 8 indicates the level of involvement of secondary principals in the hiring process. Respondents were given four choices: very much involved, somewhat involved, rarely involved, and never involved.
Of the 300 respondents, 238, or 79.3 percent, indicated that they were very much involved, which quite clearly signifies the importance of principals’ perception regarding the preparation of teacher candidates. This data, combined with the information in Table 7, is consistent with research, cited in Chapter 2, by the NAESP which specifically states that principals who provide high-quality leadership “hire and retain high-quality teachers and hold them responsible for student learning” (National Association of Elementary School Principals, 2001).

Table 8
Pennsylvania Secondary Principals Roles in Hiring Teachers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Response Percent</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very much involved</td>
<td>79.3%</td>
<td>238</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat involved</td>
<td>16.0%</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rarely involved</td>
<td>4.3%</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never involved</td>
<td>0.3%</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Given a principal’s involvement in the staffing process, it was important to ascertain the characteristics that influence hiring decisions. Table 9 indicates principals’ preference when hiring and all factors are equal. The survey gave respondents nine choices. Two of the three categories with highest affirmative response rates (candidates who substituted in schools, alternatively certified teachers, and experienced teachers with five or more years) were experience levels. Little preference was given for graduates of
Pennsylvania colleges, bilingual candidates, those living in the community, or those who
were racially similar to students.

Table 9

Preference When Hiring – All Factors Equal

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Preference</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Candidates who substituted in schools</td>
<td>73%</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduates of Pennsylvania Colleges</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>86%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bilingual Candidates</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>81%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experienced Teachers (5 or more years)</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Candidates live in community</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>71%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alternatively Certified Teachers</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Candidates Racially similar to students</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>86%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Candidates graduated in top 25%</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>56%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Candidates who grew up in the community</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>64%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Results of Hypotheses Testing

Hypothesis 1: Based on their observations, Pennsylvania secondary principals do not have a positive perception of initial teacher preparation programs.

Since high school and middle level principals are very much involved in the hiring process, the respondents were asked to draw upon their experiences to consider the new teachers, who were also recent graduates, and who were hired in the 2001-2002,
2005-2006, and 2011-2012 school years. Table 10 summarizes the results. The percentage of respondents rating the preparation level of newly hired teachers as either “Excellent” or “Good” increased from 34.7 percent in the 2001-2002 school year to 63 percent hired in the 2011-2012 school year, as respondents considered newer hires. For each year considered, the majority of respondents rated the preparation level as “Good.” The “Don’t Know” response rate decreased significantly from 33 percent in the 2001-2012 school year to 1 percent in the 2011-2012 school year. The respondents who either skipped this question or answered “Don’t Know” were more than likely not working as principals during the entire ten-year span. Therefore, based on the results presented in Table 10 and the preceding analysis, it is concluded Hypothesis 1 is rejected.

Table 10

Preparation Level of New Teachers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Year</th>
<th>Excellent</th>
<th>Good</th>
<th>Adequate</th>
<th>Poor</th>
<th>Don’t Know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2011-2012 School Year</td>
<td>12.0%</td>
<td>51.0%</td>
<td>23.0%</td>
<td>5.3%</td>
<td>1.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(N=297)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005-2006 School Year</td>
<td>3.3%</td>
<td>43.0%</td>
<td>26.0%</td>
<td>3.0%</td>
<td>22.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(n=293)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001-2002 School Year</td>
<td>5.0%</td>
<td>29.7%</td>
<td>23.3%</td>
<td>4.7%</td>
<td>33.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(n=287)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Hypothesis 2: There are no differences between the beliefs of principals of middle level schools and principals of high schools with respect to the preparation of new teachers in Pennsylvania.

The validity of Hypothesis 2 was determined from 110 responses from middle level school principals and 189 from the high school principals. These responses build on the data from Table 10 and ascertain the level of preparation when certain aspects of teaching are considered. The survey included four categories for each skill set: Very Well Prepared, Somewhat Prepared, Not Very Well Prepared, and Not At All Prepared. Each of the eleven pedagogical skills contained in the survey were tested to determine whether a relationship exists between the two sample groups. The skills were labeled as follows:

- Skill 1- Content Knowledge
- Skill 2- Integrating Technology
- Skill 3- Helping Students Master Content Standards
- Skill 4- Lesson Planning
- Skill 5- Questioning Techniques
- Skill 6- Helping Students on Standardized Tests
- Skill 7- Teaching Decision-making Skills
- Skill 8- Differentiated Instruction
- Skill 9- Using Test Data to Address Student Needs
- Skill 10- Encouraging Students to Work Together to Solve Problems
- Skill 11- Classroom Management/Dealing with Discipline
The responses confirm that high school and middle level principals perceive that newly hired teachers are prepared regarding Content Knowledge, Integrating Technology and Lesson Planning. Each of these skill areas, numbered 1, 2 and 4 respectively, received at least a 94 percent response rate when the “Very Well Prepared” and “Somewhat Prepared” categories were combined. Each skill level also received the three highest response rates in the “Very Well Prepared” category. Although 44.3 percent of the respondents indicated that new teachers were “Somewhat Prepared” regarding the use of student assessment data, Skill 9, 6 percent of respondents indicated that new teachers were “Not At All Prepared.” This skill set garnered the highest percentage in the aforementioned category and indicates that respondents do not have a totally positive perception of the preparation levels of new teachers who have recently completed education programs and are assigned to their first teaching position. Differentiating Instruction also received relatively low marks, with 39.7 percent of respondents indicating that new teachers are “Not Very Well Prepared” or “Not At All Prepared.” Table 11 recaps these results.
Table 11

Preparation of Graduates From Pennsylvania Schools of Education

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(n-300)</th>
<th>Very Well Prepared</th>
<th>Somewhat Prepared</th>
<th>Not Very Well Prepared</th>
<th>Not At All Prepared</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Delivering Content Knowledge</td>
<td>42.0%</td>
<td>53.3%</td>
<td>3.3%</td>
<td>0.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Integrating Technology</td>
<td>53.7%</td>
<td>40.7%</td>
<td>5.0%</td>
<td>0.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helping Students Master State Content Standards</td>
<td>13.0%</td>
<td>68.7%</td>
<td>16.7%</td>
<td>0.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developing Lesson Plans</td>
<td>36.7%</td>
<td>57.3%</td>
<td>5.0%</td>
<td>0.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Questioning to Promote Critical Thinking</td>
<td>7.7%</td>
<td>54.7%</td>
<td>34.7%</td>
<td>2.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helping Students Perform Well On Standardized Test</td>
<td>8.7%</td>
<td>64.3%</td>
<td>24.3%</td>
<td>1.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching Decision-Making Skills</td>
<td>9.0%</td>
<td>57.3%</td>
<td>30.3%</td>
<td>1.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Differentiating Instruction</td>
<td>10.3%</td>
<td>49.7%</td>
<td>36.0%</td>
<td>3.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Using Student Assessment Data</td>
<td>6.3%</td>
<td>44.3%</td>
<td>42.7%</td>
<td>6.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Encouraging Groups To Solve Problems</td>
<td>15.3%</td>
<td>60.7%</td>
<td>21.3%</td>
<td>2.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classroom Management</td>
<td>5.0%</td>
<td>57.7%</td>
<td>31.7%</td>
<td>4.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A series of independent-samples t-test were conducted to compare the opinions of high school principals and middle level principals as to the preparation of specific skills of new teachers. An alpha of .01 was used when completing these tests in order to decrease the possibility of a Type 1 error. It was been concluded that the mean scores for each skill set are not significantly different, indicating that both groups of principals share the same beliefs. Overall, the results consistently indicate that high school principals and middle level principals have no difference in their opinions. Therefore, since the results of the t-tests in Table 12 do not show a significant difference between the beliefs of high
school and middle level principals, Hypothesis 2 is confirmed, and it has been concluded that there are no differences between the beliefs of principals of middle level schools and principals of high schools with respect to the preparation of new teachers in

Pennsylvania.

Table 12

Opinions of High School Principals (HSP) and Middle Level School Principals (MLP) as to the Specific Skill Preparation of New Teachers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Skill</th>
<th>HS Principals M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>ML Principals M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Df</th>
<th>T</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Skill 1</td>
<td>1.58</td>
<td>.5662</td>
<td>1.69</td>
<td>.5725</td>
<td>295</td>
<td>-1.66</td>
<td>.098</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skill 2</td>
<td>1.53</td>
<td>.6235</td>
<td>1.50</td>
<td>.5866</td>
<td>297</td>
<td>.398</td>
<td>.691</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skill 3</td>
<td>2.03</td>
<td>.5640</td>
<td>2.08</td>
<td>.5821</td>
<td>295</td>
<td>.749</td>
<td>.454</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skill 4</td>
<td>1.67</td>
<td>.6014</td>
<td>1.72</td>
<td>.5421</td>
<td>296</td>
<td>.832</td>
<td>.406</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skill 5</td>
<td>2.30</td>
<td>.6513</td>
<td>2.34</td>
<td>.6269</td>
<td>295</td>
<td>.538</td>
<td>.591</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skill 6</td>
<td>2.20</td>
<td>.6234</td>
<td>2.16</td>
<td>.5473</td>
<td>294</td>
<td>.657</td>
<td>.512</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skill 7</td>
<td>2.27</td>
<td>.6665</td>
<td>2.22</td>
<td>.5853</td>
<td>293</td>
<td>.586</td>
<td>.559</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skill 8</td>
<td>2.33</td>
<td>.7208</td>
<td>2.34</td>
<td>.6944</td>
<td>297</td>
<td>-.098</td>
<td>.922</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skill 9</td>
<td>2.47</td>
<td>.7111</td>
<td>2.51</td>
<td>.7020</td>
<td>296</td>
<td>-.503</td>
<td>.615</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skill 10</td>
<td>2.13</td>
<td>.6830</td>
<td>2.05</td>
<td>.6293</td>
<td>296</td>
<td>1.082</td>
<td>.280</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skill 11</td>
<td>2.39</td>
<td>.6487</td>
<td>2.30</td>
<td>.6303</td>
<td>293</td>
<td>1.143</td>
<td>.254</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

p>.01
Hypothesis 3: There are no differences between the beliefs of principals of secondary schools and principals of elementary schools with respect to the preparation of new teachers in Pennsylvania.

A series of independent-samples t-test were conducted to compare the opinions of secondary school principals and elementary school principals as to the preparation of specific skills of new teachers. An alpha of .01 was used when completing these tests in order to decrease the possibility of a Type 1 error. It has been concluded that the mean scores for skills 2, 6, and 11 are significantly different. Secondary and elementary principals differ in their perception of how well-prepared new teachers are in the areas of integrating technology, helping students perform well on standardized tests, and managing a classroom. Based on the results presented in Table 13 and the preceding analysis, it is concluded that Hypothesis 3 is rejected. Table 13 demonstrates these results.
Table 13

Opinions of Secondary Principals (SSP) and Elementary School Principals (ESP) as to the Specific Skill Preparation of New Teachers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Skill</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Df</th>
<th>T</th>
<th>Sig</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Skill 1</td>
<td>1.11</td>
<td>.5675</td>
<td>1.18</td>
<td>.7193</td>
<td>351.565</td>
<td>-1.176</td>
<td>.240</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skill 2</td>
<td>1.16</td>
<td>.6763</td>
<td>1.34</td>
<td>.9473</td>
<td>325.586</td>
<td>-2.237</td>
<td>.026</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skill 3</td>
<td>1.53</td>
<td>1.142</td>
<td>1.53</td>
<td>1.149</td>
<td>492</td>
<td>-.074</td>
<td>.941</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skill 4</td>
<td>1.16</td>
<td>.6773</td>
<td>1.23</td>
<td>.7977</td>
<td>371.656</td>
<td>-.975</td>
<td>.330</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skill 5</td>
<td>2.11</td>
<td>1.451</td>
<td>1.99</td>
<td>1.414</td>
<td>492</td>
<td>.919</td>
<td>.356</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skill 6</td>
<td>1.78</td>
<td>1.318</td>
<td>2.03</td>
<td>1.430</td>
<td>396.242</td>
<td>-2.001</td>
<td>.046</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skill 7</td>
<td>1.98</td>
<td>1.408</td>
<td>2.02</td>
<td>1.425</td>
<td>490</td>
<td>-.338</td>
<td>.735</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skill 8</td>
<td>2.19</td>
<td>1.471</td>
<td>2.42</td>
<td>1.502</td>
<td>413.415</td>
<td>-1.689</td>
<td>.093</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skill 9</td>
<td>2.47</td>
<td>1.502</td>
<td>2.60</td>
<td>1.501</td>
<td>493</td>
<td>-.937</td>
<td>.349</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skill 10</td>
<td>1.70</td>
<td>1.274</td>
<td>1.70</td>
<td>1.272</td>
<td>493</td>
<td>.036</td>
<td>.971</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skill 11</td>
<td>2.09</td>
<td>1.445</td>
<td>1.78</td>
<td>1.317</td>
<td>445.635</td>
<td>2.471</td>
<td>.014</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

p>.01
Hypothesis 4: Secondary principals, high school and middle level, in Pennsylvania do not share the same beliefs as the superintendents, deans, from schools of education, novice teachers, and experienced teachers surveyed by the Governor’s Commission on Training America’s Teachers.

