SCHOOL LEADERS REFLECT ON THE PRINCIPAL QUALITY PRACTICE GUIDELINE AND IMPLICATIONS FOR CAPACITY BUILDING IN ONE RURAL SCHOOL DIVISION

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Dedication

To my amazing wife Debbie

Thank you for your patience and understanding through this extensive and enlightening

journey.

To my wonderful children Chase, Jazzlyn, and Paige

Thank you for forgiving me in my absence. I promise to always have time for you.

Abstract

The introduction of the Principal Quality Practice Guideline (PQPG) in 2007 by Alberta Education brought forth the question of whether or not school based leaders in Alberta School Division #1 (ASD#1) felt confident to meet the demands as presented by the dimension in the PQPG. Once confidence levels were determined I was also interested in determining how to most effectively build the professional capacity of these leaders as informed by the PQPG. Researched-based key characteristics of highly effective school leadership program design and delivery were examined and compared to perceived priorities of ASD#1 school based leaders. A literature review was completed to determine the key characteristics of effective school leadership development program design and delivery. These program elements were then offered to ASD#1 school based leaders to prioritize and evaluate. The study employed both qualitative and quantitative methods of data collection. A quantitative survey was developed and distributed to 57 ASD#1 principals and vice principals which was then supported by a qualitative interview conducted with eight ASD#1 school based leaders. ASD#1 school based leaders indicated they were highly confident in meeting the demands of the PQPG. The study highlighted the strong support ASD#1 school based leaders have for the key characteristics of leadership program design elements for building capacity. These effective elements included: researched-based curriculum, coherence between curriculum goals and shared values and beliefs, field-based internships supported by expert practitioners, extensive use of problem-based learning strategies, use of collaboration in practice-oriented situations, use of mentoring and coaching, a strong partnerships between school districts and post-secondary institutions, vigorous recruitment of highly qualified candidates and

instructors, and a adoption and promotion of the philosophy of career long learning .

ASD#1 school based leaders also strongly supported the research in their perception that

the most effective method of delivering this program would be a balance of the practical

and the theoretical through a partnership between the local school division and a post-

secondary institution. A major outcome of this study was a recommendation for adoption

of these key characteristics of effective school leadership program design and delivery to

the ASD#1 school board and senior administration through the development of a school

based leadership development program.

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Chapter 1: Background and Research Questions

Leadership education has become the public education reform strategy of the new century. Spotlighting leadership education presumes that improved leadership preparation and development will yield better leadership, management, and organizational practices which, in turn, will improve teaching, student learning and student performance in schools and districts (Orr, 2005, p.1).

Changing Role of the Principal

The principal's job has changed over the last number of years. There are far more hats to wear and with each hat comes more responsibility and accountability. The principal is no longer the master of the school, accountable simply for teacher supervision and student discipline. Effective school leadership has many areas that must be addressed. Leithwood, Seashore-Louis, Anderson, and Wahlstrom (2004) outline three sets of core leadership practices, Linda Lambert (2003) lists fifteen understandings and dispositions that enable principals to build leadership capacity, and in his meta-analysis Robert Marzano (2005) found and described 21 effective leadership elements. The Alberta Teachers' Association (ATA) points out that the role of the principal, as a quality school leader, is to facilitate teaching and learning by acting as an educational leader, an instructional leader, a decision maker, a manager, an advocate who promotes schools, and as a colleague who works alongside teachers to build an effective school learning environment. In this era of collaboration, the role of formal leader has changed to facilitator and mediator with distributed leadership and service leadership taking a more prominent place in schools. Principals must acquire knowledge and skills that go far beyond the role of "boss". They must be prepared for this dramatic change and embrace it as the new status quo. They must continue to develop themselves for this changing role and be actively involved in their own professional development.

Principal Quality Practice Guideline (PQPG)

In October 2003, Alberta's Commission on Learning (ACOL) presented its report

to then Minister of Education Dr. Lyle Oberg. It presented its findings on the state of

education in Alberta and its 95 recommendations to improve it. Specifically important to

school based administrators was recommendation 76 which states, "Develop a quality

practice standard and identify the knowledge, skills and attributes required for principals"

(ACOL, p. 122).

In anticipation of recommendation 76, both the Alberta Teachers' Association

(ATA) and the College of Alberta School Superintendents (CASS) developed standards

documents for quality school leadership. Approved by the 2004 Annual Representative

Assembly, the ATA's *Leadership Quality Standard* (see Appendix A) focuses on the

knowledge, skill, and attributes (K.S.A.s) required for quality school leadership. The

ATA Leadership Quality Standard highlights these K.S.A.s by stating that:

> Quality leadership occurs when the administrator, through ongoing analysis of the
> school context, demonstrates professional actions, judgments and decisions that
> are in the best educational interests of students and supports the provision of
> optimum teaching and learning opportunities. In all aspects of the role, the
> administrator operates in a fair and ethical manner.
>
> (ATA, 2004, p.1)

In January 2004, CASS published their commissioned report *Quality Standards of*

Practice for Alberta Principals (see Appendix B). Like the ATA's response to

recommendation 76, CASS approached the development of the standards by focusing on

the K.S.A.s necessary in the role of a quality school leader. Following the extensive work

on school leadership standards from both the ATA and CASS, in June of 2005 an

advisory committee of Alberta educational stakeholders was formed to research and

propose a Principal Quality Practice Standard (PQPS) (see Appendix C). These

stakeholders, lead by Alberta Education, included the Alberta Home and School

Councils' Association (AHSCA), Alberta Faculties of Education, Alberta Teachers'

Association (ATA), Alberta Teachers' Association Council of School Administration

(CSA), Alberta School Boards Association (ASBA), Council on Alberta Teaching

Standards (COATS), College of Alberta School Superintendents (CASS), and others. The

cooperation of these stakeholder groups was powerful as perspectives and opinions of all

were formulated into the creation of a commonly agreed upon standard. Relying heavily

on the research provided by post-secondary institutions and referring to the work of the

ATA, CASS, and others as well as utilizing feedback from extensive field response and

focus groups Alberta Education published the draft Principal Quality Practice Standard

(PQPS) in June 2007.

     The Principal Quality Practice Standard acknowledges the changing role of the

principal and the evolution the role has seen over the past half century. It refers to the

notion that the school leader must have more than the knowledge, skills, and attributes

that is required of a successful and qualified teacher. It also suggests that attempts to

prepare school leaders have taken the route of post secondary degrees focused on

"leadership and change management at the expense of viewing the principal as education

and instructional leader" (PQPS, p. 4). Alberta Education and the stakeholder committee

felt that a balance of key competencies must be expected from Alberta school principals.

The PQPS attempts to address that balance by stating, "The principal is an accomplished

teacher who practices quality leadership in the provision of opportunities for optimum

learning and development of all students in the school" (PQPS, p. 5). Because the core

purpose of the school is to "provide students with the best possible opportunities to learn"

(p. 4) the PQPS responds by articulating seven key competencies or leadership dimensions. These dimensions focus on fostering effective relationships, embodying visionary leadership, leading a learning community, providing instructional leadership, developing and facilitating leadership, managing school operations and resources, and understanding and responding to the larger societal context.

The development of this standard and its supporting dimensions has raised a number of questions about the quality of and opportunity for pre-service and in-service learning for Alberta's school based administrators. In February 2008, Alberta Education decided to remove the word Standard from the Principal Quality Practice document as concerns over accountability for measuring a standard were brought forth. Instead, the concept of a framework has been suggested until the time when Alberta Education decides on accountability measures that would allow for the Principal Quality Practice document to be considered a Standard. For our purposes the document will be referred to as the Principal Quality Practice Guideline (PQPG).

Alberta's Commission on Learning also made recommendations that addressed the potential concerns around pre-service and in-service training for principals. They included Recommendation 77 which states, "Establish a new program to prepare and certify principals" and Recommendation 78 which states, "Establish a new Council of Education Executives to provide certification, ongoing support and professional development for principals and assistant principals" (ACOL, p. 123-124). Although Recommendation 78 is very controversial and has not yet seen serious consideration, Recommendation 77 is certainly an attempt to address the concerns of building capacity in principals and vice principals to meet the Principal Quality Practice Framework.

Purpose of the Study

This study was designed to determine whether or not the school based leaders in the case study school division perceived they were prepared to meet the demands of the PQPG. The case study school division was referred to as Alberta School Division # 1 (ASD#1). If the school based leaders felt prepared, the study then asked what education, experience, and training they believed prepared them. If the school based leaders felt unprepared, the study then asked what they believed would help them build capacity to meet the PQPG. The study has also used the research and exemplary examples of principal preparation and in-service programs from Canada and around the world to determine a framework that illustrates the most effective in-service and pre-service program design elements and delivery methods. The study compared and contrasted this framework of effective school leadership preparation and in-service training with what school leaders in ASD#1 believe is their best way of building capacity in the PQPG. The study then used the analysis of the findings to determine and make recommendations to ASD#1 for next steps in the development and implementation of a Leadership Development Program based on the PQPG, effective school leadership pre-service and in-service research and the perception of current ASD#1 school based leaders' needs in order to meet the PQPG.

Definitions of Terms

For the purposes of this study, school leaders are those participants who have assumed the formal leadership roles of principal and vice principal.

In-service training shall be defined as all non-degree advancement training provided to the participant by the school division, government agency, educational

association, and all other third party educational organizations *after* the participant has

begun his or her role as a formal school leader. Pre-service training shall include all of

the above training acquired *before* the participant began his or her formal leadership role.

In terms of pre-service training, it is expected that the participant would have participated

in these training opportunities as a teacher employed by a school board.

Research Questions

This study is guided by two main research questions:

1. Do school based leaders in one rural school division feel prepared to meet the
   demands of the Principal Quality Practice Guideline (PQPG)?

2. What type of program design for leadership development do school based
   leaders in one rural school division perceive they need to help them build
   capacity to ensure they successfully meet the seven dimensions of Alberta's
   new Principal Quality Practice Guideline?

A number of sub-research questions were used to build a framework from which

to provide insight into the two main questions.

1. Effective School Based Leadership Development (Literature Review)

   i. What is school based leadership, why is it important, and how has it
      changed?

   ii. What are the essential elements of effective school based leadership?

   iii. What are the essential elements of effective school based leadership
       pre-service and in-service program design?

   iv. What are the multiple pathways to delivering high quality school based
       leadership development?

2. Alberta School Division # 1 (ASD#1) Study (Quantitative survey and Qualitative interviews)

    i. What is the baseline of education, experience and training for school based leaders in ASD#1?

    ii. Do school based leaders in ASD#1 feel that the Principal Quality Practice Guideline is necessary?

    iii. How confident do ASD#1 school based leaders perceive they are in meeting each of the seven dimensions of the PQPG?

    iv. Is their formal education, pre-service training, in-service training or previous experience helping ASD#1 school based leaders meet each of the seven dimensions of the PQPG?

    v. What do ASD#1 school based leaders believe are the essential elements of effective school based leadership pre-service and in-service program design and delivery?

3. How does the data collected from the study relate to what we know in the research literature to be elements of effective school based leadership pre-service and in-service programs?

4. Given the data collected from both the research literature and the ASD#1 study, what are the recommended steps for Alberta School Division #1 in the development of an effective school based leadership program?

Chapter 2: A Review of the Literature

What is Leadership? How is it Different from Management?

One way to clarify the meaning of leadership is to compare it to the concept of management. Bennis and Nanus (1985) claim that management is "doing things right" and leadership is "doing the right things". Kotter (1990) offers that "management is about producing order and consistency, whereas leadership is about generating constructive change" (as cited in Leithwood & Levin, 2005, p. 6).

Leithwood & Levin (2005) suggest that the difference between management and leadership rests with the effect produced by different behaviours. They conclude that, "If behaviour produces order and consistency then it must be management; if it produces change in a valued direction it must be leadership" (p. 6). It is important to note that Leithwood sees management and leadership as complementary and that they cannot be practiced separately.

Leithwood and Levin (2005) state that productive change through leadership must have two core functions:

- Direction-setting: helping members of the organization establish a widely agreed on direction or set of purposes considered valuable for the organization; and

- Influence: encouraging organizational members to act in ways that seem helpful in moving toward the agreed on direction or purposes. (p. 7)

The Changing Role of the Principal: Manager and Leader

Over ten years ago Hargreaves (1994) pointed out that a change leadership style has certainly been pushed to the front of the collective conscience "…we have seen increased advocacy for new styles of leadership that have been described variously as

instructional leadership, transformational leadership and shared governance. In all these conceptions, the sharing of decision-making on collegial lines figures prominently" (p. 187).

In recent years we have witnessed an even greater shift in societal thinking about education and the role of the school leader. Levine (2005) states that, "The job of school leader has been transformed by extraordinary economic, demographic, technological, and global change" and that "…universal standards replace universal process; learning becomes more important than instruction; and the student takes center stage from the teacher" (p. 11). He suggests the entire notion of the role of school leader has changed from that of school supervisor to that of change leader. School leaders are called upon to lead in the rethinking and redesign of schools and school systems. Driven by a focus on outcome based and accountability priorities, new goals and ways of meeting these goals are forced to the forefront. School leaders are now asked to lead and prepare teachers, students, and parents for these new realities at the same time they are expected to "…engage in continuous evaluation and school improvement, create a sense of community, and build morale in a time of transformation" (Levine, 2005, p. 12).

For school leaders to remain effective in this new era they must begin to master competencies such as becoming educational visionaries, have a clear and sophisticated understanding of organizational change, and balance facility and funding challenges with that of supporting teachers to successfully meet the diverse needs of individual students (Darling-Hammond, LaPointe, Meyerson, Orr, & Cohen, 2007, p. 1).

M. Christine DeVita, president of the Wallace Foundation, suggests that not only do school leaders need to balance the often conflicting interests of stakeholders such as

parents, teachers, and community members they also need to be, "…educational visionaries, instructional and curriculum leaders, assessment experts, disciplinarians, community builders, public relations experts, budget analysts, facility managers, special programs administrators, and expert overseers of legal, contractual, and policy mandates and initiatives." (in Davis, Darling-Hammond, LaPointe, & Meyerson, 2005, p.ii).

With the understanding that the role of the school leader has indeed changed a great deal, Levine (2005) summarizes the current situation very clearly when he points out that,

> few of today's…school leaders are prepared to carry out this agenda. Neither they nor the programs that prepared them should be faulted for this. Put simply, they were appointed to and educated for jobs that do not exist any longer (p. 12).

Leadership Effects on Student Learning

Pointing to five different types of research evidence to support the importance of the effect of leadership development on student learning, Leithwood and Levin (2005) make the statement, "…arguments that leadership does not matter have been overtaken by empirical evidence indicating that it matters a great deal" (p. 7).

Citing large-scale quantitative research on overall leadership effects on pupil test scores by Hallinger and Heck (1996a, 1996b, 1999), Townsend, (1994), and Creemers and Reetzig, (1996) , Leithwood and Levin (2005) conclude that "the combined direct and indirect effects of school leadership on pupil test scores (primarily math and language scores) are small but educationally significant" (p. 8).

After reviewing research programs in Canada (Leithwood & Jantzi, 1999) and in Australia (Silins & Mulford, 2002), Leithwood and Levin (2005) explain that the

researchers found "significant indirect effects of transformational approaches to leadership on student engagement" (p. 8).

Leithwood and Levin (2005) point out that credible research has found significant links to improved student test scores based on specific leadership practices. A meta-analysis by Marzano, Waters, and McNulty (2005) identified 21 leadership abilities and calculated that any improvement in these abilities by a leader would have a measurable effect of increasing student test scores.

Research in the area of exceptional school settings by Gezi, 1990, Reitzug and Patterson, 1998, Mortimore, 1993, and Scheurich, 1998, asserts that

> These are settings believed to be contributing to pupil learning significantly above or below normal expectations as, for example, effective school research on 'outlier' designs. Such studies usually report very large leadership effects not only on pupil learning but on an array of school conditions. (Leithwood & Levin, 2005, p. 8)

Leithwood and Levin (2005) believe that "research on leader succession is the final and, arguably, most compelling source of evidence about leadership effects" (p. 8). Using research from Hargreaves, Moore, Fink, Brayman and White, 2003, and MacMillan, 1996, Leithwood and Levin (2005) state, "few school improvement initiatives survive a change in principal leadership and that important attitudes toward leadership influences are significantly and negatively influenced by frequent changes in leadership" (p. 9). Leadership succession research in non-educational settings by Day and Lord, (1988) and Thomas, (1988) "provides powerful evidence of very large leader effects" (Leithwood & Levin, 2005, p. 9).

Davis et al. (2005) argue that successful school leaders do indeed influence the achievement of their students. The influence, they suggest, occurs through the school

leaders' interactions with not only the people in the organization but also through their interaction with the school process and organization itself.

Research by Leithwood, Seashore-Louis, Anderson, and Wahlstrom (2004) indicates that the direct and indirect effect of school leadership on student achievement is "second only to classroom instruction among all school-related factors that contribute to what students learn at school" (p. 5) and that this effect is increased in situations where school circumstances tend to be most difficult. They suggest that the "total (direct and indirect) effects of leadership on student learning account for about one quarter of total school effects" (p.5) Leithwood, Harris, and Hopkins (2008) further comment on this claim by stating that, "As far as we are aware, there is not a single documented case of a school successfully turning around its pupil achievement trajectory in the absence of talented leadership. One explanation for this is that leadership serves as a catalyst for unleashing the potential capacities that already exist in the organization" (p. 29).

Essential Elements of Effective School Based Leadership

Elements of effective school leadership can be determined when one looks to the vast collection of research on the subject. This research is then supported as it tends to form the basis of the development of standards school based leaders are measured against. These standards are interestingly similar across industrialized English speaking countries.

Marzano, Water, and McNulty (2005) describe a meta-analysis on effective leadership elements. The authors identified 21 responsibilities of school leaders and their correlations with student academic achievement. High correlating factors include

relationships, monitoring/evaluating, situational awareness, and knowledge of the curriculum, instruction and assessment (p. 42-43).

Three important and encompassing aspects of the school leaders' role have emerged from the research. Leaders must develop a deep understanding of how to support teachers, they must manage the curriculum in ways that promote student learning and they must develop the ability to transform schools into more effective organizations that foster powerful teaching and learning for all students (Davis et al., 2005). Leithwood et al. (2004) outlined three sets of core leadership practices:

- Developing people--Enabling teachers and other staff to do their jobs effectively, offering intellectual support and stimulation to improve the work, and providing models of practice and support.

- Setting directions for the organization--Developing shared goals, monitoring organizational performance, and promoting effective communication.

- Redesigning the organization--Creating a productive school culture, modifying organizational structures that undermine the work, and building collaborative processes.

These authors, however, qualify these core practices by stating, "Rarely are such practices sufficient for leaders aiming to significantly improve student learning in their schools. But without them, not much would happen" (Leithwood et al., 2004, p. 6).

Lambert (2003) makes a convincing argument for the promotion of leadership capacity within schools. She states that the central idea is that "sustainable development in schools is enhanced when we engage principals, teachers, parents, and students in broad-based, skillful participation in the work of leadership" (Lambert, 2003, p. ix). With

the notion of principal as learner and developer of leadership capacity in mind Lambert

highlights Pechura's 2002 research. She lists 15 skills, understandings, and dispositions

that enable principals to build leadership capacity:

1. Know himself and clarify his values.
2. Extend these understandings to the school and staff.
3. Formally and informally assess the leadership capacity of the school.
4. Vow to work from the school present state and walk side-by-side with the staff towards further improvement.
5. Build trust.
6. Develop norms.
7. Establish mutual understanding with staff about decision rules.
8. Develop a shared vision.
9. Develop leadership capacity in others.
10. Establish the leadership team as a design team.
11. Convene and sustain the conversation about teaching, learning, and leading.
12. Establish a cycle of inquiry.
13. Create goals and plans of action for student learning.
14. Hone communication processes
15. Develop a reciprocal relationship with district personnel. (pp. 50-52)

Professional Organizations and Government Agencies

Professional organizations as well as provincial, state, and national education

agencies have shown what they value in quality principal skills, knowledge, and

attributes through the development of standards. As noted earlier, in Alberta both the

Alberta Teachers' Association (2004) and the College of Alberta School Superintendents

(2004) have their versions of principal quality standards. Educational organizations value

the development of these standards because, "The standards provide a 'road map' for

practicing principals, a blueprint for making a difference in fundamental areas such as

fostering teacher professional growth, engaging sustained parental and community

involvement, and accomplishing successful student learning." (Van Meter & McMinn,

2001, p. 33).