The final report of the Governor’s commission on Training America’s Teachers included a report of the six pedagogical skills believed to be among the most pressing needs associated with teacher preparation. This data was obtained by compiling the survey responses which included the opinions of 174 superintendents, 237 veteran teachers, 128 new teachers, and 50 deans from schools of education. In Echard, 197 elementary principals of Pennsylvania responded to the same skills pertaining to how well teachers are prepared (Echard, 2005). The skills considered by these participants were:

- Classroom Management
- Instructing Standards
- Demonstrating Proficiency on Tests
- Differentiated Instruction
- Using Tests to Improve Instruction
- Technology Use

In the current study, high school and middle level principals were asked to consider level of preparedness of new teachers. There were 189 high school principals and 111 middle level principals who responded to this section of the survey.
A chi-square test of independence was calculated comparing the frequency of responses of the opinions of the superintendents, novice teachers, experienced teachers, deans from schools of education, elementary principals, and the secondary principals. All respondents were asked to describe the preparation of new teachers by rating teachers as either “very well prepared” or “not very well prepared” for each skill. Table 14 illustrates the results.

A Pearson Chi-square test for independence indicated that there was significant difference in the opinions about the preparation of new teachers of Echard’s elementary principals, those of the Governor’s Commission on Training America’s Teachers superintendents, novice teachers, experienced teachers, deans from schools of education, and the current study of high school and middle level principals. The results of the survey responses indicate that the principals differ in their beliefs about the preparation of new teachers. Hypothesis 4 is accepted based on the evidence revealed by the significant chi-square. However, due to the small number of responses from the education deans, it is impossible to directly compare their beliefs with the perceptions of the principals. Therefore, a conclusion cannot be made with respect to this group.
Table 14

Opinions of New Teacher Preparation According to Groups of Educators

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Well Prepared Responses</th>
<th>Not Well Prepared Responses</th>
<th>Chi-square</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High School</td>
<td>805</td>
<td>325</td>
<td>109.602</td>
<td>.000***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle Level</td>
<td>462</td>
<td>192</td>
<td>77.316</td>
<td>.000***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elementary</td>
<td>808</td>
<td>375</td>
<td>125.028</td>
<td>.000***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Superintendents</td>
<td>691</td>
<td>353</td>
<td>74.751</td>
<td>.000***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Veteran Teachers</td>
<td>962</td>
<td>460</td>
<td>69.513</td>
<td>.000***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Teachers</td>
<td>501</td>
<td>267</td>
<td>26.094</td>
<td>.000***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education Deans</td>
<td>298</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

p <.001***

Hypothesis 5: The open-ended responses by Pennsylvania secondary principals will confirm their perceptions about the quality of teacher preparation programs.

The secondary principals in Pennsylvania were given the opportunity to respond to the following open-ended questions:

1. What are the most important characteristics your district personnel consider when hiring?
2. How do these characteristics differ for new or experienced teachers?
3. Would you like to make any additional comments?

There were 280 responses to the first question, 260 responses to the second, and 59 responses to the third. The answers to the first question regarding characteristics fell
into five distinct categories: pedagogy, personal characteristics, GPA/certification, experience, and other. Principals indicated that during the hiring process, they sought a new teacher’s understanding of differentiated instruction, classroom management, and state standards. They also looked for pedagogical skills associated with use of assessment data, integration of technology, and the ability to engage students’ in higher-order thinking skills. Regarding personal characteristics, principals looked for work ethic, enthusiasm, compassion, commitment and flexibility in new hires. Those principals who gave responses that related to GPA/certification characteristics stated that they believe the following were important: multiple certifications, GPA 3.00 or above, others set a higher GPA standard of 3.65 or above, high-qualified, master’s degree, and praxis scores. Alluding to experience, principals reported that they perceived the following to be important: urban experience, student teaching, middle level, economically disadvantage youth, longevity in previous assignment, and experiences outside of the classroom. Other characteristics included having the “it” factor, good references, knowledge of the law, and attendance history, among others. Of the total 280 responses, 65 percent referred to pedagogy, 63 percent to personal characteristics, 22 percent to QPA/certifications, and 20 percent to experience. The remaining 9 percent were various and fell in the “Other” category. Figure 1 summarizes the results.
The results of the first open-ended responses clearly demonstrate that principals seek a variety of characteristics in new hires. While some factors may be based on preferences driven by specific district initiatives and needs, a majority of responses indicated the desire to find new teachers who can combine specific professional skill sets with positive personal attributes.

The second question requiring an open-ended response asked principals to consider how the characteristics considered when hiring teachers differed for new and experienced teachers. The responses from 260 principals who answered were easily divided into three groups. The largest number of respondents, or 48 percent, stated the characteristics are similar for both new and experienced teachers. The next largest group, comprised of 41 percent of the responses, perceived that the characteristics are different. The responses of the third group, the final 9 percent of the responses, either did not
address the question or indicated that the principals were not sure. Responses are summarized in Figure 2.

Figure 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristics</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Similar</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Differ</td>
<td>41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

High school and middle level principals who participated in the study agree that there are specific characteristics that are embodied in new and experienced teachers. Principals indicated that new teachers tend to have the following characteristics: more compliant, more idealistic, more collaborative, more adept at data analysis, lack methods behind theory, need mentoring, lack behavior management skills, lack work ethic, and lack professional dress. Principals noted that the characteristics possessed by experienced teachers who are new hires include: complacency, cynicism, confidence in content matter, more effective teaching, better behavior management skills, and lack of technology integration skills. A comparison of the open-ended responses clearly indicate
that principals have concerns with the skill sets of new teachers, especially those related
to the implementation of theoretical practices. While principals seem to appreciate the
enthusiasm and collaborative tendencies of new teachers, their lack of experience can be
perceived as a drawback. Conversely, experienced teachers have a wealth of knowledge
due to hands-on practices, but principals who participated in the survey expressed
concerns with overall attitudes of those who have already logged time in the classroom.

The final question contained in the survey afforded the high school and middle
level principals one more opportunity to comment on any topic. Although only 59
principals chose to comment, the responses from this group provided additional data.
The 59 responses could be grouped into four clear categories: disconnect between higher
education and schools, knowledge and pedagogy, personal characteristics, and principal
as leader. Figure 3 presents the results.
Of the 59 responses received, 35 percent of participants indicated that they perceived higher education programs as somewhat problematic. Principals cited the lack of understanding and instruction surrounding current state initiatives to which school districts must adhere such as Keystone Exams, the Common Core Standards, the PSSAs, AYP, and other mandates. Several respondents indicated a belief that current university professors do not have an adequate understanding of the challenges faced by public school districts. Principals also expressed concern that new graduates have a lack of understanding regarding school law in general and an understanding of appropriate versus inappropriate contact with students. In addition to professionalism, knowledge of behavior management was once again cited as an area in need of focus. The use of social
media was also cited as a challenge. Of the responses, 22 percent indicated a concern in areas of knowledge and pedagogy, with some indicating that teachers need to be effective in elevating learning and not just adept at covering content. The open-ended responses by secondary principals are consistent with their perceptions tested by Hypothesis 1. Therefore, these responses confirm the principals’ perceptions about the quality of teacher preparation programs and based on this finding, Hypothesis 5 is accepted.

The data gathered from the current study of responses of 300 Pennsylvania high school and middle level principals will be used to inform the conclusions outlined in Chapter 5. In addition to summaries and conclusions of the study, the researcher will make recommendations for immediate action and further study.
CHAPTER V
SUMMARIES, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

“Teachers must succeed if students are to succeed, and students must succeed if society is to succeed.” Fullan, 1993

Purpose of the Study

A review of recent education literature clearly supports the understanding that there is a national concern regarding student achievement and its importance in assuring that the United States maintains its current position as a leading nation. Today’s children who will one day be members of the 21st Century workforce will have to adapt to the global realities of the marketplace (Friedman, 2005). The 21st Century brings a changing world which values and rewards those who are able to use current resources in novel ways. It becomes the obligation of the public education system to ensure that all students are given equal opportunity and have access to quality schools and effective teachers who understand the new world’s value system. The flat world rewards teachers who are able to develop learning communities, promote communication skills, and prepare students with problem-solving skills that they are able to utilize throughout their lives. Principals typically have a vital role in the hiring decisions at the building level and also play a significant role in the daily supervision and regular evaluation of teachers. The importance of hiring effective teachers has been well established because individual instructors can directly result in academic gains and losses (DeArmond, et al., 2010). As
such, it is vital that principals hire teachers who can have a positive impact on student achievement (Ebermeier & Ng, 2006; Peterson, 2002; Stronge & Hindman, 2006).

Reflections on Past Research

In November 2001, Ohio Governor Robert Taft assembled the Governor’s Commission on Teaching Success. During the commission’s research, a variety of school groups were surveyed including teachers, administrators, professors, and school board members. The findings, entitled, Achieving More: Quality Teaching, School Leadership, Student Success (2002) outlined 15 recommendations addressing principal standards, preparation programs, alternative certification routes, and professional development. Many were similar to those found by other state commissions. The recommendations included setting clear standards for teachers and principals, holding teacher preparation programs accountable based upon the performance of their graduates, allowing for alternative routes for qualified candidates, establishing standards for induction and professional development, involving some measure of student achievement in teacher evaluation, and modifying the principal’s role to allow more time for instructional leadership. In a similar fashion, in August 2005, former Pennsylvania Governor Edward G. Rendell convened the Governor’s Commission on Training America’s Teachers in order to examine and to make specific recommendations on how to enhance teacher preparation programs in Pennsylvania, to link these programs to PreK-12 education, and to position Pennsylvania’s teacher preparation institutions as educational magnets that produce quality candidates for other states, and to enhance teacher preparation programs’ links to public education systems. During the process of its research, the Pennsylvania commission collected survey information regarding teacher
preparation levels from four groups of respondents: superintendents/human resource directors, distinguished veteran teachers, new teachers with less than three years of experience, and university education deans/chairs. (Final Report of the Governor’s Commission on Training America’s Teachers, 2006). The report did not indicate whether school building leaders were purposely excluded.

In September 2005, the committee, in consultation with governor’s office, developed a work plan which included five goals to guide the commission’s discussions. The goals were:

- All teacher education programs promote world class excellence for their students by providing them with the academic knowledge and pedagogical skills to be effective in the classroom.
- All teacher education graduates are life-long learners so they communicate this core value to their students while they continue to increase their effectiveness in delivering high-quality classroom instruction.
- The teacher education system as a whole provides quality teachers for all students in all school districts and responds to shortages and imbalances in the education marketplace.
- Pennsylvania meets the need for high quality teachers within the state and enhances its ability to meet the teacher education needs of the nation as a strategic economic development initiative.
- State laws, regulations, and policies are aligned to achieve these goals.
Interestingly, in its research, the commission did not consider one of the most influential roles in actual student learning: that of the school principals. As noted earlier, Echard (2007) observed that the Pennsylvania Governor’s Commission did not include principals and explored the importance of the principals’ role in teacher employment in *The Governor’s Commission on Training America’s Teachers: Response from Pennsylvania's Elementary School Principals.*

As a continuation of Echard’s work, the current study examined the perceptions of secondary principals in regards to teacher preparation. These perceptions were compared to those groups who were included in the Governor’s Commission on Training America’s Teachers (2005), namely teachers, school district superintendents, and deans of schools of education. Because principals were not included in the Commission’s original work, this study contributes to the general body of knowledge regarding this topic. The current study also examined whether there are significant differences in belief systems of elementary principals surveyed in Echard’s study with those principals on the secondary level. As anticipated, the data collected during the course of this study is exceedingly enlightening and is expected to contribute to the on-going conversation between school districts and the variety of entities that are approved by the Pennsylvania Department of Education to provide professional development.

Principals typically have a vital role in the hiring decisions at the building level and also play a significant role in the daily supervision and regular evaluation of teachers. In the current study this was substantiated with 79.3 percent of secondary school principals and 78.2 percent of principals of elementary schools from Echard reporting they are very much involved with hiring teachers. Only 4.6 percent of secondary and 3.1
percent of elementary principals responded that they are rarely or never involved in hiring.

In 2001, The National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP), published a guide for school leaders entitled *Standards for What Principals Should Know and Be Able To Do.* In this guide, the authors discuss a variety of skills required by today’s principals including principals who provide high-quality leadership “hire and retain high-quality teachers and hold them responsible for student learning” (NAESP, 2001). “Hiring teachers is arguably the most important task of school leaders and school principals are typically at the center of it. To design effective policies (e.g. certification and hiring processes), we need to know more about how principals make these decisions and to what degree the conventional wisdom reflects reality” (Harris, et. al., 2006). According to the authors, school leaders consistently want educators who have strong communication skills and enthusiasm for their craft. Other preferences include those who can establish a positive classroom climate, are student-centered, and have the ability to work well with others. They note that even though policy makers have in recent years focused on professional criteria, such as content knowledge, teacher experience, and intelligence, the studies which were reviewed indicate principals omit at least one of these in preference of other characteristics (Harris, et. al., 2006). The Ohio Governor’s Commission on Teaching Success concluded, in order of frequency as volunteered in open-ended questions, that administrators consider the following characteristics:

- Personal qualities of the individual, including communication and people skills.
- Passion and commitment, flexibility, and being a hard worker and team player.
• Knowledge and practical skills both in subject matter and pedagogy, particularly content knowledge and classroom experience.

• Commitment to children, a respect them, and a desire to be with them.

These qualities mirror the finding of secondary principals in this study whose responses were categorized in four areas: pedagogy, personal characteristics, QPA/certification, and experience.

Extensive research has clearly indicated that principals play a vital role in their buildings, and this role has become even more important in recent years. In their recently published study, authors Walker and Slear (2011) note that the relationship between principal behaviors and student achievement has been thoroughly explored. They assert that one of the most important responsibilities a building leader has in regards to student achievement is staff supervision. This is especially true in the case of new teachers who do not have practical experience in classroom management and/or instructional techniques in spite of having successfully completed certification programs or other preparatory efforts (Walker and Slear, 2011). In an effort to glean the level of the secondary principals’ participation in activities related to teacher preparedness, this survey sought information about principals’ primary duties. Principals were asked to check all tasks that they considered to be a primary responsibility. The survey listed the following categories: Building & Grounds, Curriculum, Discipline, Instruction & Assessment, Managerial, Personnel, Professional Development, Public Relations & Community Involvement, Staffing, Student Affairs, Teacher Evaluation, Induction/Mentoring, and Special Education. Of the 300 respondents, 297, or 99 percent, indicated that Teacher Evaluation was a primary duty. At least 240, or at least 80
percent, of respondents also indicated that seven duty types, Instruction & Assessment, Managerial, Discipline, Staffing, Professional Development, and Curriculum, fell within their prevue. Of these, Curriculum, Professional Development, and Staffing all correspond with student achievement. Interestingly, Induction/Mentoring only received a response rate of 58.3 percent. Youngs (2007) found that those principals who did not place emphasis on providing direct assistance to novice teachers experienced a variety of pushback issues leading to the resignation of a large majority of new teachers and low morale in general. Early experiences can strongly affect new teachers. Regular meetings that provide structure were also deemed to be significant in the establishment of trust between young teachers and their supervisors (Bryke, Lee & Holland, 1993; Bryke & Schneider, 2002). Induction and professional development are vital to the interrelated issues of teacher quality and teacher retention. On average one-third of all new teachers leave the profession within their first three years and about half within five years (Fulton, K., Yoon, I., and Lee, C. 2005). Components included in the most successful induction programs are an initial four to five days of induction before the beginning of the academic year, a continuum of professional development through systemic, job-embedded training over two to three years, teacher networking and support through study groups, and strong administrative support, mentoring, modeling effective teaching, and opportunities for inductees to visit demonstration classrooms (Wong, 2004).

Purpose of the Current Study

Given the importance of principals in hiring practices and student achievement, their perceptions regarding the level of teacher preparation is of some importance.
The purpose of this research study was to determine the perceptions of Pennsylvania’s high school and middle level principals regarding the preparation of new teachers in the beginning of their careers. These perceptions were compared to those groups who were included in the Governor’s Commission on Training America’s Teachers, namely teachers, school district superintendents, and deans of schools of education (2005) and principals of elementary schools.

In the current study, high school and middle level principals in Pennsylvania were given the opportunity to respond to the same survey questions posed in the Governor’s Commission. Because principals play such a vital role in the hiring and development of teachers, it is the researcher’s belief that their views should be studied in an effort to glean knowledge that can inform discussions about student achievement, professional development, and certification programs. The data in this study builds upon that gathered by Echard in 2007. The following questions were addressed through this study.

1. Based on their observations, how do Pennsylvania secondary principals perceive the quality of initial teacher preparations programs?

2. Are there differences between the beliefs of principals of secondary schools and principals of elementary schools with respect to the preparation of new teachers in Pennsylvania?

3. Are there differences between the beliefs of the secondary principals in Pennsylvania compared to the beliefs of the superintendents, deans from schools of education, novice teachers, and experienced teachers reported by the Governor’s Commission on Training America’s Teachers?
4. Are there differences between the beliefs of principals of middle schools and principals of high schools with respect to the preparation of new teachers in Pennsylvania?

5. Do the open-ended responses by Pennsylvania secondary principals confirm or deny their perceptions of about the quality of teacher preparation programs?

Summary of Hypothesis Testing

**Hypothesis 1:** Based on their observations, Pennsylvania secondary principals do or do not have a positive perception of initial teacher preparations programs.

High school and middle level principals were asked to rate the preparation levels of new teachers who had recently completed university-level education programs. Teachers hired in the 2001-2002, 2005-2006, and 2011-2012 school years were considered. Responses for the current study are summarized in Table 10. The percentage of respondents rating the preparation level of newly hired teachers as either “Excellent” or “Good” increased as respondents considered newer hires, from 34.7 percent in the 2001-2002 school year to 63 percent hired in the 2011-2012 school year. In Echard, more elementary principals rated the preparation programs as either “Excellent” or Good” with 50.7 percent responding positively for new hires in the 2001-2002 school year and 71.9 percent in the 2005-2006 school year. In the current study, the “Don’t Know” response rate decreased significantly from 33 percent in the 2001-2012 school year to 1 percent in the 2011-2012 school year. The respondents who either skipped this question or answered “Don’t Know” were more than likely not working as principals during the entire ten-year span. As noted in Table 2, only 15 percent have been in their
current position for more than 10 years. Only 23.7 percent reported being in their current position for six to 10 years. This may account for the 33 percent “Don’t Know” responses in the 2001-2002 school year and the 22.3 percent in 2005-2006 school year. Due to the question specifically stated “in current position” there is no way of knowing if the respondents in the current study were actually active secondary or middle level principals during those years. When the “Don’t Know” responses are factored in with the other response rates, it may be that the true perception may not be that teacher preparation has improved. As a result, comparison is difficult and speculation is plausible.

It is also interesting to note that the percentages of principals rating preparedness levels as “Poor” did increase slightly from 4.7 percent in 2001-2002 to 5.3 percent in 2011-2012. However, given that the majority of responses fall in the “Excellent” and “Good” categories, whether combined or separate, disproves the hypothesis that Pennsylvania high school and middle level principals do not have a positive perception of initial teacher preparation programs. This finding is inconsistent with the opinions expressed by the educators surveyed in the initial study conducted by the Governor’s Commission on Training America’s Teachers (2005). As noted earlier, the response rate for education deans who consider the overall preparedness of new teachers to be either “Excellent” or “Good” is 95 percent. This same group reported no responses, or zero percent, in the “Adequate” and “Poor” categories.

The current study of secondary principals’ views was further reinforced by Ohio Governor’s Commission on Teaching Success and the Pennsylvania study, both of which concluded that, on average, teachers are not adequately prepared for what they will face
in the classroom. Ohio new teachers especially felt unprepared for differentiated instruction, preparing students to demonstrate proficiency on standardized tests, managing classrooms, dealing with discipline, and providing appropriate instruction for students with differing abilities. Therefore, based on the findings of the current study, Hypothesis 1 is rejected.

**Hypothesis 2:** These are no differences between the beliefs of principals of middle level schools and principals of high schools with respect to the preparation of new teachers in Pennsylvania.

A comparison of means was conducted to evaluate the opinions of high school principals and middle level principals as to the preparation of specific skills of new teachers. It is the consensus of the survey participants that new teachers who have recently graduated from preparation programs have a high degree of preparation in delivering content knowledge, integrating technology, and developing lesson plans. They also perceive that new teachers are not prepared in the skill areas of using student assessment data, differentiating instruction, and questioning techniques to promote critical thinking. When compared to the results of Echard’s study and also the Ohio Governor’s Commission on Teaching Success, the responses of the secondary principals seem to echo those already expressed. In Echard, elementary principals found weaknesses in new teachers’ skills particularly in areas of classroom management, and addressing the needs of students with differing abilities, with 64 percent and 43.9 percent, respectively (Echard, 2007). In the Ohio study, 67 percent and 61 percent of Ohio
administrators indicated that new teachers were only “Somewhat” prepared in these categories.

These responses, again, were reflected in the data of the current study. The two groups held similar opinions regarding the preparation levels in all 11 skill sets. In fact, of the 11 skill sets that were analyzed, none had a significance value of less than .05, indicating that both groups of principals share the same beliefs. The lowest significance value was determined for Skill 1, Delivering Content Knowledge, at .098.

Opinions of middle level principals regarding teacher hiring and preparation can be particularly crucial. In its task force report entitled *Turning Points Preparing American Youth for the 21st Century* (1989), the Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development concluded that early adolescence is a period of opportunity for intellectual and emotional growth, yet simultaneously fraught with vulnerability and risk. Students are often paired with school systems that do not meet their needs. Among its findings, the task force also noted that due to the unique characteristics of the age group of middle level students in particular, it was imperative that teachers for middle school receive specific preparation. Given this research, one would think that the beliefs of middle level and high school principals would differ on whether teacher candidates are typically prepared to meet the needs of this unique population.

Additional research from the National Middle School Association Middle Level Teacher Preparation Standards (National Middle School Association, 2001), indicates that middle school teachers should be experts in adolescent development as well as curricula that successfully impart core subject matter to all children. This study noted 87.3 percent of middle level principals felt teachers were either somewhat prepared or not
very well prepared in providing appropriate instruction for students with differing abilities.

One significant development since the initiation of the current study is the change in certification requirements by the Pennsylvania Department of Education under Chapter 49-2. Effective January 1, 2013, certificates issued after this date will be Early Childhood – PK - 4, Elementary/Middle – 4-8, and Secondary 7-12. This change in official state certification supports the research that adolescents ages 10- to 14-years old need teachers with specialized training. Further, PDE Elementary/Middle certification states that the holder of this certificate is qualified to teach all subjects in grades 4 through 6, but will need a concentration if they are to serve as the teacher of record for the subject area(s) in grades 7 and 8. These requirements follow NCLB regulations for ‘highly-qualified.’

As noted in Chapter 4, 87 percent of middle level principals reported graduates of Pennsylvania schools of education are somewhat prepared or not very well prepared in helping students master state content standards, while only 63.3 percent similarly rated graduates in delivering appropriate content knowledge. Therefore, since the results of the t-tests do not show a significant difference between the beliefs of high school and middle level principals, Hypothesis 2 is confirmed, and it has been concluded that there are no differences between the beliefs of principals of middle level schools and principals of high schools with respect to the preparation of new teachers in Pennsylvania.
Hypothesis 3: There are no differences between the beliefs of principals of secondary schools and principals of elementary schools with respect to the preparation of new teachers in Pennsylvania.

A comparison of means was conducted to evaluate the opinions of secondary school principals and elementary principals as to the preparation of new teachers in regards to specific skills. The data indicates that secondary and elementary principals differ in their perception of how well-prepared new teachers are in the areas of integrating technology, helping students perform well on standardized tests, and managing a classroom.

One can draw from the Ohio Governor’s Commission on Teaching Success and the PA Governor’s Commission for comparison. Both commissions concluded that on average, teachers are not adequately prepared for what they will face in the classroom. Ohio teachers believed they were not well prepared to deliver differentiated instruction, to prepare students to demonstrate proficiency on standardized tests, to manage classrooms, and to deal with discipline. Both Echard and Ohio found preparation of students to demonstrate proficiency on standardized tests, and to manage classrooms lacking. Some also cited the lack of field experience in their preparation programs as a great hindrance. This lack of real-world experience and training while in preparation programs may very well be one reason why on average one-third of all new teachers leave the profession within their first three years in the classroom, while about half leave in the first five years (Fulton, K., Yoon, I., and Lee, C., 2005).
It is interesting to note that elementary principals in the Echard study signified no preparation difference between graduates of traditional preparation programs and those of professional development schools, which portend to emphasize clinical experiences, on-site teaching opportunities, and collaboration with PK-12 schools. If professional development schools do indeed recognize the challenges faced by today’s PK-12 schools, then one must wonder why more isn’t being done to prepare new teachers to meet the challenges. Is it possible that the duration of study in professional development schools is not long enough? Should one examine the length of time spent on content knowledge, pedagogy, and field experiences when determining the best combination for teacher preparation?

Ohio Governor’s Commission on Teaching Success and Pennsylvania Governor’s Commission concluded new teachers are not adequately prepared for what they will face in the classroom. They lack confidence in pedagogical skills due to limited field experiences. The U.S. Department of Education repeatedly found that “experienced and newly certified teachers see clinical experiences (including student teaching) as a powerful-sometimes most powerful- component of teacher preparation” (Wilson, Floden, & Ferrini-Mundy, 2001). Limitations noted of field experiences included:

- Students often disconnected from other components of teacher preparation and experience difficulty applying what they have learned in these components.
- Student teaching experiences tend to focus on the mechanics of teaching and are limited in range.
• University programs do not coordinate experiences with teacher preparation coursework.