What Alberta school leaders now have, through the PQPG, is a collaborative work that takes into account the different perspectives of all the major educational stakeholders and what they deem effective school leaders should know and do. The PQPG states, "The principal is an accomplished teacher who practices quality leadership in the provision of opportunities for optimum learning and development of all students in the school" (PQPG, p. 5). Supporting this statement are seven dimensions of which the principal is expected to meet including: Fostering Effective Relationships, Embodying Visionary Leadership, Leading a Learning Community, Providing Instructional Leadership, Developing and Facilitating Leadership, Managing School Operations and Resources, and Understanding and Responding to the Larger Societal Context.

Other examples of valued principal quality practices, knowledge, and attributes can be noted in the following descriptions of provincial, state, and national standards from around Canada and the world.

The British Columbia Principals and Vice Principals Association (BCPVPA) developed the Leadership Standards for Principals and Vice-Principals in British Columbia (2007). It is presented as four domains with a number of standards within each domain:

Domain 1: Moral Stewardship is broken down into Values, Vision, and Mission.
Domain 2: Instructional Leadership in Leadership for Learning, Supervision for Learning, and Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment.
Domain 3: Organizational Capacity in Learning Culture and Climate, Community Building, and Systems Thinking and Planning.
Domain 4: Relationships skills in Intrapersonal Capacity and Interpersonal Capacity. (BCPVPA, 2007)

Although there are several American examples of principal quality standards the most widely used and accepted are those determined by the Interstate School Leaders

Licensure Consortium (ISLLC). Hale & Moorman (2003) describe ISLLC as "a representative body of most of the major stakeholders in educational leadership including national associations, states and colleges and universities" (p. 2). This set of standards was spawned by recommendations in a report called Leaders for America's Schools by the blue-ribbon panel, National Commission on Excellence in Educational Administration, sponsored by the University Council for Educational Administration (UCEA) in 1987 (Hale & Moorman, 2003). Finally in 1996 a set of standards for school leaders was developed and implemented by ISLLC. Joseph Murphy (2002), the former chair of the ISLLC, stated, "Six essential criteria form the foundation of a comprehensive effort to transform principals from managers to learning leaders" (p. 1). In December, 2007, a revision of the Standards, now called the Educational Leadership Policy Standards: ISSLC 2008 (see Appendix D), was released by the Council of Chief State School Officers and approved by the National Policy Board for Educational Administration. The standards speak to developing school culture and environment that promote shared vision, student learning, staff development, effective management, collaboration within the school and community, behaviours of integrity, fairness and ethics, and the understanding of the unique context of the school.

In Australia, Western Australia's Leadership Centre's Performance Standards for School Leaders (2004) takes a unique approach. They place cases studies against a combination of context, attributes, and competencies. The context ranges from small remote rural schools to large urban city schools. Attributes that are considered valued in school leaders include collaborative, decisive, fair, flexible, innovative, persistent, supportive, and tactful. There are 24 competencies that are considered important for

quality principal practice grouped under Policy and Direction, Teaching and Learning, Staff, Partnership, and Resources.

The United Kingdom's National Standards for Headteachers (2004) (see Appendix E) states that within each of the six key standards is the, "the knowledge requirements, professional qualities (skills, dispositions and personal capabilities headteachers bring to the role) and actions needed to achieve the core purpose are identified" (p. 4).

There is overlap in many of these standards. Whether the valued characteristic is from Alberta or Australia they seem to be interchangeable, yet the different contexts remain an influential factor.

Effective Leadership Development Program Design and Delivery

To meet the needs of school leaders as they face challenging changes in their role and the high expectation of multifaceted standards, effective pre-service and in-service programs of professional development must be made available. Orr (2007) illustrates the need to tie the new reality of school leaders to their preparation and professional development by concluding that, "Demonstrating the capacity to facilitate school improvement and lead more instructionally effective school environments are becoming the new performance outcomes for graduates of leadership preparation programs" (p. 2).

Ingvarson, Anderson, Gronn, and Jackson (2006) argue the need for a comprehensive long term plan that builds logically and sequentially upon itself. They state, "A key component of any professional standards and certification system is the infrastructure created to support standards-based professional learning" (p. 65).

A key piece to developing an effective pre-service or in-service program for adult learners is to understand the learning needs of the participants. The andragogy model reflects different assumptions based on Knowles' (1995) beliefs in adult learning theory in contrast to child learning theory:

1. Concept of the learner. Adults "have a deep psychological need to be self-directing" (p. 2). Adults need to feel they have the control and power to take responsibility for themselves.

2. Role of the learner's experience. It is assumed that adults bring to the learning activity a much higher volume of experience. They are believed to be the richest source of resources. There is a greater emphasis on group discussion, field experience, problem solving, and individualized learning plans.

3. Readiness to learn. The andragogy model suggests that, "adults become ready to learn when they experience a need to know or be able to do something to perform more effectively in some area of their lives" (p. 2).

4. Orientation to learning. The adult's motivation to learn is based on a desire to know. Therefore they approach learning as a life-centered or problem-centered orientation to learn.

5. Motivation to learn. Although there is an understanding that some adults, given a certain context, are externally motivated such as in promotion this model proposes "that more potent motivators are internal- such as self-esteem, recognition by peers, better quality of life, greater self-confidence, self-actualization, and so on" (p. 3).

There are several examples of research that have determined key characteristics of an effective school leadership program design. Davis et al. (2005) concluded that effective program design was extremely important to leadership pre-service and in-service. They found that content must be research based as well as have curricular cohesion. Methods should include field-based internships, problem based-learning, cohort groups, and mentorship. The structure of the pre-service and in-service development should be found with collaboration between university programs and school districts (p. 7-11).

Levine (2005) suggests that there are nine important criteria that define effective university-based leadership development programs. These nine criteria include purpose, curricular coherence, curricular balance, facility composition, recruitment of students with capacity and motivation, degree granting, research based, supported by adequate funding of the program, and continual assessment (p. 13).

Guskey (2000) lists four common professional development principles that "have produced demonstrable evidence of improvements in student learning" (p. 36). These principles of effective professional development include: 1) A clear focus on learning and learners. 2) An emphasis on individual and organizational change. 3) Small changes guided by a grand vision. 4) Ongoing professional development that is procedurally embedded.

Norton (2002) points to the importance of candidate selection in preparation and in-service programs. He found that participant skill, motivation, and capacity were not equal and that self-selection often did not provide the best potential leaders. He concludes

that the notion of tapping only the most promising future leaders was the most effective

(p. 8-10).

The importance of partnership between school districts and other educational

organizations, especially post secondary institutes that provide rich and in-depth access to

current research, is supported by Darling-Hammond et al. (2007). Norton (2002),

however, points out that it is not easy work for partnerships between two or more systems

to redesign leadership preparation together.

Davis et al. (2005) determined that the notion of multiple approaches to delivery

of an effective leadership program is also an important consideration. This marks the

increased understanding between the importance of the connection between content

(knowledge, skills and attributes) and process (the methods, arrangements and

opportunities used to deliver the content).

> Ingvarson et al. (2006) explains that professional development must be a,
>
> mutual and shared responsibility between the professional and employers [and
> that] the infrastructure can include a wide variety of providers and activities. In
> most countries, there is a marked shift from universities being the dominant
> provider of educational administration programs to partnerships between
> employing authorities, professional associations and universities. (p. 66)

Examples of Pre-service and In-service Leadership Development Programs

There are many examples from Canada and around the world that identify

different standards, elements of valued program qualities and approaches to delivery.

Alberta examples of *pre-service* preparation programs include university master's

degrees, district developed and delivered leadership programs that identify and provide

training for aspiring leaders, and ATA training and development through workshops and

sponsored conferences such as Leadership Essentials for School Administrators. Other

Canadian examples of pre-service programs include the British Columbia Principals and Vice Principals Association's development program – *Short Course* and the Ontario Principals Association's *Principals Qualification Program* for aspiring school leaders. International examples include the National College for School Leadership in the UK which offers a program called *Middle Leaders* for teachers who are taking on leadership and management responsibilities, including heads of subject or area and subject coordinators as well as a program called *Aspiring Headteachers* for deputies, assistant heads, and others looking to move up to their first headship. Western Australia Leadership Center provides the Introductory School Leadership Program for aspiring principals (Ingvarson et al., 2006). There are many American examples including the Big Texas Partnership between the University of Northern Texas and the Dallas Independent School District (Norton, 2002) and an exemplary program provided by Delta State University in Mississippi (Darling-Hammond et al., 2007).

There are several examples of national and international new and currently practicing school leaders' professional development *in-service* programs. In Alberta the ATA provides guiding beliefs and principles for professional growth, supervision, and evaluation for administrators. The ATA (ATA, 2008) offers the Educational Leadership Academy, Administrators Specialty Council, the Banff Leadership Conference, the Western Canada Administrators Conference, and specific leadership workshops and dedicated representatives to aid in individual school leader and division development. The College of Alberta School Superintendents (CASS, 2008) offers two multi-day programs aimed both at the new leader as well as practicing school leader with Start Right and Leading for Learning. In Ontario the Ontario Principals' Council (OPC, 2008)

offers the Experienced Principals Development Program. Internationally there are a

number of exemplary American programs (Darling-Hammond et al., 2007) including the

partnership program developed by San Diego Unified School District and The

Educational Leadership Development Academy at the University of San Diego and

Hartford Public School District's LEAD Initiative for school leadership development.

The National College for School Leadership (NCSL, 2008) in the UK offers programs for

new headteachers as well as experienced headteachers who are established in their role

and looking to develop their professional qualities, skills, and expertise further.

A Framework for Highly Effective Program Design and Delivery

The School Leadership Study was conducted by the Stanford University

Leadership Institute to identify effective ways to provide exemplary school leadership

program design and delivery. *Preparing School Leaders for a Changing World: Lessons*

from Exemplary Leadership Development Programs by Darling-Hammond, LaPointe,

Meyerson, Orr, and Cohen (2007) was the result of this study. Three primary research

questions were asked: What are the qualities of exemplary leadership programs? What is

the context of exemplary leadership programs? and What is the impact of exemplary

leadership programs? Their study examined eight exemplary pre- and in-service principal

development programs. The programs were chosen because "they provided evidence of

strong outcomes in preparing school leaders and because, in combination, they represent

a variety of approaches with respect to their designs, policy contexts, and the nature of

partnerships between universities and school districts" (p. 2).

In order to define exemplary pre-service and in-service school leadership program

examples, Darling-Hammond et al. (2007) used the research summarized by Davis,

Darling-Hammond, LaPointe, and Meyerson (2005) as a framework for determining

highly effective program designs and multiple pathways for delivery. After completing

an extensive review of the current research, Davis et al. (2005) outlined a number of key

characteristics of highly effective school leadership programs. Darling-Hammond et al.

(2007) summarized these characteristics as:

1. Researched-based content that is aligned with professional standards emphasizing
   instructional leadership, organizational development, and change management.

2. Curricular coherence that links goals, learning activities, and assessments around
   a set of shared values, beliefs, and knowledge about effective organizational
   practice.

3. Field-based internships that enable candidates to apply leadership knowledge and
   skills under the guidance of an expert practitioner.

4. Problem-based learning strategies, such as case methods, action research, and
   projects that link theory and practice and support reflection.

5. Cohort groups that create opportunities for collaboration and teamwork in
   practice-oriented situations.

6. Mentoring or coaching that supports modeling, questioning, observations of
   practice, and feedback.

7. Collaboration between universities and school districts to create coherence
   between training and practice as well as pipelines for recruitment, preparation,
   hiring, and induction.

The conclusions of this study were that indeed the key elements of effective

school leadership program design as outlined by Davis and his colleagues were consistent

in their study and that "these strategies were evident in the eight programs we studied, in different configurations and combinations" (p. 63). As well as identifying the key element outlined by Davis and his colleagues the Darling-Hammond study identified a number of other important factors that contributed to program effectiveness. Two of the factors included vigorous recruitment and selection of both candidates and instructors as well as the notion of a learning continuum where a career long strategy for continued development is implemented at the beginning of a school leader's career. The seven elements highlighted by Davis et al. (2005) combined with the two additional elements highlighted in the Darling-Hammond et al. (2007) research will be used in this study as a framework or model of effective school leadership development program elements. This framework of nine highly effective elements of school based leadership development program design will be referred to in this study as the Davis and Darling-Hammond Model.

Both the Davis et al. (2005) and the Darling-Hammond et al. (2007) studies emphasize the importance of financial and policy support of the programs from district and government leaders and decision makers. Although not considered elements in program design, both studies have determined that without that support from district and government leaders, school leadership programs will never have the foundation to become exemplary programs.

Davis and his colleagues also identified a number of potential approaches or multiple pathways to delivering effective programs. They suggest that pre-service programs could be delivered effectively by universities, school districts, third party organizations (such as professional associations and educational institutes and

associations), and partnership between any numbers of these organizations. They also

suggest that in-service programs could effectively be delivered by universities, school

districts, country and state/provincial departments of education, professional associations,

comprehensive school reform programs, regional laboratories or consortiums, for-profit

and not-for-profit organizations, and independent consultants. Partnership between

organizations especially those that team with school districts show the greatest promise

for effective delivery of in-service programs (Davis et al., 2005, p. 14). They point out

that context is an important consideration in terms of effective delivery. They hint at the

notion of partnerships with school districts and other educational organizations when they

state that:

> …because of the recognition that the context matters to the types of competencies and situational knowledge required of school leaders, new approaches to principal development often emphasize strong relationships with specific school districts and preparation for specific leadership expectations. The notions of generic leadership that once dominated the field are being replaced by more contextualized notions of leadership. (Davis et al., 2005, p. 14)

Summary

This literature review is intended to add context and to provide support in the

analysis of effective school leadership and essential school leadership program design

and delivery elements. The research suggests that leadership is different from

management and that the formal role of a leader in a school has changed over the years.

There is strong evidence that school based leadership does have a direct and indirect

effect on student learning therefore adding to the importance of the role. The literature

review uncovered common essential elements of effective school leadership across

Canada and the world as well as commonly held beliefs as to what are considered

effective program design and delivery approaches. Utilizing the Davis et al. (2005)

research the Darling-Hammond et al. (2007) study summarizes much of the research and

provides a framework (referred to in this study as the Davis and Darling-Hammond

model) of highly effective program design and delivery elements from which one can

compare and contrast with the preferences and beliefs of school based leaders in ASD#1.

Chapter 3: Methodology

Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2007) explain that methods in educational research refer to "the range of approaches used in educational research to gather data which are to be used as a basis for inference and interpretation, explanation and prediction" (p. 47). This, they suggest, would traditionally include techniques associated with "the positivistic model" (p. 47) as well as techniques associated with interpretive orientation. The positivistic model suggests researchers gather responses and data from predetermined questions, measurements, phenomena, and performance experiments in the mind set of natural sciences where the researcher is looking for laws to apply and relationships to be correlated. Interpretive researchers, on the other hand, "work directly with experience and understanding to build their theory on them" (Cohen et al., 2007, p. 22). Cohen et al. refer to Kaplan's (1973) suggestion that methodology is a description and a clear understanding of the process of data gathering rather than the product of that accumulation of data. To take advantage of both methods of research I chose to incorporate the characteristics of the positivistic model that views knowledge as, "hard, objective and tangible" (Cohen, 2007, p. 7) through the use of a quantitative survey and the characteristics of the interpretive model that sees knowledge as, "personal, subjective and unique" (Cohen, 2007, p. 7) by using the qualitative interview process.

Qualitative and Quantitative Methodology

To compare effective leadership program designs and delivery found in the research and summarized as the Davis Model in Darling-Hammond et al. (2007) with the beliefs and needs of ASD#1 school based leaders, a comprehensive method of gathering data was developed. This study used both quantitative and qualitative methods to gather

the appropriate information to be analyzed to add to the depth of understanding. As

Cohen et al. (2007) explain, "Where measurement is sought then a quantitative approach

is required; where rich and personal data are sought, then a word-based qualitative

approach might be more suitable" (p. 321).

Charles and Mertler (2002) explain that all research can be differentiated based on

the data that is produced to be analyzed. Quantitative research, they explain, produces

numerical data acquired through tests or surveys that "yield numerical scores we could

analyze statistically" (p. 30). Qualitative research, on the other hand, focuses on

producing narrative data "acquired through observation, notation, and recording" (p. 30).

Sample Strategy

The data collected for this study was completely acquired from one rural school

division in Alberta. The desire to study this unique population was born from the need to

develop a school leadership program that addressed the PQPG. My intention was to first

paint a picture of what the current level of education and training ASD#1 school leaders

had. Second, I determined their perception of their ability to meet the seven dimensions

of the PQPG. Finally, I determined what in-service program they believed would serve

them best in developing their capacity to meet the demands of the PQPG.

Cohen et al. (2007) state that, "The quality of a piece of research stands or fails

not only by the appropriateness of methodology but also by the suitability of the sampling

strategy that has been adopted" (p.100). In this study, all the members of this population

(65 principals and vice principals) were asked to participate in this research. A question

that arises is: should the data collected and analyzed from ASD#1 school leaders be

generalized to apply to other similar school divisions school based leaders or even to all

Alberta school division school based leaders? It is not the intention of this study to apply

the findings or analysis to other school division populations. Cohen et al. (2007) argue

that, "There are two main methods of sampling probability (also known as a random

sample) or a non-probability sample (also known as a purposive sample)" (p. 110). A

probability sample looks to draw a random sample from a much wider population in

order to make generalizations about the wider population. The non-probability sample

employs a large degree of selectivity. Cohen et al. (2007) suggest that, "The selectivity

which is built into a non-probability sample derives from the researcher targeting a

particular group, in full knowledge that it does not represent the wider population; it

simply represents itself" (p. 113). This study employs the use of the non-probability

sample strategy by selecting only those school based leaders practicing in ASD#1. By

doing so the study does not pretend to represent all rural school division school leaders

within the province and is useful only in determining information to be used with this

population.

Study Sample

ASD#1 is a large rural school division consisting of 41 elementary, middle, high,

and K-12 schools. There are 66 school based leaders within these schools assigned to the

roles of Principal and Vice Principal. Because I am a member of this research population,

the number of suitable school leaders asked to participate in the research was reduced by

one to 65. Of the remaining 65, 57 school based leaders were invited by e-mail to

participate in the on-line quantitative survey. Thirty-six questionnaires were returned

from a possible 57 invited participants resulting in a 63.16% return rate. Eight members

of the total population of 65 school based leaders were asked to participate in a semi-

structured interview. These eight were chosen as a representative sample of ASD#1

school based leaders based on a criterion of level of training, years of experience, and

leadership role. Because interviewees were asked the closed answer questions directly

from the survey questionnaire, their responses have been included in the quantitative

data. This resulted in a total response of 44 school based leaders to the quantitative data.

The data collected from the interview participants through probing and follow up

questions is shared in narrative form in the analysis chapter. Demographic information

has been arranged to show the demographic picture of the entire sample of 44 participants

and then broken down to shown the unique demographics of the 8 interview participants.

Table 1

Gender of ASD#1 School Leaders		
	Responses	Percent
Male	29	65.91%
Female	15	34.09%
Total Response to this Question:	44	100%

65.91% (29) of the 44 respondents were male and 34.09% (15) of the respondents

were female. 50% (4) of the eight interview participants were male and 50% (4) were

female (see Table 1).

Table 2

Leadership Position of Respondent		
	Responses	Percent
Principals	22	50 %
Vice Principals	22	50 %
Total Response to this Question:	44	100%

Table 2 illustrates that from a total sample of 44 ASD#1 school leaders 50% (22)

of the respondents were principals and 50% (22) were vice principals. Of the eight

interviewed participants 62.5% (5) were vice principals and 37. 5% (3) were principals.

Choosing more vice principals than principals for the interview group was representative

of the fact that there were more vice principals in ASD#1 than principals.

Research Design and Procedure

Quantitative Study

A quantitative on-line survey (see Appendix F) was developed to gather data from

57 ASD#1 principals and vice principals. My intention was not to limit this population by

determining a small representative sample but to survey all ASD#1 school based leaders

in the population.

Citing research from Watt (1997), Dillman, Carley-Baxter, and Jackson (1999),

Dillman and Bowker (2000), and Roztocki and Lahri (2002), Cohen et al. (2007) argue

that there are many advantages to internet surveys including: reduced costs, reduced time

required to distribute the survey, reduced time required to gather and process the data,

and a "greater authenticity of responses may be obtained" (p. 230) because the

respondent voluntarily participates without coercion.

A short survey of 17 questions was created using an online survey tool from

Survey Methods at www.surveymethods.com. The use of closed question types on this

survey was an attempt to control a prescribed range of responses in order to accurately

compare and contrast participant responses. Referring to Oppenheim (1992), Cohen et al.

(2007) describe highly structured closed questions as, "useful in that they can generate

frequencies of response amenable to statistical treatment and analysis. They also enable

comparisons to be made across groups in the sample" (p. 321). This questionnaire took

advantage of a number of types of closed question and response modes including

dichotomous, multiple choice, and the five and ten point Likert scale.

To ensure the success of the questionnaire, the survey was piloted with five school based leaders who were not included in the sample to determine the appropriate wording and format. Clarity of understanding and ease of completion is extremely important for the success of any survey. Cohen et al (2007) warn that wording of questionnaires, "is of paramount importance and that pre-testing is crucial to their success" (p. 341). Following the approval of the application for Human Subject Research an e-mail was generated with an introductory cover letter (Cohen et al., 2007) (see Appendices G and H) and sent to the potential participants with a link to the on-line survey. The data collected from this survey tool was analyzed using the Survey Methods website's statistical tools, SPSS software, and Microsoft Excel. Statistical procedures included comparing and contrasting data in order to determine the mean and standard deviation of ASD#1 school based leaders' priorities and perceptions.

Qualitative Study

The semi-structured interview was used to add to the legitimacy of the quantitative data by gathering information that allowed explanation of perceptions school leaders' have toward the PQPG and school leader preparation and in-service programs.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted to gather qualitative data. Citing Kvale (1996) and Laing (1967), Cohen et al. (2007) suggest that the interview allows for the collection of data expressed from an individual's point of view of the world around them through a very human interaction. Cohen et al. (2007) explain that the interview is a, "flexible tool for data collection, enabling multi-sensory channels to be used: verbal, non-verbal, spoken and heard" (p. 348). This flexibility increases the power of the

interview allowing the researcher to dig far deeper into the respondent's understanding of a concept through follow-up questions and probes.

Data collected through the semi-structured interview are indeed rich, but not without drawbacks. The researcher must be aware and take into account issues such as: time investment, interviewer bias, inconvenience for respondents, interviewee fatigue, and problems around anonymity (Cohen et al., 2007).

Data were collected from eight semi-structured interviews of selected principal and vice principal participants taking advantage of both closed and open-ended questions. Cohen et al. (2007) explain that, "Highly structured, closed questions are useful in that they generate frequencies of response amenable to statistical treatment and analysis. They also enable comparisons to be made across groups in the sample" (p. 321). In this manner I took advantage of what Cohen et al. (2007), citing Kerlinger, (1970), state as "fixed-alternative items" (p. 357). Cohen and his colleagues admit that this method does have disadvantages such as the possibility of forcing the respondent to choose a response that is inappropriate. However, by using probing questions the respondent was then invited to add rich qualitative data to his or her response. Because the same questionnaire was used in the qualitative data collection process as in the quantitative survey the closed question data collected from these eight individuals was grouped with the 36 respondents of the on-line survey for analysis.

Open-ended questions were utilized to explore possible fears or resistance, to gain a deeper understanding of perceptions and opinions, and to probe for clarity (Cohen et al. 2007). Bailey (1994) is cited by Cohen et al. (2007) stating that, "Open-ended questions are useful if the possible answers are unknown or the questionnaire is exploratory" (p.

321). Indeed the purpose for the semi-structured interview was to explore the beliefs and

feeling underlying the responses to the closed questioned survey. Data generated would

then shed light on the attitudes and thinking beneath the questionnaire responses. This

open-ended situation, "can also result in unexpected or unanticipated answers which may

suggest hitherto unthought-of relationships or hypotheses" (Cohen et al., p. 357).

The use of the structured questionnaire gave me the starting point from which to

probe deeper into thoughts, attitudes, and feelings behind the responses to the closed

questions. Respondents were asked to expand and provide explanation to their answers to

the closed questions. As this occurred, patterns of perceived strengths and weaknesses in

meeting the PQPG emerged from the data based on school leaders' training and

experience. ASD#1 school leaders also identified common patterns of required and

desired professional development program design and delivery that they perceived are

needed to build capacity to meet the requirements of the PQPG.

The participants in this qualitative sample were chosen prior to launching the on-

line survey as I used the quantitative questionnaire to gather data and as a catalyst for the

probing questions in the interview. Table 3 illustrates the profiles of the interview

participants. Five vice principals and three principals were interviewed with four of the

school leaders having less than five years of school leadership experience and the

remaining four school leaders having five or more years of formal leadership experience.

This non-probability, purposive sample therefore allowed for a representative sample of

ASD#1 school leaders based on gender, role as a school leaders and years of experience.

Table 3

Semi-structured Interview Participant Profile			
School Based Leader Pseudonyms	Gender	Role as School Leader	Years of Experience
Mr. A	Male	Principal	>5
Mr. B	Male	Vice Principal	<5
Mrs. C	Female	Vice Principal	<5
Mr. D	Male	Vice Principal	<5
Mr. E	Male	Principal	>5
Mrs. F	Female	Vice Principal	>5
Mrs. G	Female	Vice Principal	<5
Mr. H	Male	Principal	>5

Data collected from the questionnaire's closed questions were added to and analyzed with the quantitative data gathered on-line. Analytical methods use with the qualitative data included the comparing and contrasting of participant perceptions in a narrative manner. Common patterns of the eight school based leaders' perceptions were categorized and presented in the analysis chapter to provide possible explanation and a deeper understanding of the quantitative data results.

Participants were interviewed at their own school or a convenient alternate location of their choice. A digital recording device was used to aid in the accuracy of data collection and subsequently the interviews were transcribed for analysis.

Anonymity and Confidentiality

Anonymity of participants was protected. Data collected by the on-line survey did not identify participants by name. Possible responses by participants that result in identification was coded or deleted to assure anonymity. Participants were not named at any time in the procedure. Where appropriate, pseudonyms and non-identifying references have been created to protect identities. A potential risk that occurred in the course of some of the interviews was when participants used names and places in their descriptions. However, all references to names and places were edited out or replaced

with non-identifying markers. Participant (Adult) Consent Form (see Appendix G) was

read and signed prior to the commencement of the interview and participants were

provided with a copy of the transcript of their interview.

Confidentiality of the participants and the confidentiality of the data were

protected by the use of aliases and coding. Data shared was not reported in such a way as

to identify the participants. Access to any identifying data was limited to myself as the

principal researcher. Participants were provided with a copy of a transcript of their

interview. Data was stored securely - under lock and key for written documents and

password protected for digital documentation.

Chapter 4: Summary of the Findings

The summary of the findings will be presented using the framework of the sub-research questions.

ASD#1 School Based Leader Experience, Training, and Education

The first section attempts to paint a picture of the sample used and determine what the baseline is of current experience, pre- and in-service training, and education for ASD#1 school based leaders.

Table 4

Total Number of Years of Experience as a Principal and/or Vice Principal		
	Responses	Percent
First year as a school leader	7	15.91%
2 to 3 years of experience	10	22.72%
4 to 5 years of experience	3	6.83%
6 to 10 years of experience	10	22.72%
11 or more years of experience	14	31.82%
Total Response to this Question:	44	100%

The total years of formal school leadership experience of ASD#1 school leaders in this study was varied. 15.91% (7) of participants were first year school leaders, 22.72% (10) participants had 2 to 3 years of experience, 6.83% (3) had 4 to 5 years of experience, 22.72% (10) had 6 to 10 years experience, and 31.82% (14) had more than 11 years of formal school leadership experience (see Table 4).

Of the eight interviewed participants two were in their first year, two had 2 to 3 years of school leadership experience, one had 4 to 5 years of experience, and three had 6 to 10 years of school leadership experience. None of the interviewed school based leaders had 11 or more years of school leadership experience.

Interestingly, the data has uncovered that almost 70% of ASD#1 school based

leaders have ten or less years of experience and that over 45% of these leaders have five

or less years of experience.

Table 5

Number of Years as a Vice Principal Before Assuming a Principalship		
	Responses	Percent
None	5	11.36%
Less than 2 years of experience	4	9.09%
Less than 5 years of experience	6	13.64%
More than 5 years of experience	8	18.18%
Still serving in the role of vice principal	21	47.73%
Total Response to this Question:	44	100%

Table 5 illustrates that when determining the number of years of experience as a

vice principal before becoming a principal, 11.36% (5) indicated they had no vice

principal experience, 9.09% (4) indicated less than two years of experience, 13.64% (6)

indicated they had had less than 5 but more than 2 years of experience, 18.18% (8)

indicated they had had more than 5 years of vice principal experience.

One vice principal answered this question as he had taken on an acting

principalship for one year before returning to his current position as a vice principal. His

data was included in this question as it indicates the level of experience he had before

taking on a principalship regardless of his current position.

Five of the interview participants were vice principals. Of the three remaining

school leaders who were principals two were a vice principal for less than five years but

more than 2 and one had more than five years as a vice principal.

The number of years served as a vice principal before entering a principalship

varies widely with ASD#1 principals. There seemed to be a fairly even split between

those principals who entered the role with less than five years of vice principal

experience and those that entered the role with more than five years of experience. Part of the explanation to this finding may be in the comfort level of the school leader and the need for more experience before entering into a principalship, the availability of a suitable position, and the need for further pre-service training before being considered for a principalship. Another interesting finding was in the five principals who had no previous vice-principal experience. One explanation for this may be in the reality of rural school divisions and the small school situation. ASD#1 does have a few schools were the teaching staff may include the principal (who teaches full time) and one or two others.

Table 6

Respondents' Highest Level of Formal Education		
	Responses	Percent
4 year education degree	11	25%
6 year education after degree	2	4.55%
Masters with educational leadership focus (completed or in progress)	20	45.45%
Masters with leadership focus (completed or in progress)	5	11.36%
Masters with other focus (completed or in progress)	4	9.09%
Other	2	4.55%
Total Response to this Question:	44	100%

ASD#1 participants were then asked what their highest level of formal education was. Table 6 illustrates that of the 44 participants 25% (11) indicated their highest level of education was a four year undergraduate education degree, 4.55% (2) indicated a six year education degree, 45.45% (20) indicated a Masters Degree with an educational leadership focus (complete or in progress), 11.36% (5) indicated a Masters Degree with a leadership focus (complete or in progress), 9.09% (4) indicated a Masters Degree with another focus (complete or in progress), 4.55% (2) indicated they fell into a category not offered. Data collected specifically from the interviewees shows that three of the eight interview participants have a Masters Degree with a leadership focus, two have a Masters Degree with an educational leadership focus and three have only four year Bachelor of

Education degrees but two of the three indicated they are pursuing their Masters Degree currently. These findings show us that from a total sample of 44, 34 or 77.27% of the school leaders have or are working on achieving their Masters Degree. From a total of 22 principals in the sample 21 (95.45%) hold or are working toward completing their Masters Degree. Of the 22 vice principals sampled 12 (54.54%) hold or are working toward their Masters Degree.

Clearly the data shows that in ASD#1 the value placed on holding a Masters degree is very high. Over the last decade the unofficial policy in ASD#1 was the expectation of school based leaders to pursue their Masters degrees. In the last few years all school based leadership positions have been advertised stating preference for candidates with a Masters Degree. ASD#1 has been actively seeking partnership with universities in order to offer its teachers and current school based leaders a contextual option for a Masters Degree program.

Table 7

Average Number of Books on School Leadership Read in One Year		
	Responses	Percent
None	1	2.27%
Fewer than 5 books	29	65.91%
Between 5 and 10 books	14	31.82%
More than 10 books	0	0%
Total Response to this Question:	44	100%

ASD#1 school leaders were asked what the average number of school leadership books that they read in a typical year. Table 7 shows that 61.11% (22) of school based leaders in ASD#1 read fewer than 5 books on school leadership in a year, 36.11% (13) of ASD#1 leaders read between 5 and 10 school leadership books in one year. Only 2.27% (1) indicated they read no school leadership books and none of the

school leaders indicated they read more than 10 books on school leadership in an average

year. Seven of the eight interview participants indicated that they read less than five

educational leadership books per year. The eighth participant indicated that between 5

and 10 books were read in one year on average.

This data represents a wide reality that faces ASD#1 school based leaders. On

one hand there are a number of current leaders who are engaged in their Masters Degree

work and have been actively reading school leadership literature. On the other hand,

professional reading is sometimes overlooked in the wake of the many other roles

required by school based leaders. Several of the interview participants stated that they

found it extremely difficult to make time for professional reading and that one of the best

pieces of their Masters program was that they were forced to make time.

Table 8

Frequency of Reading School Leadership Books or Articles		
	Responses	Percent
Never	0	0%
Only when required by activities in monthly meetings with school administration and central office staff	3	6.82%
Once or twice a year	17	38.64%
Monthly	17	38.64%
Weekly	7	15.90%
Total Response to this Question:	44	100%

ASD#1 school leaders were then asked how often they read school leadership

books or articles. Table 8 shows that only 6.82% (3) indicated they read school leadership

books or articles when asked to do so at professional development activities at central

office meetings, 38.64% (17) indicated they read this material once or twice a year,

38.64% (17) indicated they read school leadership books and articles monthly, and

15.90% (7) indicated that they read books and article on school leadership on a weekly

basis. None of the participants indicated not reading this material. The interview

participants indicated that two of them read school leadership books and articles one to two times a year, two read monthly, and four indicated that they read school leadership books and articles weekly.

The interview data indicated that participation in the frequency of reading books and articles on school leadership development seemed to be determined by the amount of time the school based leader allowed for it. Many restated their concern for the lack of time, yet others indicated that they simply needed to schedule it in as an important part of their role. The value of professional reading is indeed a personal commitment. Those ASD#1 school based leaders who place true value on the professional reading find the time to engage in it. The other consideration may be in those school based leaders who are still struggling with time management and organization and would engage in professional reading if they could.

Table 9

Number of School Leadership Professional Organizations Participants are Actively Involved In

	Responses	Percent
None	13	29.55%
1 to 2	25	56.82%
3 to 5	6	13.63%
More than 5	0	0%
Total Response to this Question:		100%

Considering active participation in professional organizations an indication of proactive school leadership development, ASD#1 school leaders were asked the number of professional organizations they were currently participating in. Table 9 shows that 29.55% (13) indicated they were not members of any professional school leadership development organization, 56.82% (25) indicated they were actively involved in 1 to 2 professional organizations, and 13.63% (6) indicated they were involved in 3 to 5

different professional organizations. No participants indicate they were involved in more

than 5 professional organizations. The interview participants reflected the results shown

in the main data. Two participants didn't belong to any professional development

organizations, five participants belonged to 1 to 2 organizations and 1 participant

belonged to between 3 and 5 professional organizations. Examples of school leadership

professional development that ASD#1 school leaders are involved in included the

Association of Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD), National Association

of Secondary School Principals (NASSP), and the Alberta Teachers' Association Council

for School Administrators (CSA).

Active involvement in professional organizations is also an indication of the value

school leaders have placed on their continued development. Time management and

organizational skill also play a part in the school based leader's ability to engage

regularly. Although many may see the value there are those that cannot commit to the

time needed to take advantage of these opportunities.

In order to understand the continuum of training school leaders in ASD#1 had

from teacher to school based leader, questions were designed to determine what pre-

service and in-service training these leaders have had throughout their careers. As

defined in the introduction chapter, in-service training is all non-degree advancement

training provided to the participant by the school division, government agency,

educational association, and all other third party educational organizations after the

participant has begun his or her role as a formal school leader. Pre-service training is all

of the above training acquired before the participant began his or her formal leadership

role. In terms of pre-service training, it is expected that the participant would have participated in these training opportunities as a teacher employed by a school board.

Table 10 and 11 illustrate the results of the pre-service and in-service training for ASD#1 school based leaders. The survey asked participants to indicate all the training they had been involved in and thus many responded to more than one form. The results of the survey and interviews indicate that most training occurred after the candidate was appointed to a formal leadership role.

Table 10

ASD#1 School Leader Pre-service Training		
	Responses	Percent
Masters Completed	11	25%
Masters in Progress	10	22.73%
University credit courses with focus on Leadership	15	34.09%
Start Right (CASS):	12	27.27%
Leadership Essentials for School Administrators (ATA):	1	2.27%
Educational Leadership Academy ELA (ATA Summer Conference):	4	9.09%
Banff Leadership Conferences (ATA):	4	9.09%
ATA School Leadership focused workshops:	6	13.64%
Western Canadian Educational Administrators' Conference:	6	13.64%
ASD#1 leadership workshops, courses, and programs:	17	38.64%
Other school division (not ASD#1) aspiring leadership programs:	9	20.45%
Other specific school leadership development courses, conferences, workshops or programs:	12	27.27%
Total Response to this Question:		100%

As illustrated in Table 10, pre-service training for both the main survey participants as well as the interview group was limited. The bulk of the training was concentrated in the areas of Masters Degrees completed and in progress 47.73% (21) and ASD#1 leadership workshops 38.64% (17).

Table 11 shows that once school based leaders have assumed the formal role of principal or vice principal they participate in a wider range of training. In-service training

continued to see a concentration of participants completing or starting Masters Degree

programs as well as focusing on ASD#1 sponsored workshops, courses, and programs.

Table 11

ASD#1 School Leader In-service Training		
	Responses	Percent
Masters completed:	21	47.73%
Masters started:	13	29.54%
University credit courses with focus on Leadership:	17	38.64%
Start Right (CASS):	3	6.82%
Leading for Learning (CASS):	14	31.82%
Leadership Essentials for School Administrators (ATA):	5	11.36%
Educational Leadership Academy ELA (ATA Summer Conference):	8	18.18%
Banff Leadership Conferences (ATA):	11	25%
ATA School Leadership focused workshops:	16	36.36%
Western Canadian Educational Administrators' Conference:	18	40.91%
ASD#1 leadership workshops, courses, and programs:	32	72.73%
Other school division (not ASD#1) aspiring leadership programs:	9	20.45%
Other specific school leadership development courses, conferences, workshops or programs:	11	25%
Total Response to this Question:	44 100%	

Table 11 illustrates that in-service training, after the formal appointment of the

school leader, has a much higher participation rate than that seen in pre-service training.