Research has identified the characteristics of field experiences most critical to teacher effectiveness include “strong supervision by well-trained teachers and university faculty and the prospective teachers’ solid grasp of subject matter and basic understanding of pedagogy prior to student teaching.” (Education Commission of the States, 2003).

Given the above research the question remains why principals of professional development schools held similar beliefs regarding teacher preparation? A possible answer may be that the principals were responding to this question with all teacher preparation in mind and not specifically those teachers prepared through professional development schools. In this case, further research may include the input of principals of professional development schools responding to the survey in this study with graduates of professional development school programs in mind. So, as a result of the data collected from the current study, Hypothesis 3 is rejected. It has been concluded that there is a difference between the beliefs of principals of secondary schools and principals of elementary schools with respect to the preparation of new teachers in Pennsylvania.

**Hypothesis 4:** Secondary principals, high school and middle level, in Pennsylvania do not share the same beliefs as the superintendents, deans, from schools of education, novice teachers, and experienced teachers surveyed by the Governor’s Commission on Training America’s Teachers.
The final report of the Governor’s commission on Training America’s Teachers included a report of the six pedagogical skills believed to be among the most pressing needs associated with teacher preparation. This data was obtained by compiling the survey responses that included the opinions of 174 superintendents, 237 veteran teachers, 128 new teachers, and 50 deans from schools of education. The skills considered by these participants were:

- Managing a Classroom
- Instructing Standards
- Demonstrating Proficiency on Tests
- Employing Differentiated Instruction
- Using Tests to Improve Instruction
- Using Technology Use

In the current study, high school and middle level principals were asked to consider level of preparedness of new teachers. There were 189 high school principals and 111 middle level principals who responded to this section of the survey.

The current study indicated that there was significant difference in the opinions about the preparation of new teachers of Echard’s elementary principals, those of the Governor’s commission on Training America’s Teachers superintendents, novice teachers, experienced teachers, deans from schools of education, and the current study of high school and middle level principals. The results of the survey responses indicate that the principals differ in their beliefs about the preparation of new teachers. Because there
were so few responses from education deans in the initial study, a conclusion cannot be made with respect to this group.

When delving further into the skill set categories, further details emerge. Those perceiving teacher as “very well prepared” or “somewhat prepared” in Skill 1, classroom management, range from 100 percent of education deans to 56 percent of veteran teachers in the Pennsylvania’s Governor’s study. Even more interesting is a comparison between education deans from Pennsylvania, who reported 100 percent, Ohio professors, who reported 87 percent, Ohio teachers, with 82 percent, Pennsylvania’s veteran teachers, with 56 percent, and Pennsylvania’s new teachers at 62 percent. Although Ohio professors and teachers hold a relatively similar perception of teachers in the area of classroom management as being “very well prepared” or “somewhat prepared” this does not hold true for Pennsylvania’s deans and teachers. As stated earlier, education deans may feel those students graduating from teacher preparation programs have met all criteria necessary to master the profession of teaching. When focusing on administration, the range was found for Ohio administrators to be at 84 percent, followed by Pennsylvania’s superintendents at 73 percent, and Pennsylvania’s principals at 74 percent for elementary and 62 percent for secondary. It is interesting that the principals in this study do not share the beliefs of other administrators, and rather align more closely to Pennsylvania’s teachers in their views. These principals and teachers would be considered to be the more closely involved at the classroom level than previously mentioned administrators. Curiously, Ohio teachers did not share this same perception on classroom management. Further research in differences between Ohio and
Pennsylvania teacher preparation programs may shed insight as to why these differences occur.

Skill 2, helping students master academic content standards presented a greater level of similarity between respondents in the Ohio, Pennsylvania, Echard, and the current study with the exception of Pennsylvania’s education deans. Ohio administrators, Ohio professors, Pennsylvania’s principals, both elementary and secondary, and Pennsylvania’s veteran teachers responded within a range of 81 to 86 percent. Ohio teachers, Pennsylvania’s new teachers, and Pennsylvania’s superintendents’ responses were lower, falling between 74 to 76 percent are those who believe that teachers are “very well prepared” or “somewhat prepared” to assist students in their mastery of standards. Future qualitative research would shed insight as to why there appears to be a slight difference of opinion between these groups.

Demonstrating proficiency on standardized tests, Skill 3, indicates a large discrepancy between preparedness of Ohio teachers, Pennsylvania’s new teachers, Pennsylvania’s superintendents and all other respondents. Only 54 percent of Ohio teachers, 48 percent of Pennsylvania’s new teachers, and 59 percent of Pennsylvania’s superintendents felt teachers were “very well prepared” or “somewhat prepared” to help students perform proficiently on standardized tests in comparison with a range of 73 to 82 percent for all others, with the exception of education deans at 98 percent. Education deans remain an outlier in all skill areas.

Teacher preparedness in Skill 4, differentiated instruction, illustrated a divide between states. Responses by all surveyed in the Ohio Governor’s study span 73 to 83 percent with teachers and administrators relatively similar at 75 percent and 73 percent
respectively. Of Ohio professors, 83 percent deemed teachers better prepared to meet the needs of students with differing abilities. Only 51.6 percent of Pennsylvania’s elementary principals, 59 percent secondary principals, 62 percent superintendents, 63 percent veteran teachers, and 68 percent new teachers share this same view. One may suspect differences in preparation coursework or requirements between the states, differences in population diversity, or the manner in which students with special needs are included in the main school population as possible reasons for this discrepancy. Further investigation is warranted to seek possible explanations for this difference given the importance of meeting the needs of all children under NCLB regulations.

Approximately 71.5 percent of all teachers from both the Ohio and Pennsylvania Governor’s study considered themselves “very well prepared” or “somewhat prepared” in using test results to improve instruction, Skill 5. Of Ohio administrators, 70 percent held similar views. Surprisingly, the same was not true for elementary principals at 47.5 percent, secondary principals, 60.3 percent, and superintendents, 44 percent. It appears Pennsylvania’s teachers believe their instruction is guided by test data while administrators do not hold this same belief. This may be because administrators are ultimately responsible for student achievement and face draconian ramifications when school-wide expected levels are not attained. Whereas the current tracking systems linking student achievement to individual teachers was not in place during the original Pennsylvania Governor’s Commission study and may lead to a false sense by teachers that they are meeting the instructional needs of students based upon test data. As the current Phase 3 of the new Pennsylvania teacher evaluation system moves toward full implementation during the 2013-2014 school year, and this evaluation system adds a
component of student achievement accountability at the teacher level, it is this researcher’s opinion that the perception of teachers with regard to using tests to improve instruction may not remain at the high level reported within the PA Governor’s study. When student achievement as noted on standardized tests is tracked to particular teachers, the results may bring a change in perspective on data driven instruction.

Of Pennsylvania’s teachers, approximately 71 percent believed themselves to be “very well prepared” or “somewhat prepared” while integrating technology into instruction, Skill 6. However, administrators held a more positive view of teachers’ ability to integrate technology with secondary principals expressing the highest level of satisfaction, at 94 percent, followed by elementary principals at 89 percent, and superintendents at 83 percent. This skill continues to be of major importance in teacher preparation programs with the substantial yearly increase in cyber charter schools and public school districts utilizing technology to offer advanced placement courses as well as hard to staff subjects such as foreign languages and advanced science and math courses. This preparation is of greater importance when one reviews the statements by Friedman concerning the flat world in which we live and the need to prepare students for a changing global society in which the future cannot even presently be imagined.

Therefore, based on this finding, Hypothesis 4 is accepted, and that indeed secondary principals in Pennsylvania do not share the same beliefs as the superintendents, deans from schools of education, novice teachers, and experienced teachers surveyed by the Governor’s Commission on Training America’s Teachers.
Hypothesis 5: The open-ended responses by Pennsylvania secondary principals will confirm their perceptions about the quality of teacher preparation programs.

The secondary principals in Pennsylvania were given the opportunity to respond to three open-ended regarding the characters of teachers. There were 280 responses to the first question, 260 responses to the second, and 59 responses to the third. The results of the first open-ended clearly demonstrate that principals seek a variety of characteristics in new hires. While some factors may be based on preferences driven by specific district initiatives and needs, a majority of responses indicated the desire to find new teachers who can combine specific professional skill sets with positive personal attributes.

The conclusion made as the result of test Hypothesis 1 is that high school and middle level principals in Pennsylvania do have a positive perception of initial teacher preparation programs. However, other factors may influence these results, such as a high turnover rate, which may be extrapolated from the 33 percent response rate in the “Don’t Know” category. As previously noted, the data obtained from surveying the principals indicate an acknowledgement of some improvement in teacher preparation programs from 2001 to 2011. However, there are still several areas of concern that clearly need improvement. The responses to the open-ended questions were studied to determine whether these responses confirm or deny their opinions.

The answers to the first question regarding characteristics fell into five distinct categories: pedagogy, personal characteristics, QPA/certification, experience, and other. Principals indicated that during the hiring process, they sought a new teacher’s understanding of differentiated instruction, classroom management and state standards. They also looked for pedagogical skills associated with use of assessment data, integration
of technology, and the ability to engage students’ in higher-order thinking skills. Of the total 280 responses, 65 percent referred to pedagogy, 63 percent to personal characteristics, 22 percent to QPA/certifications, and 20 percent to experience. The remaining 9 percent were various and fell in the “Other” category.

Principals’ perceptions of traits they believe to be strong indicators of a person’s ability to be an effective teacher were studied by Davis (2005). The following themes were related to 13 essential traits:

- Enthusiasm about career
- Team player
- Student-centered
- Flexible
- Content knowledge
- Pedagogy/lesson design
- Certification/licensure
- Organization
- Eagerness
- Compassionate
- Positive outlook
- Communication
- Appropriate dress

These themes mirror responses by secondary principals in this study. Of all the areas expressed by respondents, those which were most unexpected were work ethic, appropriate dress, and appropriate social interaction with students. Principals criticized teacher
preparation programs for not providing a single course addressing school law, social media and ethics. Principals reported these as being key areas in which new teachers often lack full understanding of the consequences associated with their behavior and the areas of concern that frequently lead to loss of certification. They also found these areas more problematic with new teachers than those areas surrounding pedagogy, content knowledge, student achievement, etc.

Research suggests that the selectivity or prestige of the institution a teacher attended has a positive effect on student achievement, and this is especially true at the secondary level (Rice, 2003). Interestingly, 86 percent of the principals in the current study reported their districts did not give preference to graduates of Pennsylvania university teacher preparation programs. It cannot be concluded if the reason for this is they do not hold a positive perspective of Pennsylvania programs or they feel all teacher preparation programs are governed by the Pennsylvania Department of Education and graduates must meet certain standards and praxis scores to be awarded a degree, implying that each is equal. Future research may include focus groups to delve further into principals’ assessment of teacher preparation programs.

Evidence suggests that teachers who have earned advance degrees have a positive impact on high school mathematics and science achievement when degrees were earned in these subjects. Secondary principals rarely expressed seeking a master’s degree or a primary degree in a specific subject area when hiring. However, interestingly enough when asked if their district gave preference for alternative certification, nearly half responded favorably. This is surprising given the fact that Pennsylvania educates double the number of teachers needed by the state, and that multiple areas outside the state actively recruit
Pennsylvania teachers to meet their state’s demands. One would question if the need for alternative certification recipients stems from hard to staff subject areas or difficulty faced by urban school districts recruiting and retaining qualified teachers.

When principals spoke of teacher experience the largest group expressed interest in teachers who were long-term substitutes within the district or who had completed student teaching or obtained other field experiences within the district. This provided principals a chance to observe new teachers interacting with students within the classroom, to monitor teaching abilities, and to consider whether or not a teacher was the ‘right fit’ for the school. In addition, others preferred teachers with urban experience, those who previously worked with economically disadvantaged students, middle level experience, and the ability to coach extracurricular activities. The smallest group were traits which fell into the other categories including good references, having the ‘it’ factor, attendance history, fitting in with other teachers, and willingness to learn.

The second question requiring an open-ended response asked principals to consider how the characteristics considered when hiring teachers differed for new and experienced teachers. Principals indicated that new teachers tend to have the following characteristics: more compliant, more idealistic, collaborative, more adept at data analysis, lack methods behind theory, need mentoring, lack behavior management skills, lack work ethic, and lack professional dress. A comparison of the open-ended responses clearly indicates that principals have concerns with the skill sets of new teachers, especially those related to the implementation of theoretical practices. While principals seem to appreciate the enthusiasm and collaborative tendencies of new teachers, their lack of experience can be perceived as a drawback.
The question remains what is the proper mix of coursework and field experience which produces teachers ready to tackle the challenges they faced as novice teachers in the classroom? Many suggest models based upon the medical practice of observing and conferencing with experienced practitioners. In addition, groups of interns, university professors, and high quality experienced teachers from all levels discuss aspects of subject area content knowledge and methods of teaching. Including activities such as, on-site seminars, mentors modeling and engaging novice teachers in on-going, job-embedded professional development and performance-based assessments tied to state teacher evaluation and the principles of effective teaching performed by school-based university faculty, experienced teachers, and school administration. Research indicates that principals describe graduates of this type of teacher preparation program as competent first year teachers or considerably above average (Teitel, L. 2001).