77.27% (34) ASD#1 school leaders have now either completed or are working towards

completing their Masters Degrees. Larger numbers of school leader have now

participated in professional development activities offered by Leading for Learning

31.83% (14), ATA leadership focused workshops 36.36% (16), and the Western

Canadian Educational Administrators' Conference 40.91% (18) to name a few. One can

see clearly that the bulk of school leadership training and development seems to occur

after school leaders were appointed to their first official role.

Participants indicated that they had taken courses not shown on the survey

including Covey's Seven Habits of Effective People, Covey's Four Roles of Leadership,

curriculum implementation leadership, assessment development at provincial and district

levels, Alberta Initiative for School Improvement (AISI) leadership courses, Cognitive Coaching, Professional Learning Communities training with Bob Eaker, Non-Violent Crisis Intervention, Risk-Threat Assessment, school management courses, ASD#1 mentorship courses, Principals' Association PD sessions, focus groups, symposiums, and think tank opportunities.

Clearly ASD#1 school based leaders engaged in in-service training far more than they did in pre-service training. There are a number of possible reasons behind this result. One reason would be the focus of participants after their appointment. Once appointed to the role of school based leader participants would concentrate their time and energy on that facet of their professional careers. Another reason may be the lack of knowledge and understanding of what is available to those aspiring leaders who would like to engage in pre-service training in school leadership. Yet another reason may be in the lack of opportunity to participate in leadership conferences and training due to classroom commitments, curriculum and school related obligations. Finally, and possibility the most important reason, is the lack of funding given to aspiring leaders to attend and participate in school based leadership programs and stand alone opportunities. ASD#1 did not, at the time of this study, have an aspiring leadership program that would make available to current teachers opportunities in time or money to pursue leadership training. In contrast to pre-service training opportunities ASD#1 school based leaders are regularly updated as to what in-service training opportunities are available and are given some division funding to pursue those opportunities.

ASD#1 School Based Leaders' Perception of the PQPG

After determining the demographics of this sample it was important to determine how the school based leaders in ASD#1 felt toward the Principal Quality Practice Guideline. What was their perception of the PQPG in terms of the importance of the document to their professional development? Table 12 illustrates the level of agreement ASD#1 school based leaders have in the necessity for the PQPG.

Table 12

ASD#1 School Based Leaders Agreement in the Necessity for the PQPG						
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total
The Principal Quality Practice Guideline (PQPG) is necessary in today's educational climate.	3 6.82%	0 0%	0 0%	22 50%	19 43.18%	44
Total Response to this Question:						44 100%

When asked what their level of agreement was with the statement, "The Principal Quality Practice Guideline (PQPG) is necessary in today's educational climate" (see Table 12) 93.18% (41) of school based leaders in ASD#1 agreed or strongly agreed. Only 6.82% (3) of school leaders disagreed or strongly disagreed. Of the eight individuals interviewed 62.50% (5) indicated they strongly agreed with the statement and the remaining 37.50% (3) individuals indicated they agreed with the statement.

Two common ideas expressed by the interviewees regarding the necessity of the PQPG included the need for accountability and the need for a common document from which to measure and grow as school leaders. Mr. A suggested that,

> In order for us to be doing the job we need to know or understand what the parameters of the job are so that we can have a focus on what it is that we need to

improve within that role. It is important to have a measure that we can reflect to…reflect on…a direction for our own improvement.

Mr. B concurred with Mr. A regarding the notion of accountability and strongly argued that,

Before I got into admin I heard plenty of stories of folks who shouldn't been in admin I said I wanted to be better than that…from an accountability perspective I want to make sure that I am doing everything that I should be doing.

Mrs. C also supported the notion of accountability by stating,

We also need that accountability piece…this is a standard and we are holding ourselves up to this standard. Along with that comes the assessment piece…It could become the rubric that is used by schools…this is the best and we want only the best.

The belief that the Guideline would be a good professional growth document is reflected in the comments from the interviewees. Mr. A stated,

It is a great document to have in our corner because it clearly defines what the role of a principal is. We now have a job description attached to this role. It will make it clear to others who come afterwards…this is what is necessary if I want to go and do that job.

Mrs. C agreed by concluding, "I think we need a common language in terms of talking about educational leadership. We need an outline in writing -talking about what we are all about."

It is clear that the interviewees supported the introduction of the Principal Quality Practice Guideline. The arguments they used support the importance of accountability in education in Alberta today and the document removes the uncertainty about what is truly expected from school based leaders. Mr. A commented that, "The School Act is a nice neat little line but it is as much a philosophy as it is a job description." Mr. H supported this idea with the statement, "I think the document captures all the necessary elements of

a principal or VP better than anything that I have seen in the last ten years. It's important so that we can understand the role."

The overwhelming statistical support for the document by ASD#1 school based leaders and the comments from the interviews emit almost a sense of relief on the part of the school based leaders. A relief for what the clarity of the PQPG has been able to give school based leaders as to what their role really is. With the PQPG the target (effective school leadership) is no longer obscure and it gives school based leaders an understanding and clear description of what to aim for.

ASD#1 School Based Leaders' Confidence in Meeting the Demands of the PQPG

Table 13 indicates the level of confidence that ASD#1 school based leaders have in meeting the demands of the PQPG. The table uses the Likert Scale of 1 to 10 with one measuring a very low level of confidence and 10 measuring a very high level of confidence. ASD#1 school based leaders demonstrated that, for the most part, they have a fairly high level of confidence in meeting the Principal Quality Practice Guideline (see Table 13).

Table 13

Level of Confidence in Meeting the Demands of the Principal Quality Practice Guideline (1 being "Very Low Confidence" to 10 being "Very High Confidence")

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Total
Fostering Effective Relationships	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	1 2.27%	1 2.27%	5 11.37%	16 36.36%	16 36.36%	5 11.37%	44
Embodying Visionary Leadership	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	1 2.27%	2 4.55%	5 11.37%	12 27.26%	11 25%	11 25%	2 4.55%	44
Leading a Learning Community	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	2 4.55%	2 4.55%	10 22.73%	14 31.81%	11 25%	5 11.36%	44
Providing Instructional Leadership	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	1 2.27%	5 11.36%	10 22.73%	16 36.37%	8 18.18%	4 9.09%	44
Developing and Facilitating Leadership	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	1 2.27%	1 2.27%	4 9.09%	7 15.91%	14 31.82%	11 25%	6 13.64%	44
Managing School Operations and Resources	1 2.27%	0 0%	1 2.27%	0 0%	1 2.27%	1 2.27%	9 20.46%	15 34.09%	10 22.73%	6 13.64%	44
Understanding and Responding to the Larger Societal Context:	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	1 2.27%	0 0%	4 9.09%	11 25%	17 38.64%	9 20.45%	2 4.55%	44
Total Response to this Question:											44 100%

Fostering Effective Relationship

The survey data on the confidence ASD#1 school based leaders have with fostering effective relationships is significant with 11.37% (5) indicating a level 10, 36.36% (16) a level 9, 36.36% (16) a level 8, 11.37% (5) a level 7, 2.27% (1) a level 6, and 2.27% (1) a level 5 (see Table 13).

The high confidence expressed in the quantitative data is also reflected in the interview data. Most of the interviewees felt very confident in their ability to develop and

foster relationships. Positive relationship building has been evident in Mrs. C's experience as illustrated by her comment that, "I have a personality…a nature that is conducive to building relationships. Staff feedback was 100%. I am a good listener and I have a genuine desire to get to know the people I am working with."

Two other points emerged from the data. One was the notion of how this particular dimension affects the others and the idea that this is the foundational dimension from which the other dimensions are built. Mr. A concludes,

> I have the basis of good relationships but I think as I get better at this one I get better at some of the others. When I reflect on this particular dimension it has a basis of being attached to all of the other dimensions. So if you are doing one of the other dimensions well it's going to improve your level of effectiveness with the relationship.

The second point reveals a unique perspective on the nature of school leaders in general,

> I feel that when it comes to the relationship stuff it just happens. You like people and you like kids and you get involved in stuff. It happens naturally. It is probably the dimensions that got us into administration to begin with. (Mr. H)

It is clear the data revealed in this study suggests that fostering effective relationships is by far the most important dimension in the role of the school based leader. Here we see the foundational skill set, in what ASD#1 school based leaders believe is, at the centre of successful mastery of all the other dimensions.

Embodying Visionary Leadership

The survey data on ASD#1 school based leaders' confidence in their abilities to provide visionary leadership was lower than the previous dimension with 4.55% (2) indicating a level 10, 25% (11) a level 9, 25% (11) a level 8, 27.26% (12) a level 7, 11.37% (5) a level 6, 4.55% (2) a level 5, and 2.27% (1) a level 4 (see Table 13).

The interview data on this question did not reflect the overall quantitative data. The average confidence of the school based leaders in the interview was not quite as high as the general population. Three of the interviewees stated that they felt highly confident in their ability to meet the dimension.

> I think in our Division we've done a lot of work on understanding how school vision relates to all stakeholders and communication is a big part of that. Engaging stakeholders is a skill that I've had an opportunity to develop. It's not easy sometimes. It's hard work to involve everybody. I'm finding ways to make it fit into my job a little bit better. (Mr. H)

The remaining five interviewees expressed some reservations in meeting this dimension. Some of the reservations seem to come from their perceived lack of experience or training and others come from the understanding that there are many layers to providing visionary leadership. Mr. B holds his lack of experience up as an obstacle to overcome, yet he is hopeful about the future:

> Being in a first year of a position I've spent a lot of time trying to look and listen and learn and adapt to the school, environment and surroundings. If we did this a year from now I would be more confident in my ability to self-assess and I would know how others are feeling.

Mr. E explains that he has much yet to learn and that his obstacle lies in the need for more education and professional development:

> Without working on more schooling and reading to see where the trends are going in education, my style has been more [of] a servant leader. I try to support teachers. I'm not on top of the new trends and directing my staff towards those.

And although he feels comfortable with his level of education and experience Mr. A realizes that visionary leadership is more than that:

> I think I know what makes a good school. I think I know what the goals are for a good school, but I think in order for me to maintain an appropriate vision you can't abandon the history attached to it. Just at the time I felt like I was learning at [his previous school] I changed buildings.

I believe that the process and structure of the interview allowed the participants to reflect somewhat deeper on their perception of their confidence in this dimension. On the other hand, it is possible that the chosen participants simply do not reflect the common perception of larger group in this area. This seems to be a difficult dimension for the participants to feel completely confident in. It does require the school based leader to tap into a variety of unique skills and, at the same time, rely on their strength in the relational dimension. The leader must balance what the goals and values of the school and school division with the current ability of the school staff and the pace they are comfortable in enhancing their abilities. To motivate their teaching staff with the desire to achieve the vision requires the school based leader to instill a sense of urgency. This, in turn, requires energy, persistence, and a keen understanding of how hard to pull and where to pull balanced within a relational context that ensures they will follow.

Leading a Learning Community

The survey data on ASD#1 school based leaders' confidence in their abilities to lead a learning community was again slightly higher with 11.36% (5) indicating a level 10, 25% (11) a level 9, 31.81% (14) a level 8, 22.73% (10) a level 7, 4.55% (2) a level 6, and 4.55% (2) a level 5 (see Table 13).

Most of the interview data mirrored that seen in the survey - confidence in meeting the demands of *Leading a Learning Community* was high. "My ability to do that is high. I attended that PLC [professional learning community] institute last year and came out with a passion to get that going. [It's] difficult at a K-12 school but it is starting to happen" (Mrs. C).

There were several comments in the interview data around the influence of the Alberta Initiative for School Improvement (AISI) projects over the years and how they have been catalysts in promoting PLCs. "I've been working with the AISI team and staff to work on outcomes and assessment and then using the results to start good conversations around good teaching" (Mr. A). "[I've] done lots of work on that. PLCs are something that AISI has fostered as well. AISI groups foster that in the leaders…it creates capacity building with that training" (Mrs. F).

Not surprisingly, the connection to relationships is seen in one of the comments. Here we have the foundational aspect of relationship building having an effect on the confidence level of a school leader in a different dimension. When attempting to promote the notion of professional learning communities Mr. D reflects, "The relationships get in the way. I have to become more confident with conflict and addressing concerns in a professional manner - for myself and the school. I have to learn to not be concerned if everyone likes me or not."

The data seems to represent the overall training and success of professional learning communities in ASD#1. Confidence levels reflect the reality that most of the school based leaders have extensive training and experience with PLCs in their schools. Outlier scores may be a result of those newer administrators who have not had the advantage of this experience and training.

Providing Instructional Leadership

The survey data on ASD#1 school based leaders' confidence in their abilities to provide instructional leadership was high with 9.09% (4) indicating a level 10, 18.18%

(8) a level 9, 36.37% (16) a level 8, 22.73% (10) a level 7, 11.36% (5) a level 6, and

2.27% (1) a level 5 (see Table 13).

Interview data reflects, for the most part, the high confidence level expressed in

the survey data. Mrs. G expresses her belief that her experience and professional

development have contributed greatly to her ability to provide instructional leadership:

> I have been teaching for a number of years and feel I really have a grasp on what
> good teaching is all about. This is my passion. My involvement in assessment at
> the provincial and division level and as a team leader in the first round of AISI -
> we focused on writing across the curriculum - has really helped. I read - a lot - on
> curriculum and pedagogy.

Mrs. C illustrates her strong belief that instructional leadership lies in the power

of modeling excellence:

> I have a pretty good idea of what is right in the classroom and I am able to share
> that with my staff. I am modeling that and staff is learning by my example. I have
> a strong belief in excellence within our profession and I hold myself accountable
> and encourage others to do the same.

With his current half time teaching assignment Mr. B explains how advantageous

the extra time has been, "I've had an opportunity to mentor another teacher and know that

that is making a difference".

Interviewees did, however, express concerns of time management in keeping up

with new instructional strategies and sharing through either conversation or

demonstration with staff.

> Not highly confident here. Primarily because of what my role has been. My
> teaching role has been minor. PE for the first three years - not a great avenue to
> show your teaching skills to the folks you are with. Being able to show the staff
> what you can do is very important - and they are watching. (Mr. A)

Mr. D concurs and adds that, "Time gets in the way. If a teacher needs help I can

walk them through it but I don't always get in there to find out if they need help".

> We have a lot to still learn about instructional leadership. I'm still finding out how that fits time wise into the schedule of a principal. I think to do this properly you need about two hours every day and I just don't have it right now. (Mr. H)

The ability to effectively provide instructional leadership will require some level of trust and respect. The notion of developing and fostering relationship continued to be an influential factor in developing confidence in other dimensions, "I have a hard time expressing to people if they should be doing something different" (Mr. D). Although a high confidence level was indicated by most ASD#1 school based leaders there is no illusion that instructional leadership is an easy task. Recent professional development opportunities aimed at instructional leadership at the division level during regularly scheduled administrator meetings seem to have been welcomed by ASD#1 school based leaders.

Developing and Facilitating Leadership

The survey data on the confidence ASD#1 school based leaders have with developing and facilitating leadership is also reasonably high with 13.64% (6) indicating a level 10, 25% (11) a level 9, 31.82% (14) a level 8, 15.91% (7) a level 7, 9.09% (4) a level 6, 2.27% (1) a level 5, and 2.27% (1) a level 4 (see Table 13).

Comments from the interviewees explain the wider distribution of the responses and point to the need to consider leadership styles when looking at these findings. Some leaders actively and purposely set up situations that allow for teachers and others to take on leadership roles; however, others see themselves as "servant leaders" and the culture of the building is that of distributed leadership. "By trying to allow staff to do what they are doing – I'm not a micromanager – I let them take that on and try to facilitate when they need things" (Mr. E). "[I've had an] opportunity to work with the paraprofessionals

and I have a lot of conversations about how people within a building can lead within their own environment" (Mr. B). Mrs. C indicates that building leadership capacity in others can be difficult and sometimes it requires giving up a little control:

> "I can recognize what people are good at and tell them to go with that. I think everyone has a role to play and I try, in my role, to encourage that. I try not to do everything myself. Sometimes things don't get done the way I envisioned but you have to bite your tongue" (Mrs. C).

There were a number of comments that pointed to the model of AISI in ASD#1 and how this school division has not only allowed for, but promoted, the expectation of teacher leadership development. Schools are expected to have teacher AISI leaders who are supported in their schools by the formal school leadership. "A lot of things are set up in our jurisdiction that allow for leadership development - for example AISI and PD committees" (Mr. H).

Again the connection to relationships as a foundational piece is evident in these comments. Mr. D points directly at the difficultly he has found in developing leaders on staff:

> I'm not very confident based on my current situation. I think I was better when I was in a different position in a different school. I don't feel I have done that here. Part of it comes back to relationships. Hard to develop leaders when truly people don't always want to be a leader - they want to be led. (Mr. D)

This dimension seems to highlight the different leadership style among the participants. And although there was a high confidence level overall it is clear that the way school based leaders build leadership capacity in their staffs varies widely. It is also evident that this dimension is challenging and requires a variety of approaches given individual preference, individual comfort levels and particular school cultures.

Managing School Operations and Resources

The survey data on the confidence ASD#1 school based leaders have with managing school operations and resources is also high on average but with a wider distribution than we have seen in the other dimensions with 13.64% (6) indicating a level 10, 22.73% (10) a level 9, 34.09% (15) a level 8, 20.46% (9) a level 7, 2.27% (1) a level 6, 2.27% (1) a level 5, 2.27% (1) a level 3, and 2.27% (1) a level 1 (see Table 13).

The interview data reflects the high confidence expressed by the survey responses. Most of the interviewees expressed their confidence and comfort for working with the numbers involved in budgeting, scheduling, and resource management. A general comment was that this dimension seemed to be more easily manageable and concrete: it was something they could see and check off when it was complete. Unlike the other dimensions, there seems to be a definite start and finish to tasks outlined in this dimension. "I like numbers and understand them. I take pride in having things organized and managed effectively" (Mr. H). "[I feel] pretty comfortable on the management part. That's my interest…I like organizing and having things prepared" (Mr. E). As Mr. A expresses, some of the interviewees commented on their continued need for growth, "Do I get the resources? Yes I do. Am I managing the paper? Not worth a damn!" Still others made strong comments regarding whether or not they see this dimension as part of their role, "Pathetic! That's not in my realm of things to do as a VP. I have no interest in being trained in that. It is my weakest area" (Mrs. E).

The managerial aspect seen in this dimension, more than any other dimension, reflects the traditional role of the principal in an Albertan school. The concrete list of duties can be written down and systematically approached and accomplished. This

dimension appeals to most of the school leaders in ASD#1 and, as noted by one of the interviewees, may have been the catalyst in several of the current leaders becoming school based leaders. Societal expectations have added to the list of responsibilities required from the school leadership position and the notion of manager is shared with six other dimensions of equal importance. This reality has been accepted yet it seems to be more an issue of comfort than confidence for many school based leaders in ASD#1.

Understanding and Responding to the Larger Societal Context

The survey data determining the confidence ASD#1 school based leaders have with understanding and responding to the larger societal context is also fairly high with 4.55% (2) indicating a level 10, 20.45% (9) a level 9, 38.64% (17) a level 8, 25% (11) a level 7, 9.09% (4) a level 6, and 2.27% (1) a level 4 (see Table 13).