The final question contained in the survey afforded the high school and middle level principals one more opportunity to comment on any topic. Of the 59 responses received, 35 percent of participants indicated that they perceived higher education programs as somewhat problematic. Principals cited the lack of understanding and instruction surrounding current state initiatives to which school districts must adhere such as Keystone Exams, Common Core, PSSAs, AYP, and other mandates. In addition to professionalism, knowledge of behavior management was once again cited as an area in need of focus. The use of social media was also cited as a challenge. Of the responses, 22 percent indicated a concern in areas of knowledge and pedagogy, with some indicating that teachers need to be effective in elevating learning and not just adept at covering content.
The open-ended survey responses made by the high school and middle level principals in Pennsylvania do present a concern that new teachers need to be better prepared in some areas. These responses are consistent with their perceptions tested in Hypothesis 2. Therefore, these responses confirm the principals’ perceptions about the quality of teacher preparation programs. Based on this finding, Hypothesis 5 is accepted.

Other Reflections

Table 3 revealed that approximately 61 percent of the responding principals have been in their current position five years or less. One of the difficulties obtaining email addresses for the survey in this study was due to high turnover in both middle level and high school administration. With further information garnered from Table 4 it appears as though 79 percent of respondents have held principal certification six or more years. These facts lead to some speculations: principals initially assume an assistant principal position before accepting their current position, principals use current experience as a ladder to reaching a desired position, or principals are reassigned within a district based upon the need of the district and the skill set they bring to the position. These are only speculations and further researcher would need to be conducted to reveal underlying causes. The short duration a principal has within a building, raises questions about the impact the timeframe has on hiring, induction of novice teachers, mentoring, professional development, and professional growth which occurs through dialogue guided by thorough teacher evaluations. As a teacher begins her/his career, other than students, the principal is viewed as the most significant individual in the school (Wilson, 2009). How does the length of time a principal remains in a position impact novice teachers’
effectiveness, retention, confidence, and satisfaction? What influence does it have on student achievement? Would principals’ perceptions differ between those who completed PA Inspired Leadership (PIL) program under Pennsylvania Act 45 of 2007 and those who have not? How does the length of time spent in the classroom prior to becoming a secondary school principal effect the administrators’ perception of teacher preparation and their ability to influence/impact novice teachers’ effectiveness?

Interestingly enough, Echard had more suburban respondents at 59.6 percent and less rural respondents at 24.5 percent than the current study. Also important to note, both studies had greater representation from urban area school districts than reported by the Pennsylvania Partnership for Children that describe the communities of school districts in the state. The partnership categorizes 6 percent of districts as urban while Echard reported 18.3 percent and the current study 16.3 percent (http://www.papartnerships.org/pdfs/methodology.pdf, retrieved August 13, 2012). Further, principals in this study were asked within which intermediate unit their school district was located. Given the considerable quantity of secondary principals within the two largest urban school districts, Pittsburgh Public and Philadelphia, the response rate was far less than what would be expected due to difficulty acquiring permission for email addresses. Although this study demonstrates representation of secondary principals from urban school districts which exceeds the state report, this researcher questions whether or not responses in survey areas with topics such as hiring preference, perception of teacher preparation, alternative certifications, classroom management, highly qualified and open-ended responses would differ with greater input from these two major urban districts. Urban school districts in particular face an increased need for high-quality teachers of
color as the general population continues to become racially and ethnically diverse. Research reports that teachers of color create a positive impression for students and tend to set higher expectations for social, personal, and academic performance for students in their own ethnic group (Rodriguez, V.J., 2000). Although Pennsylvania prepares a surplus of high-quality teachers, these teachers tend to take positions in districts similar to those they attended, in which they student taught or ones who offer more financial incentives. To add to this disparity, when surveyed by the Pennsylvania Governor’s Commission, 75 percent of superintendents in urban districts reported vacancies for which they did not have enough applicants to fill. This fact is compounded further when hard-to-staff areas, math, science, foreign languages, and special education are factored. According to the Pennsylvania Department of Education, Bureau of Teacher Certification and Preparation, Philadelphia held the heaviest use of Emergency Permits, 9,803 or 48.2 percent of the states’ total from 2001-2005. High-poverty urban school districts are challenged not only with teacher shortages in key subject areas, but also with teacher attrition, which causes our most needy children to be shortchanged. Ingersoll noted the most frequent reasons teachers leave the profession prior to retirement are poor administrative support, student behavior, lack of influence over school policy, too heavy a case load, and lack of planning time (Ingersoll, 2001). To combat teacher shortages in high-poverty urban school districts, universities need to better prepare prospective teachers and provide highly effective field experiences in such settings. Teachers who feel well prepared to teach in urban settings are far less likely to leave teaching. Studies demonstrate that two-thirds of teachers reporting sound preparation remain in teaching,
compared to one-third of those reporting ineffective preparation. Attrition rates mirror this finding (Darling-Hammond & Sykes, 2003).

Conclusions

The summaries of each of the hypotheses tested clearly indicate that high school and middle level principals have strong beliefs about the preparation levels of new teachers who have recently graduated from education programs. Survey responses support findings in the literature that indicate that principals are very much involved with the hiring, supervision, and evaluation of teachers. Some principals are also very much involved with teacher mentoring and professional development. These duties are a direct outgrowth of the principal’s role as curriculum leader of the school, which in turn fits directly with other processes and activities that fall within her or his prevue.

This study has served as a vehicle to provide some very important information about the preparation levels of new teachers in Pennsylvania. The importance of the principal as the instructional leader of a school has been duly documented and it is understood that a principal has an impact on student achievement either directly or indirectly. The principal’s role in hiring, professional development, induction/mentoring, school policy, and discipline also affects teacher attrition, which can impact student achievement.

Reference data obtained by the Governor’s commission indicated that 95 percent of the education deans surveyed perceived that new teachers are being excellently prepared to enter the workforce in their profession. The principals surveyed in some areas disagreed. In their responses to the open-ended questions, principals indicated that
the lack of understanding and instruction surrounding current state initiatives to which school districts must adhere such as Keystone Exams, Common Core, PSSAs, AYP, and other mandates. Several respondents indicated a belief that current university professors do not have an adequate understanding of the challenges faced by public school districts. Principals also expressed concern that new graduates have a lack of understanding regarding school law in general, and an understanding of appropriate verses inappropriate contact with students. In addition to professionalism, knowledge of behavior management was once again cited as an area in need of focus. The use of social media was also cited as a challenge.

Throughout the survey high school and middle level principals indicated that there are some areas in which new teachers are prepared, such as content knowledge, integrating technology, and lesson planning. However, they also expressed concern, both in the open-ended questions and elsewhere, that there are specific areas in which preparation level is lacking. Classroom management consistently was presented as a weak area for new teachers as well as differentiating instruction. These are important aspects for principals who spend valuable time and resources dealing with new teachers who are lacking in these areas. That teacher preparation is “good” isn’t good enough when it takes years of mentoring, induction, and professional development to move a novice teacher along the spectrum of apprentice, professional, expert, master, to distinguished teacher. The time for such training is during their tenure in higher education teacher preparation programs.

The knowledge obtained as a result of this study adds to the body of knowledge related to improving student achievement by preparing excellent teachers. This
information can be used to impact teacher preparation and inform discussions related to professional development and teacher preparation courses.

Recommendations for Immediate Action

Students must be prepared for the newly evolving demands of a global society, and this is impossible to obtain if teachers themselves are not well prepared. In order to immediately address the concerns brought forth by the principals who responded to this study, a variety of actions is suggested:

1. Teachers must have a thorough grasp of content knowledge and skills to teach an ever-changing curriculum. Teacher preparation programs must align the courses to the Common Core Standards.

2. Teacher preparation programs must be on the cutting edge of initiatives set forth by federal and state agencies. New teachers must be prepared to “hit the ground running” especially with regards to PVASS, PSSA, Keystone Exams, and the Common Core Standards.

3. Greater attention must be paid to establishing courses on school law and ethics in teacher preparation programs. These courses will diminish the increasing number of teacher dismissals, inappropriate teacher-student interaction, ill-chosen use of technology, and unsuitable public displays of behavior.

4. The Governor’s Commission on Training America’s Teachers suggested tracking teacher preparation program graduates and their impact on student achievement. Data collection could be expanded to include: principals’ evaluation of graduate’s ability and effectiveness until tenured, exit interview with graduate just prior to
graduation combined with follow-up interviews, and information pertaining to field experiences.

5. A collaborative partnership must be developed between district level administration, PDE, and university faculty deans of education. The purpose would be to coordinate efforts, ascertain areas of curriculum importance, determine essential pedagogy skills, and determine requirements for on-going professional development, among others.

6. University teacher preparation programs, Pennsylvania Department of Education, Pennsylvania school districts, and NCATE must work together to establish an appropriate mix of content knowledge, pedagogy, and field experience needed to prepare novice teachers for the classroom.

7. There is a need for emulating model teacher preparation programs where field experiences are tied to key courses beginning as early as the second year of study. Lesson study, observation, and lesson review should coincide with courses. The medical model of internships could be followed in which groups of interns, university professors, and high quality experienced teachers from all levels discuss aspects of subject area content knowledge and methods of teaching. Including activities such as, on-site seminars, mentors modeling and engaging novice teachers in on-going, job-embedded professional development. Performance-based assessments, tied to Pennsylvania state teacher evaluation and the principles of effective teaching, performed by school-based university faculty, experienced teachers, and school administration, would provide continuous feedback and lead to professional growth.
8. Throughout her or his preparation program, a new teacher should have multiple field experiences which are tied to coursework. These experiences should be extensive, intensive, and guided by continuous feedback from university faculty, distinguished educators, and supported by principals.

9. The Pennsylvania study found the state is becoming increasingly diverse in its PK-12 population while the white teacher population remains a majority. This was not a major concern voiced by secondary principals. However, this may have been under reported due to the small response rate from both Pittsburgh Public and Philadelphia school district.

10. Both the Ohio Governor’s Commission on Teaching Success and Pennsylvania Governor’s Commission on Training America’s Teachers concluded from surveys the average teacher is not adequately prepared for the challenges of more complex and diverse classrooms. Areas of concern are ability to differentiate instruction, demonstrate proficiency on standardized tests, and manage classrooms. In addition, Pennsylvania’s findings also included use of assessments to improve instruction, integrate technology into instruction, and achieve state standards. Pennsylvania teacher preparation programs must be more cognizant of what challenges face graduates as they enter the teaching profession and must work to better address these needs.

Recommendations for Further Study

1. This study should be extended to include the opinions of middle level and high school principals from the two largest Pennsylvania urban school districts:
Pittsburgh Public Schools and The School District of Philadelphia. By conducting a comparison study, patterns may emerge that indicate teacher preparation needs of large urban school districts are similar or different from those of smaller urban, suburban, and rural districts.

2. Survey graduates at the time of graduation and then annually until they have received tenure concerning ways teacher preparation programs have met or failed to meet the needs of novice teachers as they encounter the challenges of the classroom. A uniform survey instrument should be developed for comparison of different university teacher preparation programs. Results may be submitted to PDE and used to guide improvements to better meet the needs of teachers and school districts.

3. To better assess the effectiveness and value of field experiences, upon hiring a novice teacher and each year until tenure is granted, a principal may be surveyed on the overall preparedness of the teacher in each of the eleven skills areas included in the present study. Patterns may provide a link between the amount and duration of field experiences the teacher received and the rating by principals in the first three years of teaching. In addition to surveying principals, novice teachers may also provide insight into the proper balance between coursework and field experiences.

4. With the increasing number of publicized cases in which teachers have jeopardized their teaching credential through inappropriate teacher-student relationships, a review of Pennsylvania university course offerings in ethical professional practices and school law should be undertaken.
5. This study should be extended to include the opinions of elementary and secondary principals of cyber charter schools. With the ever increasing number of cyber schools approved for charters, Pennsylvania teacher preparation programs would benefit greatly by identifying areas of strength and weakness in preparing teachers for diverse school settings and skill sets.

6. The instructional leadership of a principal is second only to direct teacher instruction in its impact on student achievement (Leithwood et. al., 2004). Given the importance of principals in hiring practices, teacher evaluations, and student achievement, their perceptions regarding the level of preparation of novice teachers was of importance in the current study and that of Echard. To further understanding of principal leadership and how it impacts perceptions of teacher preparation, a comparison study of perceptions of principals who have completed Pennsylvania Inspired Leadership training and those who have not may provide insight as to whether expectations differ between the group


The Elementary and Secondary Education Act. (2002). *No Child Left Behind*


APPENDIX A

Pennsylvania Accountability System (PAS)
APPENDIX A

Pennsylvania Accountability System

The Pennsylvania Accountability System applies to all public schools and districts. It is based upon the State’s content and achievement standards, valid and reliable measures of academic achievement, and other key indicators of school and district performance such as attendance and graduation rates. The Pennsylvania Accountability System meets the requirements of the federal No Child Left Behind legislation and has the same end goal – having every child in the Commonwealth proficient or above in reading and mathematics by the year 2014.

Schools are evaluated on a minimum target level of improvement called Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP). A key additional feature of the Pennsylvania Accountability System is that it allows both a school’s absolute level of achievement (the proportion of students who score at or above the proficient level), and a school’s growth in achievement from one year to the next to be recognized.

The pages within this site offer further information on the components of the accountability system, the Pennsylvania Performance Index, and how schools achieve their AYP. Also available are complete data records of schools’ current AYP status.

For More Information:
Pennsylvania Department of Education
Bureau of Assessment and Accountability
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APPENDIX B

What Teachers Should Know and Be Able to Do

National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS)

Policy Position (Five Core Propositions)
APPENDIX B

What Teachers Should Know and Be Able to Do
National Board for Professional Teaching Standards

Policy Position (Five Core Propositions)

The National Board for Professional Teaching Standards seeks to identify and recognize teachers who effectively enhance student learning and demonstrate the high level of knowledge, skills, abilities, and commitments reflected in the following five core propositions.

1. Teachers are committed to students and their learning.

Accomplished teachers are dedicated to making knowledge accessible to all students. They act on the belief that all students can learn. They treat students equitably, recognizing the individual differences that distinguish one student from another and taking account of these differences in their practice. They adjust their practice based on observation and knowledge of their students’ interests, abilities, skills, knowledge, family circumstances, and peer relationships.

Accomplished teachers understand how students develop and learn. They incorporate the prevailing theories of cognition and intelligence in their practice. They are aware of the influence of context and culture on behavior. They develop students’ cognitive capacity and their respect for learning. Equally important, they foster students’ self-esteem, motivation, character, civic responsibility, and their respect for individual, cultural, religious, and racial differences.

2. Teachers know the subjects they teach and how to teach those subjects to students.

Accomplished teachers have a rich understanding of the subject(s) they teach and appreciate how knowledge in their subject is created, organized, linked to other disciplines and applied to real-world settings. While faithfully representing the collective wisdom of our culture and upholding the value of disciplinary knowledge, they also develop the critical and analytical capacities of their students.

Accomplished teachers command specialized knowledge of how to convey and reveal subject matter to students. They are aware of the preconceptions and background knowledge that students typically bring to each subject and of strategies and instructional materials that can be of assistance. They understand where difficulties are likely to arise and modify their practice accordingly. Their instructional repertoire allows them to create multiple paths to the subjects they teach, and they are adept at teaching students how to pose and solve their own problems.

3. Teachers are responsible for managing and monitoring student learning.

Accomplished teachers create, enrich, maintain, and alter instructional settings to capture and sustain the interest of their students and to make the most effective use of time. They also are adept at engaging students and to make the most effective use of time. They also are adept at engaging students and adults to assist their teaching and at enlisting their colleagues’ knowledge and expertise to complement their own. Accomplished teachers command a range of generic
instructional techniques, know when each is appropriate and can implement them as needed. They are as aware of ineffectual or damaging practice as they are devoted to elegant practice.

They know how to engage groups of students to ensure a disciplined learning environment, and how to organize instruction to allow the schools’ goals for students to be met. They are adept at setting norms for social interaction among students and between students and teachers. They understand how to motivate students to learn and how to maintain their interest even in the face of temporary failure.

Accomplished Teachers can assess the progress of individual students as well as that of the class as a whole. They employ multiple methods for measuring student growth and understanding and can clearly explain student performance to parents.

4. **Teachers think systematically about their practice and learn from experience.**

Accomplished teachers are models of educated persons, exemplifying the virtues they seek to inspire in students – curiosity, tolerance, honesty, fairness, respect for diversity and appreciation of cultural differences – and the capacities that are prerequisites for intellectual growth: the ability to reason and take multiple perspectives to be creative and take risks, and to adopt an experimental and problem-solving orientation.

Accomplished teachers draw on their knowledge of human development, subject matter and instruction, and their understanding of their students to make principled judgments about sound practice. Their decisions are not only grounded in the literature, but also in their experience. They engage in lifelong learning which they seek to encourage in their students.

Striving to strengthen their teaching, accomplished teachers critically examine their practice, seek to expand their repertoire, deepen their knowledge, sharpen their judgment, and adapt their teaching to new findings, ideas, and theories.

5. **Teachers are members of learning communities.**

Accomplished teachers contribute to the effectiveness of the school by working collaboratively with other professionals on instructional policy, curriculum development, and staff development. They can evaluate school progress and the allocation of school resources in light of their understanding of state and local educational objectives. They are knowledgeable about specialized school and community resources that can be engaged for their students’ benefit, and are skilled at employing such resources as needed.

Accomplished teachers find ways to work collaboratively and creatively with parents, engaging them productively in the work of the school.
APPENDIX C

NCATE UNIT STANDARDS

Unit Standards in Effect 2008

Standard 1: Candidate Knowledge, Skills, and Professional Dispositions

Candidates preparing to work in schools as teachers or other school professionals know and demonstrate the content knowledge, pedagogical content knowledge and skills, pedagogical and professional knowledge and skills, and professional dispositions necessary to help all students learn. Assessments indicate that candidates meet professional, state, and institutional standards.

Standard 2: Assessment System and Unit Evaluation

The unit has an assessment system that collects and analyzes data on applicant qualifications, candidate and graduate performance, and unit operations to evaluate and improve the performance of candidates, the unit, and its programs.

Standard 3: Field Experiences and Clinical Practice

The unit and its school partners design, implement, and evaluate field experiences and clinical practice so that teacher candidates and other school professionals develop and demonstrate the knowledge, skills, and professional dispositions necessary to help all students learn.

Standard 4: Diversity

The unit designs, implements, and evaluates curriculum and provides experiences for candidates to acquire and demonstrate the knowledge, skills, and professional dispositions necessary to help all students learn. Assessments indicate that candidates can demonstrate and apply proficiencies related to diversity. Experiences provided for candidates include working with diverse populations, including higher education and P–12 school faculty, candidates, and students in P–12 schools.

Standard 5: Faculty Qualifications, Performance, and Development

Faculty are qualified and model best professional practices in scholarship, service, and teaching, including the assessment of their own effectiveness as related to candidate
They also collaborate with colleagues in the disciplines and schools. The unit systematically evaluates faculty performance and facilitates professional development.

**Standard 6: Unit Governance and Resources**

The unit has the leadership, authority, budget, personnel, facilities, and resources, including information technology resources, for the preparation of candidates to meet professional, state, and institutional standards.
APPENDIX D

Pennsylvania Accountability System:

Inspired Leaders Program
APPENDIX D

Pennsylvania Accountability System: Inspired Leaders Program

There are two program components: “GROW” for principals and assistant principals with three years or less of experience; and “SUPPORT” for experienced school leaders.

Both the GROW and the SUPPORT program components of the PA Inspired Leadership Initiative have been designed to address the following three “core” leadership standards:

- The leader has the knowledge and skills to think and plan strategically, creating an organizational vision around personalized student success.
- The leader is grounded in standards-based systems theory and design and is able to transfer that knowledge to his/her job as the architect of standards-based reform in the school.
- The leader knows how to access and use appropriate data to inform decision-making at all levels of the system.

In addition, the SUPPORT Program of the Initiative also focuses on six “corollary” standard. The curriculum and delivery of these six standards are regionally determined:

- The leader creates a culture of teaching and learning with an emphasis on learning.
- The leader manages resources for effective results.
- The leader collaborates, communicates, engages, and empowers others inside and outside of the organization to pursue excellence in learning.
- The leader operates in a fair and equitable manner with personal and professional dignity.
- The leader advocates for children and public education in the larger political, social, economic, legal, and cultural context.
- The leader supports professional growth of self and others through practice and inquiry.

Each PA Inspired Leadership Initiative Region has a full-time Site Coordinator who assists with program delivery and support (see list of Project Team members and Regional Site Coordinators). In addition, each region has an Advisory Committee to assist in the design, implementation, and evaluation of the regional leadership initiative.

PDE Project Team:
Sharon Brumbaugh
PA Inspired Leadership Program, PDE
APPENDIX E

Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC):

Standards for School Leaders
APPENDIX E

Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC):

Standards for School Leaders

Standard 1

A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by facilitating the development, articulation, implementation, and stewardship of a vision of learning that is shared and supported by the school community.

Standard 2

A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by advocating, nurturing, and sustaining a school culture and instructional program conducive to student learning and professional growth.

Standard 3

A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by ensuring management of the organization, operations, and resources for a safe, efficient, and effective learning environment.

Standard 4

A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by collaboration with families and community members, responding to diverse community interests and needs, and mobilizing community resources.

Standard 5

A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by acting with integrity, fairness, and in an ethical manner.

Standard 6

A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by understanding, responding to, and influencing the larger political, social, economic, legal, and cultural context.
APPENDIX F

Standards for What Principals Should Know and Be Able To Do
A Guide for Those Who Care About Creating and Supporting Quality in Schools
National Association of Elementary School Principals

Standard 1

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APPENDIX G

NATIONAL MIDDLE SCHOOL ASSOCIATION
INITIAL LEVEL TEACHER PREPARATION STANDARDS

Program Standards for Middle Level Teacher Preparation
APPENDIX G

NATIONAL MIDDLE SCHOOL ASSOCIATION
INITIAL LEVEL TEACHER PREPARATION STANDARDS

Program Standards for Middle Level Teacher Preparation

This document contains standards for middle level teacher candidates as they complete middle level teacher preparation programs at the initial level. Information regarding submission of middle level teacher preparation programs for review by National Middle School Association through the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education program review process is provided on the NCATE and NMSA web sites. http://www.nmsa.org  http://www.ncate.org The program review coordinator for NMSA, Dr. Ken McEwin, can be reached at 828 262-2200 or mcewinck@appstate.edu.

Standard 1. Middle Level Courses and Experiences

Institutions preparing middle level teachers have courses and field experiences that specifically and directly address middle level education.

Indicators

1. The middle level conceptual framework establishes a shared vision for the programs efforts in preparing educators to work in middle level schools.
2. Courses address topics such as middle level philosophy and organization, young adolescent development, middle level curriculum, and middle level instruction.
3. Early and continuing middle level field experiences and student teaching are provided and required.

Standard 2. Qualified Middle Level Faculty

Institutions preparing middle level teachers employ faculty members who have middle level experience and expertise.

Indicators

1. Faculty members hold advanced degrees in areas that provide appropriate backgrounds to teach in the program.
2. Faculty members have demonstrated their interest and expertise in middle level education.
3. Faculty members are active scholars in middle level education.
NOTE: The following definition is used for the term “all young adolescents” throughout this standards document:

The middle level standards interpret “all young adolescents” to be inclusive, comprising students of diverse ethnicity, race, language, religion, socioeconomic status, gender, sexual orientation, regional or geographic origin, and those with exceptional learning needs.

Standard 1. Young Adolescent Development

Middle level teacher candidates understand the major concepts, principles, theories, and research related to young adolescent development, and they provide opportunities that support student development and learning.

Knowledge

Middle level teacher candidates:

1. Understand the major concepts, principles, and theories of young adolescent development – intellectual, physical, social, emotional, and moral.
2. Understand the range of individual differences of all young adolescents and the implications of these differences for teaching and learning.
3. Know a variety of teaching/learning strategies that take into consideration and capitalize upon the developmental characteristics of all young adolescents.
4. Understand the implications of young adolescent development for school organization and components of successful middle level programs and schools.
5. Understand issues of young adolescent health and sexuality.
6. Understand the interrelationships among the characteristics and needs of all young adolescents.
7. Understand that the development of all young adolescents occurs in the context of classrooms, families, peer groups, communities and society.
8. Are knowledgeable about how the media portrays young adolescents and comprehend the implications of these portraits.

Dispositions

Middle level teacher candidates:

1. Are positive and enthusiastic about all young adolescents.
2. Respect and appreciate the range of individual developmental differences of all young adolescents.
3. Hold high, realistic expectations for the learning and behavior of all young adolescents.
4. Believe that all young adolescents can learn and accept responsibility to help them do so.
5. Are enthusiastic about being positive role models, coaches, and mentors for all young adolescents.
6. Believe that diversity among all young adolescents is an asset.
7. Believe that their role includes helping all young adolescents develop to their full potential.

Performances

Middle level teacher candidates:

1. Establish close, mutually respectful relationships with all young adolescents that support their intellectual, ethical, and social growth.
2. Create learning opportunities that reflect an understanding of the development of all young adolescent learners.
3. Create positive, productive learning environments where developmental differences are respected and supported, and individual potential is encouraged.
4. Make decisions about curriculum and resources that reflect an understanding of young adolescent development.
5. Use developmentally responsive instructional strategies.
6. Use multiple assessments that are developmentally appropriate for young adolescent learners.
7. Engage young adolescents in activities related to their interpersonal, community, and societal responsibilities.
8. Create and maintain supportive learning environments that promote the healthy development of all young adolescents.
9. Deal effectively with societal changes, including the portrait of young adolescents in the media, which impact the healthy development of young adolescents.
10. Respond positively to the diversity found in young adolescents and use that diversity in planning and implementing curriculum and instruction.