Two common threads that came from the interview data seemed to be that the respondent was either feeling highly confident in their understanding and ability to address issues in a larger societal context or they were unsure of what exactly the dimension was looking for. Those that indicated high confidence pointed to practical experiences as the source of their confidence. "I've developed relationships with parents and I understand the impacts of what we are doing with kids. I have a better handle on this" (Mr. D). Some of the interviewees also expressed the ability to develop relationships with the community at large, especially those agencies that work with children at an economic and social level, as a strength:

> Yah, I feel pretty confident here. I've developed a good relationship with the town and FCSS [Family and Community Support Services]. Working on the Economic Development Committee helped me understand where we [the school] fit into the town. Working with the wellness worker and Mental Health has helped me figure out who the players are and how the roles have changed. (Mr. A)

Those indicating a moderate confidence level point to their lack of understanding or their lack of initiative in pursuing an understanding. Although he expressed a moderate confidence level in this dimension Mr. E certainly seems to understand why, "I don't know if I really get caught up in the large societal thing. Not getting involved enough in post degree studies. I'm in tune with small communities/context but not the larger society." Mrs. C, on the other hand, is still struggling with an understanding of this dimension, "Hard one for me because, what does that mean? What does it look like? I think much of the work at the Division level has supported that. There is more that I could do there."

It is clear that experience and training play an important role in the confidence level of school based leaders in this dimension. Interestingly, however, the responses of the interviewees seems to suggest that a combination of both is required to truly feel confident in not only understanding but responding to the larger societal context impacting schools.

ASD#1 School Based Leaders' Perception of Their Education, Pre-service Training, In-service Training, and Previous Experience

When determining where ASD#1 school based leaders perceived their confidence in meeting the demands of the PQPG developed, one might look to their training, education and experience. Table 14 illustrates ASD#1 school based leaders' perception of the usefulness of their education, training and experience when meeting the dimensions of the PQPG.

Table 14

ASD#1 School Based Leaders Perception of How Their Education, Training, and Experience Has Prepared Them to Meet the PQPG

	Does Not Apply	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total
Undergraduate Degree:	2 4.55%	4 9.09%	15 34.08%	10 22.73%	13 29.55%	0 0%	44
Masters Degree:	12 27.27%	1 2.27%	2 4.55%	1 2.27%	18 40.91%	10 22.73%	44
Experience as a school leader	1 2.27%	0 0%	0 0%	1 2.27%	18 40.91%	24 54.55%	44
Pre-service training (not a Masters)	11 25%	2 4.55%	3 6.82%	6 13.64%	17 38.63%	5 11.36%	44
In-service training	1 2.27%	0 0%	0 0%	4 9.09%	27 61.37	12 27.27%	44
Total Response to this Question:							44 100%

Table 14 clearly indicates that school based leaders in ASD#1 heavily rely on their school leadership experience, in-service training, and their Masters Degree work to met the demands of the PQPG. ASD#1 school based leaders put little stock in their undergraduate degrees and their pre-service training to prepare them for the PQPG.

Undergraduate Degree

When asked if their Undergraduate Degree effectively prepared ASD#1 school based leaders to meet the demands of the PQPG 29.55% (13) agreed, 22.73% (10) were neutral, and 34.08% (15) disagreed, 9.09% (4) strongly disagreed, and 4.55% (2) felt it did not apply to their situation (see Table 14).

There were very few positive comments from the interviewees regarding how their Undergraduate Degrees have effectively prepared them for the PQPG. Mr. B's statement, "I don't think my undergraduate degree trained me for anything," was not

typical. However, it may reflect his frustration with how prepared he feels upon entering a school leadership role.

Masters Degree

When asked if obtaining a Masters Degree effectively prepared them to meet the demands of the PQPG 22.73% (10) strongly agree, 40.91% (18) agreed, 2.27% (1) was neutral, 4.55% (2) disagreed, 2.27% (1) strongly disagreed and 27.27% (12) felt it did not apply to their situation as they had not started their Masters Degrees yet (see Table 14).

Completing a Masters Degree also seemed to give school leaders confidence in meeting the demands of the PQPG. Those interviewees holding a Masters Degree were very quick to state it had helped them meet several of the dimensions in the PQPG. "My Masters Degree definitely prepared me for the PQPS. Strongly Agree. Strong emphasis on collaboration, teamwork, opportunity for mentorship and do research while on the job with a direct relevance to the job I was doing" (Mr. B). Mr. A's experience was not as equally satisfying as Mr. B's, however, it has certainly prepared him for much of what the PQPG asks:

> My Masters Degree prepared me for the leadership piece of the PQPS, but not for the C&I [curriculum and instruction]. Gave me a framework for understanding what leadership is as opposed to being 'that nebulous guy who's charismatic… let's follow him'. It gave me an understanding of the components of say 'servant leadership'.

School Leadership Experience

ASD#1 school based leaders clearly felt school leadership experience was an important and effective source of their confidence in meeting the demands of the PQPG. When asked if school leadership experience effectively prepared them to meet the

demands of the PQPG 54.55% (24) strongly agree, 40.91% (18) agreed, 2.27% (1) was

neutral, and 2.27% (1) felt it did not apply to their situation (see Table 14).

The strong comments from the interviewees clearly reflect the data found by the

quantitative survey. Mr. A's comment on leadership experience solidly supports the

general finding:

> My experience as a school leader definitely has helped me meet the demands of
> the PQPG. Peter Drucker has written on management and leadership since WWII.
> He clearly states that leadership cannot be taught but it can be learned. Truly there
> is nothing like the school of experience.

Mr. E explains that his experience as a vice principal in a mentoring environment firmly

prepared him, "Being paired up. The idea of being a vice-principal under an experienced

leader was huge for me. The principal sharing that role with me was a progressive nature

which gave me quite a bit of background for this job." Mr. D's daily reality has forced

him to tackle the dimensions of the PQPG head on and eventually become comfortable

with them:

> My experience as a school leader has prepared me for the demands of the PQPG.
> It's made me more aware and… you have all these elements on the PQPG and
> your daily experiences make those reality. They are just words on the paper until
> you can relate them to the things you have done. They only have substance if you
> can place them within your reality and have experience with them.

Mrs. F touches on a very revealing aspect of her leadership experience and how being on

the job has prepared her to meet the PQPG:

> My experience in the role has been very beneficial. Not just the training but also
> the confidence. As a female leader, one of the key things that has been fostered is
> the confidence in knowing that we can do what has to be done.

The notion of developing confidence through experience was strongly supported by all of

the interviewees.

Pre-service Training

When asked if the pre-service training, not including Masters Degree work, the school based leader received prior to his/her appointment a formal leadership role effectively prepared them to meet the demands of the PQPG 11.36% (5) strongly agreed, 38.63% (17) agreed, 13.64% (6) were neutral, 6.82% (3) disagreed, 4.55% (2) strongly disagreed and 25% (11) felt it did not apply to their situation as they did not participate in any pre-service leadership development (see Table 14).

This comment from Mr. E is a reflection of the majority of the interviewees, "I had a pre-service opportunity where they brought in some experienced administrators who talked about the gamut of these things. [But] until you are actually in it you don't realize what they are talking about." This is a revealing comment that reflected many of those in the interview. Obviously this reaction has as much to do with the structure and purpose of the pre-service as it does with the content. It would be interesting to investigate the design, curriculum, and follow-up activities provided by these pre-service experiences to understand the degree of influence and true learning they had on the participants.

In-service Training

When asked if the in-service training the school based leader received after his/her appointment to a formal leadership role effectively has prepared them to meet the demands of the PQPG 27.27% (12) strongly agreed, 61.37% (27) agreed, 9.09% (4) were neutral, and 2.27% (1) felt it did not apply to his/her situation (see Table 14).

There were several strong comments in support of the effectiveness of in-service training. One response from Mr. H mirrors the common thinking of the interviewees

"Every time I go to something I get another piece of the puzzle. No matter what the complexity level of the PD is."

School Based Leaders' Perception of Elements of Effective School Based Leadership In-Service Program Design

There are two elements that must be explored in order to understand how to build capacity in school based leaders to meet the demands of the Principal Quality Practice Guideline. First, one must determine the key elements of school leadership development program design and second, the method of delivering the program.

Table 15 presents what school based leaders in ASD#1 perceive as low and high priority elements of design for an effective school based leadership program. On the Likert Scale one represents the lowest level of priority and 10 represents the highest level of priority.

Table 15

ASD#1 School Based Leaders Perception of Key Elements of Effective School Leadership Program Design (1 being "Very Low Priority" to 10 being "Very High Priority")

Program Element	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Total
Clear focus and values about leadership:	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	1 2.27%	2 4.55%	3 6.82%	8 18.18%	9 20.45%	13 29.55%	8 18.18%	44
Standards-based curriculum emphasizing the dimensions outlined in the PQPG:	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	1 2.27%	2 4.55%	4 9.09%	6 13.64%	16 36.36%	7 15.91%	8 18.18%	44
Standards-based curriculum emphasizing instructional leadership:	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	2 4.55%	6 13.63%	8 18.18%	10 22.73%	10 22.73%	8 18.18%	44
Standards-based curriculum emphasizing organizational development:	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	1 2.27%	4 9.09%	9 20.45%	7 15.91%	12 27.27%	6 13.64%	5 11.37%	44
Standards-based curriculum emphasizing change management:	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	1 2.27%	5 11.36%	5 11.36%	11 25%	6 13.64%	10 22.73%	6 13.64%	44
Standards-based curriculum emphasizing leadership skills:	0 0%	0 0%	1 2.27%	0 0%	1 2.27%	6 13.64%	4 9.09%	14 31.82%	10 22.73%	8 18.18%	44
Field-based internships with skilled supervision:	1 2.27%	0 0%	1 2.27%	0 0%	1 2.27%	3 6.82%	9 20.45%	11 25%	13 29.56%	5 11.36%	44
Mentoring and coaching:	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	2 4.55%	2 4.55%	3 6.82%	11 25%	10 22.73%	16 36.36%	44
Active instructional strategies:	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	2 4.55%	2 4.55%	9 20.45%	12 27.27%	11 25%	8 18.18%	44
Cohort groups emphasizing collaboration and teamwork:	1 2.27%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	3 6.82%	5 11.36%	8 18.18%	9 20.45%	18 40.92%	44
Collaborative partnerships between universities and school districts:	0 0%	1 2.27%	0 0%	0 0%	4 9.09%	3 6.82%	8 18.18%	7 15.91%	14 31.82%	7 15.91%	44
Rigorous recruitment and selection:	1 2.27%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	1 2.27%	3 6.82%	11 25%	5 11.36%	11 25%	12 27.28%	44
A continuum for life-long learning:	0 0%	2 4.55%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	3 6.82%	5 11.35%	13 29.55%	13 29.55%	8 18.18%	44
Total Response to this Question:											44 100%

Curricular Coherence and Shared Values and Beliefs

As an element of an effective school based leadership program, school based

leaders in ASD#1 were asked what level of priority they would perceived the notion of

clear focus and values about leadership and learning around which the program would be coherently organized. On the ten point Likert scale survey results indicated that 18.18% (8) chose level a 10 priority, 29.55% (13) chose a level 9, 20.45% (9) chose a level 8, 18.18% (8) chose a level 7, 6.82% (3) chose a level 6, 4.55% (2) chose a level 5, and 2.27% (1) chose a level 4 (see Table 15).

Comments made by the interviewees support the quantitative data. There was agreement that the need for vision and a common direction was vital. "It defines your playing field and the parameters of the job" (Mr. A). Several of the interviewees comment that the clarity of the message was important, that without it the program would not have the structure it needs to be a significant catalyst of learning and growing. "If you don't have a program based around a coherent values system there is no framework" (Mrs. F).

Clearly participants saw this program element as a high priority for an effective school leadership program design. ASD#1 school based leaders understand the importance of a clear vision and direction within a school leadership development program. Too often there is frustration around the disjointedness of in-service opportunities. This speaks not only to immediate benefit of participants in a program but also to the advantage the clear vision of school based leadership would have on those struggling with a continuum of career long professional growth.

Researched-Based Content that is Aligned with Professional Standards

ASD#1 school based leaders were then asked to share their perceptions around the notion of researched-based curriculum and importance of aligning that content with professional standards.

Standards-based curriculum emphasizing the dimensions in the PQPG. As an element of an effective school based leadership program, school based leaders in ASD#1 were asked at what level of priority they perceived the notion of standards-based curriculum emphasizing the dimensions outlined in the PQPG. On the ten point Likert scale survey results indicated that 18.18% (8) chose level a 10 priority, 15.91% (7) chose a level 9, 36.36% (16) chose a level 8, 13.64% (6) chose a level 7, 9.09% (4) chose a level 6, 4.55% (2) chose a level 5, and 2.27% (1) chose a level 4 (see Table 15).

The information collected in the interviews reflected the collective belief that emphasizing the dimensions of the PQPG was a high priority in a school leadership development program. The idea of a common vocabulary and a standard from which to measure their growth and performance was illustrated repeatedly in the comments. "That's the common language. That is a document that encompasses all that we are about. The more we can do to work with it and have it frame our practice and growth and discussions the better" (Mrs. C). "It is the notion of what the playing field is we are going to be measured against. There's the playing field…there's the target. We are developing models of what is effective. These are things I would feel are valuable" (Mr. A). Some like the clarity of the document as it could be used as a trouble shooting tool for struggling school leaders. "The PQPG is not fluff and anytime someone is having a problem with their own performance as an administrator they probably need some help in one of these areas." (Mr. H)

There seemed to be little concern for the possible negative aspects of a "standards like" framework and its possible use in performance measures by senior administration in ASD#1. This was most likely because of the common message expressed by the ASD#1

superintendent's office that the framework was first and foremost a professional growth tool. One interviewee did feel the document was somewhat cumbersome, although it could do the job of raising the bar for low performing school leaders. "I'm not a fan of all of the dimensions…you could compress the seven qualities into four, but the idea behind the framework is good - for accountability reasons" (Mr. B).

  Standards-based curriculum emphasizing instructional leadership. As an element of an effective school based leadership program, school based leaders in ASD#1 were asked at what level of priority they perceived the notion of standards-based curriculum emphasizing instructional leadership. On the ten point Likert scale survey results indicated that 18.18% (8) chose level a 10 priority, 22.73% (10) chose a level 9, 22.73% (10) chose a level 8, 18.18% (8) chose a level 7, 13.63% (6) chose a level 6, and 4.55% (2) chose a level 5 (see Table 15).

  ASD#1 school based leader participation in the interview supported the notion that skills and abilities as well as knowledge around instructional strategies and best practices were key to effective leadership. "Although this is really important we don't do enough of it" (Mrs. F).They commented that this would be an important element in an effective school based leadership program, although concern was voiced around the vastness of what it means to be an effective instructional leader. "We have a lot of curriculum that is pretty specific so for me to have some leadership, where I can speak specifically to the teacher in that area, would be a great benefit" (Mr. E). The support for the necessity of instructional leadership reflected the quantitative data although the interview data certainly put the reality of the notion in perspective with comments

indicating that changing curriculum and new assessment practices, although beneficial

for teaching and learning, were challenging to stay abreast of.

　　Standards-based curriculum emphasizing organizational development. As an

element of an effective school based leadership program, school based leaders in ASD#1

were asked at what level of priority they would perceived the notion of standards-based

curriculum emphasizing organizational development. On the ten point Likert scale survey

results indicated that 11.37% (5) chose level a 10 priority, 13.64% (6) chose a level 9,

27.27% (12) chose a level 8, 15.91% (7) chose a level 7, 20.45% (9) chose a level 6,

9.09% (4) chose a level 5, and 2.27% (1) chose a level 4 (see Table 15).

　　The survey results seemed to place this element as a comparatively lower priority

yet by no means was it not considered an important element by most of the participants.

The qualitative data indicates that organizational development is a high priority. Mr. H

most clearly reflected the comments from the interviewees by stating,

> When your pathway is clearly set out you are going to spend less time arguing
> about it. Schools waste a lot of time arguing about what we should do next.
> Mapped it out as clear as a bell and then just do it and stick with it.

　　Standards-based curriculum emphasizing change management. As an element of

an effective school based leadership program, school based leaders in ASD#1 were asked

at what level of priority they would perceived the notion of standards-based curriculum

emphasizing change management. On the ten point Likert scale survey results indicated

that 13.64% (6) chose level a 10 priority, 22.73% (10) chose a level 9, 13.64% (6) chose

a level 8, 25% (11) chose a level 7, 11.36% (5) chose a level 6, 11.36% (5) chose a level

5, and 2.27% (1) chose a level 4 (see Table 15).

As with the survey data most of the interviewees aligned with the notion that change management was a significant element that school leaders should engage in.

> Schools are all about change (or should be). We are constantly learning more about brain development, teaching and learning, professional growth, coaching and we need to adapt to that. Managing change can be challenging and it is a big piece of that principal role. (Mrs. C)

Again reflecting the quantitative data some of the interviewees placed a lower priority on this element although for unique reasons. One interviewee saw the difficultly in context and the uniqueness of the educational situation when dealing with change management. "Most of the literature and most of the resources available that look at change are from contexts outside of schools and they can't be applied" (Mr. H). Although this point could be argued it does indicate the perceived challenges that this element would face in a school based leadership development program.

Given the realities of our changing educational environment and society in general, it is clear that understanding and acting upon organizational change is an important aspect of school based leadership. The data collected in this study indicates that ASD#1 school based leaders, collectively, hold this element as a high priority in any school leadership program.

Standards-based curriculum emphasizing leadership skills. As an element of an effective school based leadership program, school based leaders in ASD#1 were asked at what level of priority they would perceived the notion of standards-based curriculum emphasizing leadership skills. On the ten point Likert scale survey results indicated that 18.18% (8) chose level a 10 priority, 22.73% (10) chose a level 9, 31.82% (14) chose a level 8, 9.09% (4) chose a level 7, 13.64% (6) chose a level 6, 2.27% (1) chose a level 5, and 2.27% (1) chose a level 3 (see Table 15).

Interviewees mirrored the overall very high priority of the survey respondents, "Leadership skills are definitely a very high priority … you want to know what they are and what elements you need to further develop in, reflect on…what's necessary for the job at hand" (Mr. A). Although highly prioritized as an overall population some interviewees reflected that, "You can't teach good leadership skills. You can teach components of leadership…like strategies for instructional leadership. You are a good leader or you are not. Either you have the skills and you have that knack or not" (Mrs. C).

Any individual notions of whether or not leadership skills can be taught or not is irrelevant to the importance ASD#1 school based leaders, collectively, have placed on this element for school leadership program design. It is clear that most ASD#1 school based leaders feel that this element is an essential component in an effective school leadership program design. By indicating this belief, they obviously perceive that leadership skills are not only teachable but learnable.

Field-based Internships under the Guidance of Expert Practitioners

As an element of an effective school based leadership program, school based leaders in ASD#1 were asked at what level of priority they perceived the notion of field-based internships that enabled candidates to apply leadership knowledge and skills under the guidance of an expert practitioner. On the ten point Likert scale survey results indicated that 11.36% (5) chose level a 10 priority, 29.56% (13) chose a level 9, 25% (11) chose a level 8, 20.45% (9) chose a level 7, 6.82% (3) chose a level 6, 2.27% (1) chose a level 5, 2.27% (1) chose a level 3 and 2.27% (1) chose a level 1 (see Table 15).

Several of the comments from the interviewees focused on the importance of experience. They felt that some of the best professional training would occur in an

environment of hands-on experience. "You can't beat experience. Mentorship and experience are the most important things" (Mrs. F). A high priority was placed on the notion of learning while doing. "This is a very high priority – working with a mentor administrator. I think you can take a lot of things in courses but each school has different elements and you can learn a lot by putting things into practice" (Mr. E). The importance of the training and skill of the supervisor was evident in a comment from Mr. B. He placed this key element of field-based internship for aspiring school leaders as a high priority, however he pointed out the importance of trained supervisors. "Knowing what you're getting in to. Experiential learning! When you have skilled mentors you develop skilled leaders" (Mr. B).

One of the interviewees provided an alternative view and although he didn't dispute the importance of experience in the job as a professional growth tool he took a difference approach. "We still are doing it backwards. We are asking teachers to invest a whole bunch of their time and energy when there is no guarantee. If someone has the qualities, employ them as a VP and then provide them with the training" (Mr. H).