Standard 2. Middle Level Philosophy and School Organization

Middle level teacher candidates understand the major concepts, principles, theories, and research underlying the philosophical foundations of developmentally responsive middle level programs and schools, and they work successfully within these organizational components.

Knowledge

Middle level teacher candidates:
1. Understand the philosophical foundations of developmentally responsive middle level programs and schools.
2. Are knowledgeable about historical and contemporary models of schooling for young adolescents and the advantages and disadvantages of these models.
3. Understand the rationale and characteristic components of developmentally responsive middle level schools.
4. Know best practices for the education of young adolescents in a variety of school organizational settings (e.g., K-8, 5-8, 7-12 organizational plans).
5. Understand the team process as a structure for school improvement and student learning.
6. Understand that flexible scheduling provides the context for teachers to meet the needs of all young adolescents.

Dispositions

Middle level teacher candidates:

1. Believe in the philosophical foundations that support developmentally responsive and socially equitable programs for all young adolescents.
2. Are committed to the application of middle level philosophical foundations in their practice.
3. Are supportive of organizational components that maximize student learning.
4. Are committed to developmentally responsive and socially equitable teaching, learning, and schooling in a variety of organizational settings.

Performances

Middle level teacher candidates:

1. Apply their knowledge of the philosophical foundations of middle level education when making decisions about curriculum and instruction.
2. Work successfully within developmentally responsive structures to maximize student learning.
3. Articulate and apply their knowledge of the philosophical foundations of middle level education in their classrooms, schools, and communities.
4. Implement developmentally responsive practices and components that reflect the philosophical foundations of middle level education.

Standard 3. Middle Level Curriculum and Assessment

Middle level teacher candidates understand the major concepts, principles, theories, standards, and research related to middle level curriculum and assessment, and they use this knowledge in their practice.
Knowledge

Middle level teacher candidates:

1. Understand that middle level curriculum should be relevant, challenging, integrative, and exploratory.
2. Understand the interdisciplinary nature of knowledge and how to make connections among subject areas when planning curriculum.
3. Possess a depth and breadth of content knowledge.
4. Are knowledgeable about local, state, and national middle level curriculum standards and of ways to assess the student knowledge reflected in those standards.
5. Are fluent in the integration of technology in curriculum planning.
6. Know how to incorporate all young adolescents’ ideas, interests, and experiences into curriculum.
7. Understand multiple assessment strategies that effectively measure student mastery of the curriculum.
8. Understand the integrated role that technology plays in a variety of student assessment measures.
9. Understand their roles in the total school curriculum (e.g., advisory program, co-curricular activities and other programs).
10. Know how to assess and select curriculum materials that are academically challenging and personally motivating for young adolescents.
11. Understand the key concepts within the critical knowledge base and know how to design assessments that targets them.
12. Understand how to develop, implement, and assess advisory and other student advocacy programs that attend to the social and emotional needs of young adolescents (e.g. mentoring, conflict resolution).

Dispositions

Middle level teacher candidates:

1. Value the need for being knowledgeable and current in curriculum areas taught.
2. View all areas of knowledge and skills as important.
3. Value the importance of ongoing curriculum assessment and revision.
4. Realize the importance of connecting curriculum and assessment to the needs, interests, and experiences of all young adolescents.
5. Are committed to implementing an integrated curriculum that accommodates and supports the learning of all young adolescents.

Performances

Middle level teacher candidates:

1. Successfully implement the curriculum for which they are responsible in ways that help all young adolescents learn.
2. Use current knowledge and standards from multiple subject areas in planning, integrating, and implementing curriculum.
3. Incorporate the ideas, interests, and experiences of all young adolescents in curriculum.
4. Develop and teach an integrated curriculum.
5. Teach curriculum in ways that encourage all young adolescents to observe, question, and interpret knowledge and ideas from diverse perspectives.
6. Provide all young adolescents with multiple opportunities to learn in integrated ways.
7. Participate in varied professional roles within the total school curriculum (e.g., advisory program, co-curricular activities).
8. Use multiple assessment strategies that effectively measure student mastery of the curriculum.
9. Incorporate technology in planning, integrating, implementing and assessing curriculum and student learning.
10. Articulate curriculum to various stakeholder groups.

**Standard 4. Middle Level Teaching Fields**

Middle level teacher candidates understand and use the central concepts, tools of inquiry, standards, and structures of content in their chosen teaching fields, and they create meaningful learning experiences that develop all young adolescents’ competence in subject matter and skills.

**Knowledge**

Middle level teacher candidates:

1. Possess a depth and breadth of knowledge in two content areas which are broad, multidisciplinary, and encompass the major areas within those fields (e.g., science, not just biology; social science, not just history).
2. Know how to use content knowledge to make interdisciplinary connections.
3. Are knowledgeable about teaching and assessment strategies that are especially effective in their teaching fields.
4. Understand how to integrate state-of-the-art technologies and literacy skills into their teaching fields.

**Dispositions**

Middle level teacher candidates:

1. Value the importance of staying current in their teaching fields.
2. Are committed to the importance of integrating content.
3. Are committed to using content specific teaching and assessment strategies.
4. Value the integration of state-of-the-art technologies and literacy skills in all teaching fields.
Performances

Middle level teacher candidates:

1. Use their depth and breadth of content knowledge in ways that maximize student learning.
2. Use effective content specific teaching and assessment strategies.
3. Engage all young adolescents in content that incorporates their ideas, interests, and experiences.
4. Teach in ways that help all young adolescents understand the integrated nature of knowledge.
5. Integrate state-of-the-art technologies and literacy skills into teaching content to all young adolescents.
6. Engage in activities designed to extend knowledge in their teaching fields.

Standard 5. Middle Level Instruction and Assessment

Middle level teacher candidates understand and use the major concepts, principles, theories, and research related to effective instruction and assessment, and they employ a variety of strategies for a developmentally appropriate climate to meet the varying abilities and learning styles of all young adolescents.

Knowledge

Middle level teacher candidates:

1. Understand the principles of instruction and the research base that supports them.
2. Know a wide variety of teaching, learning, and assessment strategies, and when to implement them.
3. Know that teaching higher order thinking skills is an integral part of instruction and assessment.
4. Know how to select and develop formal, informal, and performance assessments based on their relative advantages and limitations.
5. Understand ways to teach the basic concepts and skills of inquiry and communication.
6. Know how to evaluate the effectiveness of teaching strategies.
7. Understand how to motivate all young adolescents and facilitate their learning through the use of a wide variety of developmentally responsive materials and resources (e.g., technological resources, manipulative materials).
8. Know effective, developmentally responsive classroom management techniques.
9. Understand the multiple roles of assessment in the instructional process (e.g. monitoring learning, evaluating student progress, and modifying teaching strategies).
Dispositions

Middle level teacher candidates:

1. Value the need for a repertoire of teaching/learning strategies that are appropriate for teaching all young adolescents.
2. Value the need for providing and maintaining environments that maximize student learning.
3. Believe that instructional planning is important and must be developmentally responsive.
4. Value opportunities to plan instruction collaboratively with teammates and other colleagues.
5. Value the importance of on-going and varied assessment strategies.
6. Realize the importance of basing instruction on assessment results.
7. Appreciate the importance of teaching strategies that are current and supported by research and successful practice.
8. Are committed to using assessment to identify student strengths and enhance student growth rather than deny student access to learning.

Performances

Middle level teacher candidates:

1. Use a variety of teaching/learning strategies and resources that motivate young adolescents to learn.
2. Create learning experiences that encourage exploration and problem solving so all young adolescents can be actively engaged in learning.
3. Plan effective instruction individually and with colleagues.
4. Provide all young adolescents with opportunities to engage in independent and collaborative inquiry.
5. Participate in professional development activities that increase their knowledge of effective teaching/learning strategies.
6. Establish equitable, caring, and productive learning environments for all young adolescents.
7. Employ fair, effective, developmentally responsive classroom management techniques.
8. Implement a variety of developmentally responsive assessment measures (e.g. portfolios, authentic assessments, student self-evaluation).
9. Maintain useful records and create an effective plan for evaluation of student work and achievement.
10. Communicate assessment information knowledgeably and responsibly to students, families, educators, community members, and other appropriate audiences.
**Standard 6. Family and Community Involvement**

*Middle level teacher candidates understand the major concepts, principles, theories, and research related to working collaboratively with family and community members, and they use that knowledge to maximize the learning of all young adolescents.*

**Knowledge**

Middle level teacher candidates:

1. Understand the variety of family structures.
2. Understand how prior learning, differing experiences, and family and cultural backgrounds influence young adolescent learning.
3. Understand the challenges that families may encounter in contemporary society and are knowledgeable about support services and other resources that are available to assist them.
4. Know how to communicate effectively with family and community members.
5. Understand that middle level schools are organizations within a larger community context.
6. Understand the relationships between schools and community organizations.
7. Know about the resources available within communities that can support students, teachers, and schools.
8. Understand the importance of following school district policies and protocol regarding interagency partnerships and collaboratives.
9. Understand the roles of family and community members in improving the education of all young adolescents.

**Dispositions**

Middle level teacher candidates:

1. Respect all young adolescents and their families.
2. Realize the importance of privacy and confidentiality of information when working with family members.
3. Value the variety of resources available in communities.
4. Are committed to helping family members become aware of how and where to receive assistance when needed.
5. Value and appreciate all young adolescents regardless of family circumstances, community environment, health, and/or economic conditions.
6. Value the enrichment of learning that comes from the diverse backgrounds, values, skills, talents and interests of all young adolescents and their families.
7. Realize and value the importance of communicating effectively with family and community members.
8. Accept the responsibility of working with family and community members to increase student welfare and learning.
Performances

Middle level teacher candidates:

1. Establish respectful and productive relationships with family and community members that maximize student learning and well-being.
2. Act as advocates for all young adolescents in the school and in the larger community.
3. Connect instruction to the diverse community experiences of all young adolescents.
4. Identify and use community resources to foster student learning.
5. Participate in activities designed to enhance educational experiences that transcend the school campus.
6. Encourage all young adolescents to participate in community activities and services that contribute to their welfare and learning (e.g., service-learning, health services, after-school programs).
7. Demonstrate the ability to participate in parent conferences.

Standard 7. Middle Level Professional Roles

Middle level teacher candidates understand the complexity of teaching young adolescents, and they engage in practices and behaviors that develop their competence as professionals.

Knowledge

Middle level teacher candidates:

1. Understand their evolving role as middle level education professionals.
2. Understand the importance of their influence on all young adolescents.
3. Are knowledgeable about their responsibility for upholding high professional standards.
4. Understand the interrelationships and interdependencies among various professionals that serve young adolescents (e.g., school counselors, social service workers, home-school coordinators).
5. Know advisory/advocate theories, skills, and curriculum.
6. Understand teaming/collaborative theories and processes.
7. Understand their service responsibilities to school reform and the greater community.
8. Understand the need for continual reflection on young adolescent development, the instructional process, and professional relationships.
9. Know the skills of research/data-based decision-making.
10. Are fluent in the integration of a range of technologies (e.g., film, computers) in their professional roles with curriculum, instruction, and assessment.

Dispositions

Middle level teacher candidates:
1. Value learning as a life-long process.
2. Perceive themselves as members of the larger learning community.
3. Believe that their professional responsibilities extend beyond the classroom and school (e.g., advisory committees, parent-teacher organizations).
4. Believe in maintaining high standards of ethical behavior and professional competence.
5. Are committed to helping all young adolescents become thoughtful, ethical, democratic citizens.
6. Are committed to refining classroom and school practices that address the needs of all young adolescents based on research, successful practice, and experience.
7. Value collegiality as an integral part of their professional practice.

**Performances**

**Middle level teacher candidates:**

1. Model positive attitudes and appropriate behaviors for all young adolescents.
2. Serve as advisors, advocates, and mentors for all young adolescents.
3. Work successfully as members of interdisciplinary teams and as part of the total school environment.
4. Engage in and support ongoing professional practices for self and colleagues (e.g., attend professional development activities and conferences, participate in professional organizations).
5. Read professional literature, consult with colleagues, maintain currency with a range of technologies, and seek resources to enhance their professional competence.

APPENDIX H

Commonwealth of Pennsylvania

Governor’s Commission on Training America’s Teachers

Superintendent Survey
APPENDIX H

Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
Governor’s Commission on Training America’s Teachers
Superintendent Survey

School District

1. How many students does your district serve?

_____________________________________________________________________

2. How would you describe the community in your district?
   O Urban
   O Suburban
   O Rural

3. What percentage of students in your district receive free or reduced lunch?
   O 0% - 20%
   O 21% - 40%
   O 41% - 60%
   O 61% - 80%
   O 81% - 100%

4. How would students in your district describe their race or ethnicity? (Percentages adding up to 100%)
   ___ % Asian
   ___ % Black
   ___ % Hispanic (non-white)
   ___ % White
   ___ % Other

School District Hiring

5. What are the most important characteristics your district personnel look for when hiring teachers?

_____________________________________________________________________

160
6. How do these characteristics differ for new and experienced teachers?