Overall the findings from the qualitative and quantitative were consistence in their support of this element of program design. There was a common understanding that experience in the field greatly adds to the development of the skills and understandings necessary for successful leadership.

Mentoring and Coaching

As an element of an effective school based leadership program, school based leaders in ASD#1 were asked at what level of priority they perceived the notion of mentoring or coaching that supports modeling, questioning, observations of practice, and

feedback. On the ten point Likert scale survey results indicated that 36.36% (16) chose

level a 10 priority, 22.73% (10) chose a level 9, 25% (11) chose a level 8, 6.82% (3)

chose a level 7, 4.55% (2) chose a level 6, and 4.55% (2) chose a level 5 (see Table 15).

Important distinctions in the type of mentorship surfaced in the data collected

from the interviewees. The interviewees stressed that they agreed that mentorship was a

vital and important element in an effective school leadership development program,

however they expressed concern in the way that mentorship program would be

established. Mr. A explained that mentorship has an important place in the development

of school leaders when, "done properly!" Selection of the mentor was expressed by a few

of the interviewees, "…one-on-one forced mentorship is maybe not the way to go. Self

selected definitely should be supported. It is about relationships and you can't force

relationships" (Mrs. C). With the importance of relationship another common thread

tended to be the skill level of the mentor. Mr. D summarized many of the thoughts

provided by the other interviewees by stressing, "Only with competent, experienced,

knowledgeable, and capable mentors."

There is a great deal of support for the notion of mentorship and coaching,

however, ASD#1 school based leaders are clear in their desire to have the "right" kind of

mentorship program. They stress the need for mentors and coaches who have the skill

and understanding to make the program successful for the protégé as well as the

importance of relationship building in the selection of mentors. These conclusions come

on the heels of an ASD#1 mentorship pilot program that was put in place the fall before

this study took place. ASD#1 school based leaders were very much aware of the

necessary elements needed, through their own experiences, to establish an effective

mentorship of coaching program.

Problem-based Learning Strategies

As an element of an effective school based leadership program, school based

leaders in ASD#1 were asked at what level of priority they perceived the notion of

problem-based learning strategies, such as case methods, action research, and projects

that link theory and practice and support reflection. On the ten point Likert scale survey

results indicated that 18.18% (8) chose level a 10 priority, 25% (11) chose a level 9,

27.27% (12) chose a level 8, 20.45% (9) chose a level 7, 4.55% (2) chose a level 6, and

4.55% (2) chose a level 5 (see Table 15).

Comments from the qualitative data supported the finding in the survey results.

The linking of theory and practice is what most of the interviewees stated was missing in

many professional development courses they have experienced. The idea of finally

moving the theory into a real situation where it could be picked apart and put into action

interested many of the interviewees. "We all learn through story…we need to put theory

into practical situations" (Mr. D). Mrs. C suggested that, "when we are talking about

scenarios people have a much richer discussion." Although he supports the notion of

linking theory to practice, Mr. A had an interesting and realistic warning, "At some point

in time it is still artificial. I have a leaning towards the ones [key elements] that are more

pragmatic. The training is nice but until you have the actual experience."

My observations of ASD#1 school based leaders over a number of years is that

professional development that utilized real life problems and scenarios were often greeted

with far more enthusiasm than those that asked for passive engagement. Conversation

and debate continued, often for months after, when active learning strategies were used.

Cohort Groups Emphasizing Collaboration and Teamwork

As an element of an effective school based leadership program, school based

leaders in ASD#1 were asked at what level of priority they perceived the notion of cohort

groups that create opportunities for collaboration and teamwork in practice-oriented

situations. On the ten point Likert scale survey results indicated that 40.92% (18) chose

level a 10 priority, 20.45% (9) chose a level 9, 18.18% (8) chose a level 8, 11.36% (5)

chose a level 7, 6.82% (3) chose a level 6, and 2.27% (1) chose a level 1 (see Table 15).

The high priority of cohort groups as an element in an effective school based

leadership development program was also supported by the interviewees. They suggested

the collaboration and teamwork that would be fostered in a cohort group would greatly

benefit the individuals. Mr. D explained, "That's being part of being a team together we

are developing things for everyone else to experience." Mrs. C shared her belief about the

cohort model and its future in ASD#1 when she stated, "That's a really good model and I

see in our plan for our division. I see that expanding for everybody." Mr. E made the very

important connection of the cohort model too, what he suggests, the Conference Board of

Canada and what new Alberta curriculum is emphasizing in terms of collaboration and

teamwork. "That's the way it has to be done. That's how business is going and that's how

schools are going. Why wouldn't we do it with leadership development?" (Mr. E)

The effect of a few low outlier responses held the mean response to the priority of

this element lower than the general consensus. Over 90% of ASD#1 considered this key

element essential for an effect school leadership program design. The benefit of working

as cohorts is certainly not lost on ASD#1 school based leaders as they obviously see the

exponential advantage of sharing experiences and knowledge.

Collaborative Partnerships between Universities and School Districts

As an element of an effective school based leadership program, school based

leaders in ASD#1 were asked at what level of priority they perceived the notion of

collaboration between universities and school districts to create coherence between

training and practice as well as pipelines for recruitment, preparation, hiring, and

induction. On the ten point Likert scale survey results indicated that 15.91% (7) chose

level a 10 priority, 31.82% (14) chose a level 9, 15.91% (7) chose a level 8, 18.18% (8)

chose a level 7, 6.82% (3) chose a level 6, 9.09% (4) chose a level 5, and 2.27% (1) chose

a level 2 (see Table 15).

Interview comments also placed the idea of a strong university and school district

partnership as a requirement for success. The agreement between the post secondary

institute and the school district must not only lie in the curriculum but also in the beliefs

and values of the two organizations. "You need to make sure that whatever program

you're taking is fitting the needs of what we are doing here." (Mrs. F) This thought is

also echoed by Mr. A and his consideration of the geographical challenges.

> We are unique and certainly the work I did [in his Master's thesis] reminded me
> of that. We have towns that are large enough that those schools operating would
> be like city schools and then we have small schools that are truly the rural
> experience. In order for the outside program to be pragmatic they are going to go
> after a different market.

The support from ASD#1 school leaders for this element of school leadership

program design is clear. A strong partnership between the school division and a

university would provide a balance of practical and theoretical experiences. Still there is a

lingering feeling from the interviewees that the partnership would be difficult to establish

and maintain even given the potential benefits of doing so.

Vigorous Recruitment and Selection of Candidates and Instructors

As an element of an effective school based leadership program, school based

leaders in ASD#1 were asked at what level of priority they perceived the notion of

vigorous recruitment of high-ability candidates with experience as expert, dynamic

teachers and a commitment to instructional improvement. On the ten point Likert scale

survey results indicated that 27.28% (12) chose level a 10 priority, 25% (11) chose a

level 9, 11.36% (5) chose a level 8, 25% (11) chose a level 7, 6.82% (3) chose a level 6,

2.27% (1) chose a level 5, and 2.27% (1) chose a level 1 (see Table 15).

Interview participants echoed the high priority placed on this element by the

survey results:

> Who we bring in to this division and put into leadership roles and keep in
> leadership roles is crucial and certainly those instructing have to be the cream of
> the crop. If administrators are skilled and aligned with the standards of the PQPS
> then they have a certain skills and are qualified to do that [be instructors]. (Mrs.
> C)

Mr. H highlighted the current condition in Alberta regarding a lack of potential leadership

candidates and the dangers of putting the wrong people in place:

> You have to get the right people on the bus and they have to be on the right seat
> on the bus. We are facing an absolute crisis in our province for school based
> leaders. We are begging people and they probably aren't going to enjoy it. When
> people are doing this job out of obligation….they don't enjoy it and they probably
> aren't very good at it. (Mr. H)

Again ASD#1 school based leaders see this as a high priority element for an

effective school leadership development program. The quality of the candidate as well as

the instructor is obviously important to these leaders. The qualitative data added a rich

layer to what the quantitative data illustrated. Although the selection of the school based leadership candidate was vital - the way the candidate was selected was important as well. The careful selection of the instructor based on effective adult learning skills was an important factor that was deeply expressed in the qualitative data and certainly seems to be a hinging factor in the support found in the quantitative data.

A Continuum for Life Long Learning

As an element of an effective school based leadership program, school based leaders in ASD#1 were asked at what level of priority they perceived the notion of the conceptualization of a continuum of opportunities from pre-service, through induction, and ongoing throughout the careers, with both group and individual supports for principals. On the ten point Likert scale survey results indicated that 18.18% (8) chose level a 10 priority, 29.55% (13) chose a level 9, 29.55% (13) chose a level 8, 11.35% (5) chose a level 7, 6.82% (3) chose a level 6, and 4.55% (2) chose a level 2 (see Table 15).

The common thread of discussion was centered on the need for ongoing planned professional development and "the whole lifelong learning thing. You've got to keep growing." (Mrs. F) Mr. D stresses that, "Learning is never done." Mrs. C adds that career long planning:

> …has to be required and we have to take that really seriously and hold ourselves to a certain standard. We expect it of our teachers, they expect it of their students, and we need to expect if of ourselves. Our division should expect it of us. It should be framed around that common language. (Mrs. C)

> Mr. H was one of the outlier respondents and he explains his reasoning this way:

> How often do things… circumstances just come together? When an opportunity arises and you just go for it. You can't always plan for your professional development and then to stick to a plan you've made five years ago might not be what's best for you professionally or personally.

Although interesting in his argument, Mr. H's understanding of a career long strategy may be quite rigid. A strategy must have built in flexibility and be able to change as new research on promising practices emerge. The notion of "continued development" is what is most important here and a practice of continued growth as opposed to stagnant status quo must be emphasized.

By far the common perception of ASD#1 survey participants as well as interviewees was the need to develop and maintain a continuum of professional growth that links seemly different elements under a larger vision of school based leadership.

ASD#1 School Based Leaders' Perception of the Methods of Delivering School

Leadership In-Service Programs

Table 16 summarizes the second consideration that was investigated, the delivery method of the school leadership development program. ASD#1 school based leaders were ask to identify what they perceived was the level of effectiveness a particular program delivery method rated. In other words, how effective did they believe each of the highlighted institutions were in delivering school based leadership development programming. School based leaders rated these programs on a Likert Scale of 1, very ineffective, to 10, very effective.

Table 16

ASD#1 School Leader Perception of the Most Effective Method of Delivering In-service Program Key Elements (1 being "Very Ineffective" to 10 being "Very Effective")

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Total
Alberta Education Provincial Leadership Program:	3 6.81%	0 0%	4 9.09%	0 0%	11 25%	11 25%	11 25%	2 4.55%	2 4.55%	0 0%	44
ATA Leadership Program:	2 4.55%	0 0%	2 4.55%	0 0%	12 27.26%	6 13.63%	13 29.55%	6 13.64%	2 4.55%	1 2.27%	44
Educational Professional Development Organization	0 0%	0 0%	2 4.55%	1 2.27%	8 18.18%	6 13.64%	5 11.36%	13 29.55%	5 11.36%	4 9.09%	44
Local School Division Developed Program:	0 0%	1 2.27%	2 4.55%	0 0%	0 0%	3 6.82%	8 18.18%	13 29.55%	8 18.18%	9 20.45%	44
University or College Developed Leadership Program (not a Masters):	1 2.27%	1 2.27%	2 4.55%	1 2.27%	6 13.64%	5 11.36%	12 27.28%	11 25%	5 11.36%	0 0%	44
Partnership program with a University or College and a local School Division:	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	1 2.27%	4 9.09%	2 4.55%	6 13.64%	13 29.55%	11 25%	7 15.90%	44
Individual professional development plans:	0 0%	2 4.55%	1 2.27%	0 0%	3 6.82%	5 11.36%	5 11.36%	12 27.27%	9 20.46%	7 15.91%	44
Total Response to this question:											44 100%

Alberta Education Provincial Leadership Program

ASD#1 school based leaders were asked to determine what they perceived as the

level of effectiveness Alberta Education would have in delivering a school based

leadership development program. Quantitative data results revealed that 4.55% (2)

indicated an effectiveness level of 9, 4.55% (2) indicated a level of 8, 25% (11) indicated

a level of 7, 25% (11) indicated a level of 6, 25% (11) indicated a level of 5, 9.09% (4)

indicated a level of 3, and 6.81% (3) indicated a level of 1 (see Table 16).

The results of the interview data support the moderate effectiveness rating seen in

the survey data. The common threads indicated by the interview group were that of role

and the importance of local context. Several of the interviewees stated that they didn't

believe it was the role of Alberta Education to develop school leadership beyond the

Principal Quality Practice Guideline. They spoke of professional autonomy and the

inappropriateness of involving the government at this level. "I just don't see that as part

of their role right now. It's all about bureaucracy and compliance" (Mrs. C). "It's about

the standards and being [at] arms length away from the government that is important in

maintaining our professionalism" (Mrs. E). "Their perspective would be a little one

sided" (Mr. A). Mrs. G's comment that an organization at the level of Alberta Education

may be "too far removed from the local context to be an effective deliverer of the

program" seemed to be evident in a number of interviewees' statements including, "It has

to be more to the grass roots, more to your situation. You have to be more involved in it.

You only get that when you are part of the group. It can't come from that far up" (Mr. D).

An important relational factor may be coming into play here, the traditional

relationship between Alberta teachers and the Alberta Government. A history of sporadic

confrontation may have had a negative impact on the open mindedness of ASD#1 school

based leaders to this potential option.

Alberta Teachers' Association Leadership Program

ASD#1 school based leaders were asked to determine what they perceived as the

level of effectiveness the Alberta Teachers' Association would have in delivering a

school based leadership development program. Quantitative data results revealed that 2.27% (1) indicated an effectiveness level of 10, 4.55% (2) indicated a level of 9, 13.64% (6) indicated a level of 8, 29.55% (13) indicated a level of 7, 13.63% (6) indicated a level of 6, 27.26% (12) indicated a level of 5, 4.55% (2) indicated a level of 3, and 4.55% (2) indicated a level of 1(see Table 16).

Some common patterns seen in the interviewee data is the fact that offering a school leadership development program may be more the ATA's mandate as a professional association, however, the concern is still there for the lack of a local context. "I would support this because the ATA is our professional organization [and] there is a level of trust with that. They generally run good programs with good instructors" (Mrs. E). Mrs. G felt that the ATA model "has potential and could be delivered by former school leaders or those on sabbatical." Although many comments were hopeful that this could be a possible role for the ATA, some comments indicated a level of concern for the contextual issues as well as suspicion of ability. Mr. D felt that the model was still "way too top down and far away from our situation. Whereas Mr. H was clear in his statement that, "They can't do it alone. They don't have enough former school administrators to do it. You cannot facilitate a session on school leadership if you haven't been an administrator."

Again, as with the Alberta Education consideration, the notion of a centralized delivery system does have value. It is clear, however, that ASD#1 school based leaders fear that a large provincial approach would negatively affect and possibly overlook important aspects of the local context thus reducing the effectiveness of a school based leadership program.

Educational Professional Development Organization Leadership Program

ASD#1 school based leaders were asked to determine what they perceived as the level of effectiveness a third party educational professional development organization, like a regional consortium, would have in delivering a school based leadership development program. Quantitative data results revealed that 9.09% (4) indicated an effectiveness level of 10, 11.36% (5) indicated a level of 9, 29.55% (13) indicated a level of 8, 11.36% (5) indicated a level of 7, 13.63% (6) indicated a level of 6, 18.18% (8) indicated a level of 5, 2.27% (1) indicated a level of 4, and 4.55% (2) indicated a level of 3 (see Table 16).

Two common threads in the interview data suggest that, although third party organizations in Alberta, such as a regional consortium, have the experience of delivering professional development to educators, there is a concern that they would not effectively handle the delivery of a full and ongoing program. Mrs. C feels that they have the knowledge and skill because of their experience and Mr. B likes the delivery experience he has had from them in the past, "There's opportunity for short bursts of training there," he stated, "and specifically targeted training." The biggest concerns seemed to come from whether the organization could deliver a leadership program that satisfied everyone. "They've got stuff to offer but it's not always aligned with provincial and jurisdictional parameters. It's also sometimes not practical" (Mr. H). "I question that those [third party organizations] truly face so many pressures to maintain fiscal bottom lines and tend to be influenced by the noisiest in the room" (Mr. A).

Political concerns seem to ring throughout the interviewees' responses, yet there is indeed a sense of possibility if certain conditions were met. The concerns of designing

and delivering to meet the local context are reduced given the regional structure of the consortiums in Alberta. There is evidence from the research that regional professional development organizations can have a very positive effect on school leadership development programs.

Local School Division Leadership Development Program

ASD#1 school based leaders were asked to determine what they perceived as the level of effectiveness local school divisions would have in delivering a school based leadership development program. Quantitative data results revealed that 20.45% (9) indicated an effectiveness level of 10, 18.18% (8) indicated a level of 9, 29.55% (13) indicated a level of 8, 18.18% (8) indicated a level of 7, 6.82% (3) indicated a level of 6, 4.55% (2) indicated a level of 3, and 2.27% (1) indicated a level of 2 (see table 16).

Qualitative data mirrored the quantitative results. Interviewees agree that the idea of a locally delivered leadership program would be highly effective. They point to the notion of context and response to specific local needs. "I believe this would be one of the most effective methods because it is tailored to our specific needs" (Mrs. C). "This could provide more flexibility by addressing individual constraints. Here there would be ways of tying into the daily job on a smaller scale" (Mr. E). "If you are running a local program you can tailor it to the needs of the leadership community you have. If we are trying to develop rural leadership capacity you need to create a program specific to this" (Mrs. E). Mrs. G expresses the positive possibilities, however at the same time she stresses the need for collaboration and support:

> Has a lot of potential if it is done right. You need the right people to deliver the program and the senior administration must not only support it with resources and policy, but they must play an active role in it.

With all the praises for the potential effectiveness of a local school division delivered program, a couple of comments arose that provide food for thought and caution. "I wonder if our perspective would be narrow and are there things we could learn from other rural jurisdictions" (Mr. A)? "[It would only work] with proper resources and proper people involved" (Mr. D). These gentlemen provide interesting perspectives at they same time they believe the method has potential. Mr. H, however, doesn't hold the same faith as most of the respondents in the effectiveness of this method of program delivery when he states, "Resources! Small jurisdictions just can't generate the resources…big jurisdictions can do it."

Again Mr. H found his view to be outside the commonly held belief of the ASD#1 school leadership group. There seems to be a real belief in the ability of ASD#1 to be able to provide the delivery of the key elements of an effective school leadership development program. This may be due to the continued success of ASD#1 school based leaders participating in division level committee work including school based leader professional development initiatives as well as policy development. They may feel there would be an element of control in terms of content and delivery.

University or College Leadership Development Program

ASD#1 school based leaders were asked to determine what they perceived as the level of effectiveness local school divisions would have in delivering a university of college leadership development program. Quantitative data results revealed that 11.36% (5) indicated an effectiveness level of 9, 25% (11) indicated a level of 8, 27.28% (12) indicated a level of 7, 11.36% (5) indicated a level of 6, 13.64% (6) indicated a level of 5,

2.27% (1) indicated a level of 4, 4.55% (2) indicating a level of 3, 2.27% (1) indicated a

level of 2, and 2.27% (1) indicated a level of 1 (see Table 16).