7. When hiring teachers, all other factors being equal, do you give preference to:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Candidates who have substituted in your schools</td>
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<tr>
<td>Graduates from Pennsylvania colleges</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bilingual candidates</td>
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<tr>
<td>Experienced teachers (5 or more years teaching)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Candidates who currently live in the community</td>
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<tr>
<td>Alternatively certified teachers</td>
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<tr>
<td>Candidates who are racially similar to the student population</td>
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<tr>
<td>Traditionally certified teachers</td>
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<tr>
<td>Candidates with experience in other fields</td>
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<tr>
<td>Candidates who have experience working with a similar student population</td>
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<tr>
<td>Candidates who graduated in the top 25% of their class</td>
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<tr>
<td>Candidates who grew up in the community</td>
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</table>

8. Additional comments on school district hiring practices (optional).

Teacher Recruitment

9. In preparing for school this fall, did you experience difficulty in filling teacher positions?
   - Yes, not enough applicants
   - Yes, not enough quality applicants
   - No

10. What do you think are the causes of your staffing problems?

11. How does teacher recruitment today compare to the situation 5 years ago?
   - Teacher recruitment is MORE challenging than it was 5 years ago
   - Teacher recruitment is LESS challenging than it was 5 years ago
   - Teacher recruitment is about the SAME as it was 5 years ago
   - I do not know
12. What specific areas were challenging to recruit teachers? (Choose all that apply)
   - Pre-Kindergarten
   - Elementary School
   - Middle School
   - High School
   - Math
   - Science
   - English
   - Social Studies/History
   - Art/Music/Physical Education/Health
   - Special Education
   - Foreign Language
   - Other (please specify)

13. Do you anticipate significant changes in your staffing/recruitment needs in the next few years?
   - Yes
   - No

**Teacher Recruitment**

14. Please explain your anticipated change in staffing needs:

   ____________________________________________________________

   ____________________________________________________________

15. Additional comments on teacher recruitment (optional).

   ____________________________________________________________

   ____________________________________________________________

**Teacher Preparation**

16. How would you rank recent graduates of teacher preparation programs applying for teaching positions in your district?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Excellent</th>
<th>Good</th>
<th>Adequate</th>
<th>Poor</th>
<th>Don't Know</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2005 - 2006 School Year</td>
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<tr>
<td>2001 - 2002 School Year</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

162
17. How well prepared to do each of the following would you say graduates from the Pennsylvania schools of education are when they begin their first jobs as teachers?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Very Well Prepared</th>
<th>Somewhat Prepared</th>
<th>Not Very Well Prepared</th>
<th>Not At All Prepared</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Delivering appropriate content knowledge</td>
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<tr>
<td>Integrating technology into instruction</td>
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<tr>
<td>Helping students master state content standards</td>
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<tr>
<td>Developing and implementing lesson plans</td>
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<tr>
<td>Asking questions to encourage critical thinking</td>
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<tr>
<td>Helping students perform well on standardized tests</td>
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<tr>
<td>Teaching decision-making skills</td>
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<tr>
<td>Providing appropriate instruction for students with differing abilities including gifted students, average students, and slower learners</td>
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<tr>
<td>Using the results from tests and other student assessments to figure out how to address student needs.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Encouraging students to work together to solve problems</td>
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<tr>
<td>Managing classrooms and dealing with discipline</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

18. Would new teacher candidates be better prepared if their teacher education faculty had more current exposure to K-12 schools?

- [ ] Yes
- [ ] No
- [ ] Comments:
19. Would your district be willing to provide opportunities for teacher education faculty to teach or observe in your classrooms?
   ○ Yes
   ○ No
   ○ Comments:

20. Additional comments on teacher preparation (optional).

---

**Induction Programs**

21. For what length of time do new teachers participate in an induction program?
   ○ One Year
   ○ Two Years
   ○ Three Years
   ○ Other (please specify)

22. Which teachers participate in an induction program? (Choose all that apply)
   ○ All first year teachers
   ○ All teachers new to the school regardless of experience
   ○ Teachers who request participation

23. Please describe the induction program at your school district.
24. Please rank the priorities of your induction program (#1 highest priority - #8 lowest priority)

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<th>#7</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Developing and implementing lesson plans</td>
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<td>Delivering the appropriate content knowledge</td>
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<tr>
<td>Helping students perform well on standardized tests</td>
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<tr>
<td>Providing appropriate instruction for students with differing abilities including gifted students, average students, and slower learners</td>
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<tr>
<td>Using the results from tests and other student assessments to figure out how to address students' needs</td>
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<tr>
<td>Integrating technology into instruction</td>
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25. Do first year teachers have a lighter teaching load than experienced teachers?
   ○ Yes
   ○ No
   ○ Comments:

26. What teachers are assigned mentors? (Choose all that apply)
   ○ No formal mentoring
   ○ All first year teachers
   ○ All teachers new to the school regardless of experience
   ○ Teachers who request mentors

27. Do mentors receive training?
   ○ Yes
   ○ No
   ○ If yes, describe training:

28. Do mentors receive additional compensation?
   ○ Yes
   ○ No
   ○ If yes, how much? ________
29. How are mentors and mentees assigned?

30. How often do mentors and mentees meet for collaboration and advisement?
   - Daily
   - Weekly
   - Bi-Monthly
   - Monthly
   - Quarterly
   - Yearly
   - Other (please specify)

31. Do mentees have release time to observe their mentor teacher?
   - Yes
   - No
   - Comments:

32. Do mentors have release time to observe their mentee?
   - Yes
   - No
   - Comments:

33. Do mentors formally evaluate mentee performance?
   - Yes
   - No
   - Comments:

34. Additional comments on teacher induction/mentoring (optional).
Professional Development

35. Please rank the priorities of your Act 48 professional development activities (#1 highest priority - #8 lowest priority)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
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<th>#2</th>
<th>#3</th>
<th>#4</th>
<th>#5</th>
<th>#6</th>
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<tr>
<td>Developing and implementing lesson plans</td>
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</table>

36. How is professional development primarily evaluated?

- Student achievement
- Informal teacher feedback
- Formal teacher feedback
- Informal principal feedback
- Formal principal feedback
- Other (please specify)

37. During the last school year, about how much money did your district spend on professional development?

__________________________________________________________________________

38. What percentage of your school district budget is spent on professional development?

__________________________________________________________________________
39. How could Act 48 activity be made more effective in improving student achievement?

40. Additional comments on professional development (optional).

Partnerships

41. Please explain any partnerships your district has with one or more teacher education institutions (beyond providing field placement and student teaching opportunities).

42. Additional comments on partnerships (optional).

State Policy

43. How can state policy increase the quality of K-12 teachers?

44. Additional comments on state education policy (optional).

Final Comments

45. Thank you very much for completing this survey. Your responses are important to the work of the Governor's Commission on Training America's Teachers. If you have any final comments, please write them below.
Governor’s Commission on Training America’s Teachers: Response
From Pennsylvania’s Elementary Principals
Survey
APPENDIX I

Governor’s Commission on Training America’s Teachers: Response
From Pennsylvania’s Elementary Principals
Survey

1. Are you a principal in a Pennsylvania public elementary school?
   □ yes
   □ no

2. How long have you served as principal in your current position?
   □ Less than 1 year
   □ 1 to 5 years
   □ 6-10 years
   □ Over 10 years

3. How many students does your school serve?
   □ 100 - 200
   □ 201 – 300
   □ 301 - 400
   □ 401 - 500
   □ 501 – Greater than 600

4. How would you describe the community in which your school district is located?
   □ Urban
   □ Suburban
   □ Rural

5. What percentage of the students in your school receive free or reduced lunch?
   □ 0%- 20%
   □ 21%- 40%
   □ 41%-60%
   □ 61% - 80%
   □ 81% - 100%
6. As a building principal how would you describe your role in the hiring of teachers?

- Very much involved
- Somewhat involved
- Rarely involved
- Never involved

7. What are the most important characteristics your district personnel look for when hiring?

8. How do these characteristics differ for new and experienced teachers?

9. When hiring teachers, all other factors being equal, do you give preference to

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10. How would you rank recent graduates of teacher preparation programs applying for teaching positions in your school?

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<td>2005-2006 School Year</td>
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11. How well prepared to do each of the following would you say graduates from the Pennsylvania schools of education are when they begin their first jobs as teachers?

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12. Please explain any partnerships your school has with one or more teacher education institutions (beyond providing field placement and student teaching opportunities)
13. Is the school where you are the principal a professional development school (PDS)?
   □ yes
   □ no

14. Thank you very much for completing this survey. Your responses are very important. If you have any final comments, please feel free to add them below.

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________
APPENDIX J

Governor’s Commission on Training America’s Teachers: Response
From Pennsylvania’s Secondary Principals
Survey
APPENDIX J

Governor’s Commission on Training America’s Teachers: Response From Pennsylvania’s Secondary Principals Survey

1. Are you a principal in a Pennsylvania public secondary school?
   □ yes
   □ no

2. How long have you served as principal in your current position?
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12. Thank you very much for completing this survey. Your responses are very important. If you have any final comments, please add them here.
APPENDIX K

DUQUESNE UNIVERSITY
600 FORBES AVENUE ♦ PITTSBURGH, PA 15282

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN A RESEARCH STUDY
CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN A RESEARCH STUDY

TITLE: The Governor’s Commission on Training America’s Teachers: Response from Pennsylvania’s Secondary School Principals

INVESTIGATOR: Denise Morelli
475 East Waterfront Drive
Homestead, Pennsylvania 15120
412-394-4945

ADVISOR: Dr. Joseph Kush
Director, EdDIT
Department of Instruction and Leadership
412-396-1151

SOURCE OF SUPPORT: This study is being performed as partial fulfillment of the requirements for the doctoral degree in instructional leadership at Duquesne University.

PURPOSE: You are being asked to participate in a research project that seeks to investigate the perceptions that secondary principals have pertaining to how well prepared secondary teachers appear to be when they begin their first teaching positions. Participants will be asked to complete an online survey that will take approximately 5-10 minutes to complete. This is the only request that will be made of you.

RISKS AND BENEFITS: There are no risks greater than those encountered in everyday life. The information obtained through your participation in this study will add to the body of knowledge that currently exists pertaining to the preparation of teachers in Pennsylvania. As a school...
administrator this information will be a benefit to you as you hire, mentor, and support new teachers.

**COMPENSATION:**

There will be no individual compensation for your participation in this study however a preselected survey number will be awarded one iPod Touch as an incentive for participation. Participation in the project will require no monetary cost to you.

**CONFIDENTIALITY:**

Your name will never appear on any survey or research instruments. No identity will be made in the data analysis. The researcher will hold identifiers of those people who participated but will not hold identifiers associated with specific survey responses. Your responses will only appear in statistical data summaries. The survey data is only available to the investigator who maintains the Survey Monkey account. Once the investigator's Survey Monkey account is cancelled your data will be accessible for 90 days as a summary view only before it is archived.

The servers are kept at SunGard (http://www.sungard.com). Physically the servers are kept in a locked cage which requires a passcard and biometric recognition for entry. There is digital surveillance equipment and the system is staffed 24 hours a day.

**RIGHT TO WITHDRAW:**

You are under no obligation to participate in this study. You are free to withdraw your consent to participate at any time.

**SUMMARY OF RESULTS:**

A summary of the results of this research will be supplied to you, at no cost, upon request. To request a copy of the results please write or telephone the investigator. Contact information is included on page one of this form.

**SECURITY:**

Survey Monkey will be used as the data collection service. SurveyMonkey.com is aware of your privacy concerns and strives to collect only as much data as is required to make your Survey Monkey experience as efficient and satisfying as possible, in the most unobtrusive
manner as possible. Data is collected and stored, but only made available to the account holder. All information collected is kept confidential and secure, and is not shared with any third-parties. Survey Monkey has met the Safe Harbor requirements Original Certification: 11/29/2004
Next Certification: 11/29/2012
SurveyMonkey.com has been placed on the Safe Harbor list of companies accordingly. This list can be found at:
http://safeharbor.export.gov/list.aspx

VOLUNTARY CONSENT:

I have read the above statements and understand what is being requested of me. I also understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw my consent at any time, for any reason. On these terms, I certify that I am willing to participate in this research project. I understand that should I have any further questions about my participation in this study, I may call Denise A. Morelli (412-215-6605), the Principal Investigator, Dr. Joseph Kush (412-396-1151), the Advisor and Chair of the Duquesne University Institutional Review Board (412-396-6326).

If you agree to participate in this study please click on the link below to take you to the survey.

Place survey link here

Denise A. Morelli
Electronic signature
Researcher’s Signature Date