Like the data from the quantitative survey, the interview produced two common

points. One praised the possibility of effectiveness, the other expressed concern for the

ability of the post secondary institutions in Alberta to be up to the challenge. The

interviewees agreed, for the most part, that the theory around school leadership would be

evident and they agreed that there would be a treasure chest of resources and expertise

available. "This would work by providing resources and expertise" (Mr. E). This method

would be successful because of the "confidence and experience they have in delivering

these types of programs" (Mrs. F). However, Mr. A argued the effectiveness of the post

secondary institutions by stating:

> I question the responsiveness of the university to the pragmatics. They tend to be
> a safe haven to the research and academics. It's their ability to change and
> respond to new dynamics I highly question. Universities tend to be slow moving
> institutions.

Mrs. G concurred with him by stating, "Great to have the expertise and the current

research literature, however is the post secondary institute truly on the cutting edge or

still tied to traditional thinking. Need to be careful here."

Partnership Leadership Program between a University or College and a Local School

Division

ASD#1 school based leaders were asked to determine what they perceived as the

level of effectiveness local school divisions would have in delivering a school based

leadership development program. Quantitative data results revealed that 15.90% (7)

indicated an effectiveness level of 10, 25% (11) indicated a level of 9, 29.55% (13)

indicated a level of 8, 13.64% (6) indicated a level of 7, 4.55% (2) indicated a level of 6,

9.09% (4) indicated a level of 5, and 2.27% (1) indicated a level of 4 (see Table 16).

Comments from the interviewees agreed with the survey data suggesting that this

method of delivering a school leadership development program had the most potential to

be highly effective. Mrs. G mused that:

> This one [delivery method] has most promising potential if it is done right. The
> university must be cutting edge and practicing and preaching the best research out
> there and the school division must be committed financially as well as
> philosophically. You could get the best of both worlds in that the University
> brings the newest research and resources and the school division tailors it to the
> specific context.

Mrs. C agreed and commented, "You can tailor that program to meet the specific needs.

But you also have the ability to recruit instructors that are proven." Mr. E cautiously

endorsed the idea as well but was a little hesitant with who would have the control, "This

would be effective if you could balance the local context with the backing of an academic

university program."

ASD#1 school based leaders indicate clearly that can certainly see the benefits of

this approach to delivery possibly because they feel the best of both worlds could be

effectively merged. The academic aspect of researched-based curriculum provided by a

post-secondary institution would meld effectively into the contextual consideration of a

local school division. Earlier data (see Table 15), however, does indicate the concern

ASD#1 school based leaders have regarding the necessity of a common goal and vision

held by both the post-secondary institution and the school division.

In-Service Based on Individual Professional Development Plans

ASD#1 school based leaders were asked to determine what they perceived as the

level of effectiveness the current arrangement of school leaders choosing specific

conferences and workshops based on individual professional development plans have had

in delivering school based leadership development. Quantitative data results revealed that

15.91% (7) indicated an effectiveness level of 10, 20.46% (9) indicated a level of 9,

27.27% (12) indicated a level of 8, 11.36% (5) indicated a level of 7, 11.36% (5)

indicated a level of 6, 6.82% (3) indicated a level of 5, 2.27% (1) indicated a level of 3,

and 4.55% (2) indicated a level of 2 (see Table 16).

The introduction of the PQPG seemed to affect a number of the interviewees'

comments as many commented that it will help them organize their individual

professional development so as to meet the demands of the dimensions. Mr. A argues

that, "This could be highly effective if that level of accountability is there with it- until

the PQPS I really haven't had a document to hold it [professional growth] up to." Mr. B

suggested a level of autonomy in professional development, "For continuing

administrators this [current arrangement] is highly effective. If you are looking for

lifelong learning this gives you the opportunity to do PD in short bursts. It can

accommodate your lifestyle and your needs." This idea was reinforced by Mrs. E:

> Leaders need to have the ability to identify the areas they need to work on.
> Sometimes as leaders we go with our strengths and interests. It's the whole team
> thing. Not everyone on the team needs to be good at the same things. It can really
> foster a sense of confidence when you are allowing them to make the decisions as
> to where they need to go.

Not all the interviewees were supportive of this method of delivering in-service to

school leadership and provided a second perspective. Ms. G cautioned that the current

arrangement of school leaders choosing specific conferences and workshops based on

individual professional development plans had:

> A lot of great intentions with little real growth. We get busy doing the daily stuff and this is the piece that is constantly moved to the back. Where is the consistent lifelong plan in a bunch of unrelated PD sessions and one day 'sit and gets'?

Mr. D voiced his disapproval of the current situation very clearly, "Pretty ineffective. Professional Growth Plans are a joke! In reality I'm not sure how much this happens. Should happen. But not sure that it does."

Although there is diversity among the ASD#1 school based leaders' perspective in the effectiveness of this delivery method a large number feel this is a legitimate avenue. There is a feeling of control that many do not want to give up and still feel they are the best providers of their professional development. The PQPG as a guiding document may be adding to the feeling of confidence in determining a professional development direction for these individuals. As school based leaders grapple with time and energy obstacles many may feel that being able to determine their own professional development commitments allows for a reduce amount of stress. Others many argue that a set schedule of pre-determined commitments would better reduce the time and energy obstacles.

Overall, the findings conclude that the quantitative data generated by the 44 participants in the survey are greatly supported by the qualitative data determined by the eight semi-structured interviews. The interviews were very beneficial in determining a deeper understanding of the numerical data provided by the survey. Insights as to why participants answered the survey items in particular ways were provided by the interviewees.

Chapter 5: Analysis and Discussion of the Data

This chapter presents the analysis and discussion of the research findings. Both qualitative and quantitative methods of analysis were used to examine the findings of the study. The analysis of these findings looked for connections within the data to make conclusions as well as connections to the research literature.

Charles and Mertler (2002) explain that there are several differences between qualitative and quantitative data analysis. They explain that in qualitative data analysis the data itself is mostly verbal and that the purpose of the analysis is to discover patterns within the data. Qualitative data are analyzed logico-inductively which is, "a thought process that uses logic to make sense of observations" (p. 180). In this manner, Charles and Mertler (2002) explain that research questions are answered through a process of observing "behaviors, situations, interactions, objects, and environments" (p. 180) to develop topics, determining patterns and categories through careful examination of the observed topics which then lead to conclusions and explanations based on the inductions (p. 182).

Cohen et al. (2007) state that, "data are multilayered and open to interpretation" (p. 459). It is in this sense that the researcher must clearly lay out the purpose of the study and strive to be transparent in his interpretation. "Qualitative data analysis involves organizing, accounting for, and explaining data; in short, making sense of data in terms of the participants' definitions of the situation, noting patterns, themes, categories and regularities" (p. 461). They stress that although there is no single way that data can be analyzed as long as the purpose of the analysis is clear. Cohen and his colleagues argue that although qualitative data focuses on smaller samples than quantitative, the data will

be rich and detailed (p. 461). Large amounts of data is often collected and the researcher

is required to look at it from a wide angle and then by "shifting, sorting, reviewing and

reflecting" (p. 462) the researcher begins to find patterns and common elements. The

analysis of qualitative data is almost inevitably interpretive, and unlike the numerical or

positivist tradition seen in the analysis of quantitative data, qualitative data analysis

requires a more "reflexive, reactive interaction between the researcher and the

decontexualized data that are already interpretations of a social encounter" (p. 469).

In order for the data collected in this study to be analyzed effectively it was

coded. Ezzy, (2002) is cited by Cohen et al. (2007) as describing coding as the process

of:

> …disassembling and reassembling the data. Data are disassembled when they are
> broken apart into lines, paragraphs or sections. These fragments are then
> rearranged, through coding, to produce a new understanding that explores
> similarities, differences, across a number of different cases. (p. 493)

Ezzy (2002) continues to explain that although the early stages of coding usually results

in a confusion of mass information, the end result of this organizational method produces

themes and patterns that can be analyzed.

Quantitative data, however, are analyzed mathematically using statistical

terminology to express the results. Charles and Mertler (2002) explain that the analysis of

quantitative data is used to determine what is "typical and atypical" among the data,

demonstrate degrees of difference or similarity between arrays of data, determine if the

data collected are likely to be collected again given a similar situation or if there was an

inherent error in the sample. The authors explain that descriptive statistics and inferential

statistics emerge as two main categories of statistical analysis. Descriptive statistics help

clarify data from samples by utilizing information such as mean, median and mode to

determine central tendency, standard deviation, variance and range to determine

variability and correlation. Inferential statistics uses tests of significance, confidence

intervals and standard error to analyze quantitative data (p.178). A statistical

understanding of both the quantitative and qualitative data collected in this study included

determining how participants were clustered in their understandings, comforts, fears and

resistance to the concepts highlighted in my sub research questions. Basic descriptive

statistical methods identifying means and standard deviations in the data were used to

understand these themes and patterns.

     Survey Methods, SPSS, and Excel spreadsheet software were used to code and

analyze the quantitative data and the qualitative data to identify a statistical and narrative

understanding of ASD#1 school leaders' current reality of experience and training, their

perception of the PQPS in general, as well as their perception of their strengths and

weaknesses in meeting the PQPS. Patterns in their desired approach to effective capacity

building were also identified and compared to proven approaches to building capacity

within Darlington et al.'s (2007) framework of highly effective leadership programs. This

process provided information for outlining the development and delivery of an effective

leadership program in ASD#1.

     Cohen et al. (2007) describe five ways of analyzing the data. They suggest

organizing the data by groups, individuals, particular issue, research question, or research

instrument. It is useful to mention that the authors list advantages and disadvantages of

all methods, however they tend to support the use of research questions as a method of

organizing the analysis of the data by stating, "…it draws together all the relevant data

for the exact issue of concern to the researcher, and preserves the coherence of the

material" (p. 468). Unlike the other methods of data organization this method tends to bring together data from interviews, questionnaires, observations, and other sources to enable, "patterns, relationships, comparisons and qualifications across data types to be explored conveniently and clearly" (p. 468). The authors also suggest that a degree of systematization is needed and that numerical quantitative data should be presented and then followed by qualitative data or vice versa.

Themes and patterns found in both the quantitative and qualitative data have been organized in the following categories which are based on the research and sub-research questions:

1. ASD#1 School Based Leaders' Perception of the Principal Quality Practice Guideline

2. ASD#1 School Based Leaders' Confidence in Meeting the Demands of the Principal Quality Practice Guideline

3. ASD#1 School Based Leaders' Perception of Their Formal Education, Pre-service Training, In-service Training, and Previous Experience

4. ASD#1 School Based Leaders' Perception of Elements of Effective School Leadership In-Service Program Design

5. ASD#1 School Based Leaders' Perception of the Methods of Delivering School Leadership In-Service Programs

ASD#1 School Based Leaders' Perception of the PQPG

The question of whether or not the PQPG is necessary in today's education climate was answered overwhelmingly positive by school leaders in ASD#1 (see Table 12). As noted in the literature review, the Principal Quality Practice Guideline was the result of Alberta's Commission on Learning (2003). Because Recommendation 76 stated the need to "recognize and support the leadership role of principals" (p.122) the Commission determined "that a clear statement of the knowledge, skill and attributes of principals is required and should form the basis for preparing, recruiting and assessing their performance" (p. 123).

The stakeholders committee charged with the development of the PQPG presented to Alberta Education a draft of the Principal Quality Practice Standard [as it was called then] in June, 2007, which states the standard as, "The principal is an accomplished teacher who practices quality leadership in the provision of opportunities for optimum learning and development of all students in the school." (p. 5) This "Standard" is then supported by seven dimensions, each of those supported by descriptors. The draft document suggests that it can be "used to guide many activities including: principal preparation and recruitment, principals' self-reflection and daily practice, principals' initial and ongoing professional growth and principal supervision and evaluation" (p. 4).

The notion of whether the Principal Quality Practice Guideline is necessary in today's educational climate is reflected in the responses of the school based leaders in ASD#1 regarding acceptance of the document and it's implied professional growth demands and accountability standards. ASD#1 school leaders were asked to respond to

this question by indicating their degree of agreement with the statement, "Is the Principal Quality Practice Guideline Necessary in Today's Educational Climate?" Responses were offered on a Likert Scale of 1 through 5, 1 being strongly disagree and 5 being strongly agree. Of the 44 school leaders responding to this question 43.18% (19) of the school based leaders strongly agreed that the framework was necessary and an additional 50% (22) school based leaders agreed that it was necessary. The remaining 6.82% (3) of school based leaders strongly disagreed with the statement (see Table 12). The mean response was 4.11 which falls into the agree category with a standard deviation of 1.07.

Overwhelming qualitative data supported the pattern of agreement for the PQPG survey data in that the ASD#1 school based leaders perceived that the introduction of the PQPG was not only acceptable but necessary. The general perception of ASD#1 school based leaders was that the role of school based leader had been unpacked for all to see. Specific responsibilities could be determined and the feeling that a sense of direction around school leadership development had been establish not only for personal growth but also as an accountability measure.

ASD#1 School Based Leaders' Confidence in Meeting the Demands of the PQPG

Until its introduction to school leaders in 2007 nothing quite like the Principal Quality Practice Guideline had been "noticed" by school leaders in Alberta. The Alberta Teachers' Association and the College of Alberta School Superintendents had both released their interpretations of principal practice standards in the years following the recommendations of the Alberta Commission on Education in 2003. However, neither of these documents received the province-wide attention that the PQPG has enjoyed. This may be in part due to the possibility of Alberta Education determining the guideline as a

standard for school leaders or that so many stakeholders had a hand in its development and had agreed to the document's standard and supporting dimensions.

This study asked participants to indicate their level of confidence in meeting the demands of the Principal Quality Practice Guideline by choosing a level of confidence on a 10 point Likert Scale for each of the seven dimensions that define the PQPG (see Table 13). Participants who indicated a 9 or a 10 on the scale perceive themselves as having a very high level of confidence in meeting that particular dimension. Participants choosing a 7 or 8 indicate a high level of confidence, those choosing a 5 or 6 indicate a moderate level and those who choose 4 and below are indicating a low level of confidence in meeting the particular dimension.

Fostering Effective Relationships

The Principal Quality Practice Guideline (2008) describes the dimension of *Fostering Effective Relationships* as, "The principal builds trust and fosters positive working relationships, on the basis of appropriate values and ethical foundations, within the school community -- students, teachers and other staff, parents, school council and others who have an interest in the school" (p. 5).

Certainly with a mean score of 8.36 the average ASD#1 school based leader's perceived ability to develop and foster relationship is one of their most confident dimensions (see Table 13). A comparatively low standard deviation of 1.05 illustrates the dimension's lower range variation among school leaders. 47.73% (21) of ASD#1 school leaders felt they had a very high confidence rating in developing and fostering relationships. Another 47.73% (21) felt they had a high level of confidence while 4.55% (2) school leaders placed themselves in a moderate confidence category.

This pattern of confidence in their ability to foster effective relationships is clearly seen in the qualitative data as well. Responses from the interview participants indicated an obvious pattern of confidence in their ability to master this dimension. Important comments from many of the interviewees provided a sense that this dimension was the foundational dimensions from which they build skills and abilities in the other dimensions.

Leithwood et al. (2008) would agree that fostering effective relationships is probably one of the more influential effects school leaders will have on student learning. As Claim Four in their *Seven Strong Claims about Successful School Leadership* (2008), Leithwood and his colleagues state that, "School leaders improve teaching and learning indirectly and most powerfully through their influence on staff motivation, commitment and working conditions" (p. 32). All of these elements can only be accomplished though a carefully developed relationship between the school leader and the individual teacher.

Embodying Visionary Leadership

The second dimension in the PQPG, *Embodying Visionary Leadership*, is described as, "The principal collaboratively involves the school community in creating and sustaining shared school values, vision, mission and goals" (p.5).

Responses to the visionary leadership dimension revealed a slightly lower mean than the previous dimension - the confidence level for the average ASD#1 school leader is 7.61 with a standard deviation of 1.34. Still, ASD#1 school leaders indicate a strong level of confidence in providing visionary leadership. 29.55% (13) of school leaders felt they have a very high level of confidence in meeting this dimension, 52.27% (23) of

school leaders indicate they feel highly confident, 15.91% (7) feel moderately confident and only 2.27% (1) have low confidence in meeting this dimension (see Table 13).

Contrasting the quantitative data, interviewee participants did not indicate this dimension as one they feel particularly confident in. The process of the interview may have allowed a deeper reflection of the participants' abilities in this area, thus resulting in a common pattern for interviewees indicating a lower confidence rating. Interviewees did, however, agree it was a highly important area for school based leaders to develop.

The literature strongly supports the importance of visionary leadership. "Leaders are uniquely positioned to ensure that amid the busyness and bombardment that all organizations endure, the dream remains central. Leaders nourish the dream by keeping each person fully aware of an organization's purpose and goals" (Schmoker, 1999, p. 115). The importance of developing the skill and understanding needed to foster and maintain vision for any organization is supported by its consistent appearance in standards for quality principal practices in most, if not all, educational organizational documentation. The Alberta Teachers' Association states in its Leadership Quality Standard that, "The administrator sees the important role of public education in society and works with staff and community to chart the direction of the school and to provide opportunities for students to prepare for the future" (p. 2). The College of Alberta School Superintendents document, Quality Standards of Practice for School Principals, states that, "The school principal focuses on and promotes improved student learning and development by collaborating with students, staff, parents, school council and community to develop, implement, and monitor a shared vision for the school" (p. 3). Reference to vision building and maintenance are also seen in the United States with their *Educational*

Leadership Policy Standards: ISLLC (2008) (see Appendix D) and in the United

Kingdom in their *The United Kingdom's National Standards for Headteachers* (2004)

(see Appendix E).

Leading a Learning Community

The dimension of *Leading in a Learning Community* is described by the PQPS as,

"The principal nurtures and sustains a school culture that values and supports learning"

(p. 6). This, the document continues, includes notions of a culture of high expectation and

meaningful involvement from all stakeholders.

ASD#1 had been working for a number of years on developing Professional

Learning Communities (PLCs) within its schools. Several years ago ASD#1 school based

leaders attended a retreat with Robert Eaker, co-author of *Professional Learning*

Communities at Work, and spent three days in intensive conversation around how to build

and maintain PLCs within their school. Many of the school leaders who have responded

to this survey have been fairly successful in achieving an environment of the professional

learning community in their schools. Others have tried to implement PLCs and have run

into roadblocks. Still others may not have been exposed to this training due to recently

joining ASD#1 or the school leadership role.

The result of the training and school division follow-up, I believe, is reflected in

the high confidence level from a large majority of ASD#1 school based leaders. The

average school based leader indicated a mean confidence level of 8.02 which places it in

a high confidence level. The standard of deviation of 1.23 is exactly mid range when

compared to the standard deviation of the six other dimensions. Four indications in the

moderate level forced the standard deviation to be slightly higher, however these outlier

responses must be measured realistically against the general pattern of high to very high confidence. The data confirmed that 36.36% (16) of school based leaders have a very high confidence level, 54.55% (24) of school based leaders indicate they have a high confidence level in leading in a learning community and only 9.09% (4) indicated they have a moderate level of confidence in meeting this dimension. No ASD#1 school based leaders indicated a low confidence level (see Table 13).

Interviewees agreed with the high mean response and further indicated that much of their confidence in developing PLCs was a direct result of the in-service and then on-going school leadership experience of establishing and maintaining professional learning communities with their schools.

Providing Instructional Leadership

The Principal Quality Practice Guideline describes the *Providing Instructional Leadership* dimension as, "The principal ensures that all students have ongoing access to quality teaching and learning opportunities to meet the provincial goals of education" (p.6).

As school leaders, providing instructional leadership is one of the most important responsibilities. School based leaders in ASD#1 indicated a high level of confidence in meeting this dimension of the PQPG with a mean of 7.84 and, with the third lowest of the seven dimensions, a comparatively low standard deviation of 1.19. The data showed that 27.27% (12) of school based leaders indicated that they have a very high level of confidence in providing instructional leadership, 59.09% (26) feel they have a high level of confidence, and 13.64% (6) of school based leaders in ASD#1 have a moderate level of confidence in providing instructional leadership (see Table 13).

Qualitative data support the quantitative indicating a high confidence in meeting this dimension by the interviewees. Issues of time management and the vastness of curriculum design and strategies concerned the interviewees although the general feeling was that they were continually preparing themselves. The high confidence levels, according to interviewees, were based greatly on their continued in-service commitments. The importance of instructional leaderships is certainly not lost on ASD#1 school based leaders. Instructional leadership, when school based leaders coordinate, monitor, and evaluate curriculum, instruction and assessment (Murphy, 1990), is considered extremely valuable to the indirect improvement of student learning. Senge (2000) takes it a step further to state that as school leaders engage in instructional leadership they, "become even more of a fulcrum point – not just a supervisor of teachers, but a 'lead teacher and lead learner', and steward of the learning process as a whole" (p. 15).

Developing and Facilitating Leadership

To satisfactorily meet the dimension of *Developing and Facilitating Leadership*, the Principal Quality Practice Guideline requires that, "The principal promotes the development of leadership capacity within the school community --students, teachers and other staff, parents, school council for the overall benefit of the school community and education system" (p. 6).

Survey data showed ASD#1 school based leaders expressed high confidence in developing and facilitating leadership with a mean score of 8.02 and a standard deviation of 1.37. The data also showed that 38.64% (17) of ASD#1 school based leaders indicated they have a very high confidence level in developing and facilitating leadership, 47.73% (21) indicated a high confidence level in this dimension and the remaining 11.6% (5)

indicated they have a moderate level of confidence (see Table 13). The general pattern in

the qualitative data supports that found in the quantitative data and indicates a high level

of confidence in developing and facilitating leadership.

Gene Bottoms, senior vice president of Southern Regional Education Board,

believes that the facilitation of leadership is essential to create organizational structures

that promote high student achievement. Bottoms (2001) suggests school based leaders:

> …can assign a team leader, a department chairperson or an interdisciplinary
> leader to head each team of teachers. Team leaders should be teachers who have
> "bought into" the concepts of higher standards, better teaching and more
> advanced learning. Principals need to meet continuously with their team leaders to
> sustain the focus on curriculum, instruction and student learning. (p. 3)

Using evidence from a recent study, Leithwood et al. (2008) describe the effects

of distributed leadership as having a large impact on student achievement across schools.

They use the term "total leadership" to describe the combined influence of leadership

from all sources. The authors claim that through the direct effect on staff performance

there was an indirect effect on student learning and that, "total leadership accounted for a

quite significant 27% of the variation in student achievement across schools" (Leithwood

et al., 2008, p. 34).

Managing School Operations and Resources

The PQPG dimension of, *Managing School Operations and Resources*, demands

that, "The principal manages school operations and resources to ensure a safe and caring,

and effective learning environment" (p.7). Although considered the traditional role of the

principal, this piece of the school leadership puzzle continues to be extremely important.

To be successful in a school based leadership role the research literature points to the

balance of leadership and management.

This dimension had the highest standard deviation at 1.72, however, careful analysis indicates that only 4.55% (2) school leaders in the sample of 44 have a low confidence level in managing school operations and resources and only another 4.55% (2) have a moderate confidence level. The largest group fell into the high confidence range with 54.44% (24) of leaders indicating a 7 or 8 and 36.36% (16) of ASD#1 school leaders believed they had a very high confidence level indicating a 9 or 10 (see Table 13). This data allows for a mean level of confidence of 7.91 which easily falls into the high confidence range. The interview data continues to support the survey results and indicate a high, overall, confidence among participants. Two of the interview participants were also outlier respondent in the survey data. Individual strengthens and weaknesses are easily seen in this traditional managerial role. As interview data revealed most of the school based leaders felt comfortable managing the checklist approach associated with this dimension, however one participant was very aware of her abilities and indeed desire to not be immersed in the numbers. One participant was candid, and represented a common interviewee comment, in his reflection that the paperwork tended to be overwhelming.

Most standards developed for school based leadership emphasize the continued importance of principal as school manager. The ATA's Leadership Quality Standard (2008) reflects the common agreed upon notion that this is an important element of an effective school leader. "The administrator is responsible for directing the management of the acquisition, organization, utilization of resources and operation of the school to ensure a safe and effective learning environment" (ATA, 2008, p. 2).

Understanding and Responding to the Larger Societal Context

The seventh dimension in the Principal Quality Practice Guideline, *Understanding and Responding to the Larger Societal Context*, expects that, "The principal understands and responds appropriately to the political, social, economic, legal and cultural contexts impacting the school" (p. 7).

Again, a high level of confidence was expressed by ASD#1 school leaders in their ability to understand and respond to the larger societal context. Qualitative data collected from the interviewees supported the high confidence mean response of 7.77 and a standard deviation of 1.15. The data showed that 25% (11) indicated they have a very high confidence level, 63.64% (28) indicated they have a high level of confidence, 9.09% (4) indicated a moderate level of confidence and only 2.27% (1) of ASD#1 school based leaders responded with a low level of confidence in meeting the demands of this dimension (see Table 13). The interview data revealed an overall high level of confidence for most of the participants, however it also point to some confusion on the part of a couple of participants and some confessions to increase knowledge in this area. Confidence would increase with a greater understanding of what this dimension is requiring of school based leaders.

Overall, it is clear that the confidence level of school based leaders in ASD#1 in meeting the demand of the PQPG as set out in the dimensions is high. The average school leader in the study indicated an overall high level of confidence in his or her abilities to meet all of the PQPG dimensions.

I will admit I was surprised by the high confidence level of school based leaders in ASD#1 and was expecting a more reserved reaction to the PQPG and its dimensions.

My contention being that pre-service and in-service professional development had not been adequate over the years to prepare ASD#1 school based leaders to the point of high confidence. I believe I may have not taken into account the potential of school leadership experience and quality Masters' degree work to greatly add to the confidence of ASD#1 school based leaders. Analysis of the qualitative data indicates that school based leaders derive much of their confidence from previous experience and in-service training.

Another explanation for the overall high confidence in their ability to meet the demands of the PQPG may be in the recent in-service experiences ASD#1 school base leaders have had. A few months before the survey was released, all ASD#1 school based leaders attended a leadership retreat with a focus on analyzing the PQPG. Equally advantageous was the lead up to the retreat, which included an introduction, through administrator monthly meetings, to the document to avoid being overwhelmed by is range and level of expectation.

Further examination of the qualitative data indicates that most participants have enjoyed what they perceive as quality in-service experiences. These in-services have directly or in-directly influenced their confidence levels.

The noteworthy conclusion shown by these high confidence results is in the excellent position this has place ASD#1. When a significant majority of the school based leaders in this school division feel highly confident in mastering the dimensions indicated in the PQPG the school division is in a perfect position to see a correlation to improved student learning and results.

School Based Leaders' Perception of Their Education, Pre-service Training, In-service

Training, and Previous Experience

ASD#1 school leaders were asked to indicate to what level they perceived their

formal education, pre-service training, in-service training or previous experience is

helping them meet each of the seven dimensions of the PQPG. This question was asked

using a 5 point Likert Scale with 1 indicating the participant strongly disagreed and 5

indicating the participant strongly agreed.

Undergraduate Degree

When asked if their undergraduate degree has prepared them for the demands of

the PQPG none of the respondents indicated that they strongly agreed, 29.55% (13)

indicated they agree, 22.73% (10) indicated a neutral response, 34.08% (15) indicated

they disagreed, 9.09% (4) indicated they strongly disagreed, and 4.55% (2) indicated that

the question did not apply to them (see Table 14). The mean response was 2.76 with a

standard deviation of 0.99. The effect of an undergraduate degree on ASD#1 school

leaders' preparation to meet the demand of the PQPG was very low. The mean response

of 2.76 indicated a range between disagree and a neutral response with a standard

deviation of 0.99 indicating a close range of responses from the sample.

Qualitative data supported the overall low mean response in the survey data.

Interviewees disagreed with the statement that their undergraduate degrees have prepared

them for the PQPG. It was not expected that school based leaders would find their

undergraduate degrees a strong element in their preparation for the PQPG, however, it

does illustrate the possible need to begin to connect certain educational and pre-service

elements in order to secure a continuum of learning.

Masters Degree

When asked to indicate to what level of agreement they perceived their Masters

Degree has prepared them for the demands of the PQPG, 22.73% (10) indicated they

strongly agreed, 40.91% (18) indicated they agreed, 2.27% (1) indicated a neutral

response, 4.55% (2) indicated they disagreed, 2.27% (1) indicated they strongly

disagreed, and 27.27% (12) indicated they hadn't yet earned a Masters Degree (see Table

14). School leaders in ASD#1 responded with a mean of 4.19 and a standard deviation of

0.77 to their perception of the effectiveness of their Masters Degree work on their ability

to meet the dimensions of the PQPG. After school leadership experience, ASD#1 school

based leaders felt, by mean score (4.19), that their Masters Degree was equal to in-service

training as the second most effective element in preparing them to meet the demands of

the PQPG.

Again interview data supports the claim by the survey data that Masters Degree

work greatly prepared ASD#1 school based leaders to meet the demands of the PQPG.

Quality Masters Degree experiences have been the norm for most school based leaders in

ASD#1. School based leaders indicated that dimensions in the PQPG had been addressed

and study in one form or another during their Masters Degree work. It is important to

note that most (see Table 6) of the school based leaders in ASD#1 who are in progress of

or have completed their Masters Degrees focused on leadership and specifically

educational leadership. Masters programs with these focuses have obviously touched on

many of the dimensions presented in the PQPG and the result has been beneficial for

these leaders now charged with meeting its demands.

School Leadership Experience

When asked if their experience as a school leader has prepared them for the demands of the PQPG, 54.55% (24) responded they strongly agreed, 40.91% (18) indicated they agreed, 2.27% (1) indicated a neutral response, and 2.27% (1) indicated he/she strongly disagreed (see table 14). With a mean of 4.53 and a standard deviation of 0.54 most ASD#1 school based leaders perceived that previous school leadership experience was, by far, the most effective preparation to meet the PQPG. Analysis of the interview data supported the strongly agree claim that school leadership experience has greatly prepared them for the demands of the PQPG.

As one looks at the PQPG it is obvious how school leadership experience would be greatly beneficial in meeting the demands of the dimensions. As the school leaders become more familiar with the roles and responsibility expected from them through positive and negative experiences their understanding and skills are honed to successfully meet these demands.

Pre-service Training

When asked if their pre-service training has prepared them for the demands of the PQPG only 11.36% (5) indicated they strongly agreed, 38.63% (17) indicated they agreed, 13.64% (6) indicated a neutral response, 6.82% (3) indicated the disagreed, 4.55% (2) indicated they strongly disagreed, and 25% (11) indicated they hadn't done any pre-service training (see Table 14). The mean response for ASD#1 school leaders' perception of whether pre-service training had prepared them for the demands of the PQPG was 3.61 indicating a range between a neutral response and agree. The standard deviation was revealing at 1.04. As the largest standard deviation of the five categories it

can be concluded that there were a range of positive and negative pre-service experiences among the participants.

Pre-service experience among ASD#1 school based leaders ranged widely as indicated by the standard deviation. This in itself is an indication of the inconsistency of pre-service opportunities for potential formal school leaders. Data from Table 10 helps to understand the results of this question by revealing that many school based leaders in ASD#1 either had poor pre-service experiences or very few experiences at all.

In-service Training

When asked if their in-service training had prepared them for the demands of the PQPG 27.27% (12) responded that they strongly agreed, 61.37% (27) indicated that they agreed, 9.09% (4) indicated a neutral response, and 2.27% (1) indicated he/she strongly disagreed (see Table 14). This element of preparation to meet the PQPG had a mean response of 4.19 and a standard deviation of 0.58. This was tied with earning their Masters Degree as the second most effective element used by ASD#1 school leaders to prepare for the demands of the PQPG. The standard deviation for this element (0.58) was lower than that for the Masters Degree (0.77) giving it a more concentrated range of overall responses.

As indicated earlier, in-service training ranked second with Masters Degree work as being effective in helping ASD#1 school based leaders meet the demands of the PQPG. In general school leaders have had positive in-service experiences and have felt not only that these experiences have been quality experiences in themselves but have cumulated into strong preparation for the PQPG as a collaboration of experiences. The

lower Standard Deviation should also indicate the general agreement among all ASD#1 school based leaders that their in-service experiences have been beneficial.

Although the "school of experience", as Mr. A points out, is perceived by ASD#1 school based leaders as the most effective preparation for the PQPG, training and education are also considered valuable preparation tools. Achieving their Masters Degree and appropriate in-service training raked high in the minds of ASD#1 school leaders. At the same time interviewees were careful to add that the key to their usefulness as preparation tools lie in the quality of the Masters Degree program and in-service training. A final revealing point is the reaction to pre-service training and that few ASD#1 school based leader felt that the training they received in this area was effective while others indicated they had no pre-service training at all. This reality points to the lack of quality pre-service opportunities available to ASD#1 school based leaders.

School Based Leaders' Perception of Elements of Effective School Based Leadership

In-Service Program Design

"Successful professional development takes time. Principals, just like their teachers, benefit from professional development that examines best practices, provides coaching support, encourages risk-taking designed to improve student learning, cultivates team relationships and provides quality time for reflection and renewal" (Fenwick & Pierce, 2002, p. 6).

Elements of effective school leadership in-service program design should take into account Knowles' (1995) work on adult learning theory. Some of the basic understandings include notions of self-direction and control, emphasis on group discussion, field experience, and problem solving based on life-centered situations. This

research on adult learning suggests that learning and motivation to learning is promoted

by programs that, "have a well defined and well integrated theory of leadership for school

improvement that frames and integrates the program [and] uses preparation strategies that

maximize learning, learning transfer, and leadership identity formation" (Orr, 2006 as

cited by Darling-Hammond et al., 2007, p.11).

Using the foundational principals of effective program design discussed by Davis

et al. (2005) the study conducted by Darling-Hammond et al. (2007) focused on eight

exemplary school leadership development programs. The study pointed out that their

eight exemplary programs' approaches to in-service learning were unique and effective.

They determined that first these programs focused on,

> …a comprehensive approach that enables principals to develop their instructional
> leadership abilities in practice, by connecting new knowledge to specific, concrete
> practices. Second, they conceptualize leadership development as a continuum
> extending from pre-service through induction, ongoing support, and engagement
> of expert and retired principals in mentoring. Third, they conceptualize leadership
> as a communal activity embedded in collective work around practice, rather than
> as a solitary activity. (Darling-Hammond et al., 2007, p. 82-83)

The study also emphasizes the importance of a "comprehensive approach to

developing practice in practice" (p. 83). Each of the exemplary districts studied had

developed multiple opportunities for principals to connect student learning, teacher

development and school leadership in both theory and practice.

Using the Davis et al. (2005) research review Darling-Hammond et al. (2007)

summarized a framework or model of effective school leadership design elements. I have

used this list of proven effective program design elements to frame what ASD#1 school

based leaders perceive as high priority elements in an effective leadership development

program. As explained in detail in the literature review this Davis and Darling-Hammond

Model includes curricular coherence around a set of shared values and beliefs, research-based content, field-based internships, mentorship or coaching, problem-based learning strategies, cohort groups, and collaboration between universities and school districts, vigorous recruitment of high-ability candidates and a continuum of career-long development opportunities.

Using a Likert Scale of 1 through 10, participants were asked to determine what they believed were program designs of high priority, with 10 indicating the highest priority (see Table 15). They were to determine what priority, in their minds and based on their experience and learning style, certain design elements should have within an effective school leadership development program. For the purposes of analyzing this question, responses were gathered into five categories. Participant responses of a 9 or a 10 priority of the element fell into the very high priority category, responses of 7 and 8 fell into a high priority category, responses of 5 and 6 indicated a mid-range priority where as response of 4 and below indicated low priority.

On occasion certain data was indicated far outside the mean. These data are known as outliers. Cohen et al. refer to outliers as, "an extreme score a long way from the others" (p. 513). Although outliers will be included in the means and standard deviation of the data, reference to them as individual scores will only occur when deemed important to the understanding of the analysis.

Curricular Coherence and Shared Values and Beliefs

The research data of the eight exemplary school leadership program designs studied by Darling-Hammond et al. (2007) point clearly to the necessity of curricular

coherence that links goals, learning activities, and assessments around a set of shared values, beliefs, and knowledge about effective organizational practice.

This element speaks to the need for clear focus and values about leadership and learning around which the program is coherently organized. As the second of his seven habits of highly effective people, Covey (1989) explains,

> To begin with the end in mind means to start with a clear understanding of your destination. It means to know where you are going so that you better understand where you are now so that the steps you take are always in the right direction (p.98).

Leithwood et al. (2008) claim one of the basic leadership practices almost all successful leaders draw on includes the ability to build vision and set directions. This, they argue, "carries the bulk of the effort to motivate leaders' colleagues. It is about the establishment of shared purpose as a basic stimulant for one's work" (p. 30). The notion of setting direction for an organization is a core leadership practice and the "evidence suggests that those leadership practices included in Setting Directions account for the largest proportion of a leader's impact" (Leithwood et al. 2004, p. 8). People, Leithwood and his colleagues suggest, are motivated by goals that they find personally compelling that help them make sense of their work and give them a sense of identity (p. 8).

Interview and survey participants clearly favored this program element as a high priority for effective school leadership program design. The mean priority for survey participants was a high 8.11 with a standard deviation of 1.50. 47.73% (21) of responses indicated this as a very high level priority followed by 38.63% (17) indicating that it was a high priority, 11.36% (5) of respondents saw this as a mid-range priority and only 2.27% (1) indicated that this was a low priority element (see Table 15).

Having a program that is anchored by a shared set of values and beliefs about what good leadership elements are and how they should be delivered can only be beneficial. Both the research literature and ASD#1 school based leaders support this as a high priority design element for an effective school leadership program. The importance of a shared vision is also supported by the PQPG in its second dimension *Embodying Visionary Leadership*. Although the context is different the notion of shared vision is important in a successful and effective school as well as a successful and effective school leadership development program.

Researched-Based Content that is Aligned with Professional Standards

As part of their extensive study Davis et al. (2005) determined that, "The content of a principal preparation development programs should reflect the current research on school leadership, management, and instruction" (p. 8). The study also concluded that any changes to the content of a program must include "developing knowledge that will allow school leaders to better promote successful teaching and learning" (p. 8).

Traditional thinking around leadership development curriculum has been changing. Orr (2006) points to a number of changes based on what current research is saying about the changing role, and therefore need for different skills and understandings of the school leader. "New course areas have been developed in change, conflict resolution, delegation, teamwork and communication, analytical and process skills, the capacity to foster learning communities, and understanding the larger political, social, and economic contexts of schooling" (Orr, 2006, p. 495).

Orr (2006) uses two examples to highlight how curriculum and program delivery in school leadership development has been revamped. Portland State University is

utilizing effective adult learning elements by shifting coursework, "from a conventional

format of non-sequenced, stand alone courses to an integrated, spiral curriculum, with a

progressive development of topics that are aligned with field experience" (p. 495).

Curriculum content also shifted from the traditional focus on management to a focus "on

school improvement and transformational leadership, using a problem-based curriculum

drawn from actual school and district challenges" (p. 495). At California State

University, Hayward, Orr (2006) explains that both curriculum and the delivery of that

content has changed by the integration of social justice and democratic leadership into

leadership preparation courses on developing community using inquiry methods, such as:

action research, student, adult, and organizational learning, professional and

organizational development, and information systems in schools.

Standards-based curriculum emphasizing the dimensions in the PQPG. A key

element of exemplary school leadership design revealed in the Darling-Hammond et al.

(2007) research was the necessity of connecting the program to a commonly shared set of

professional standards. In many of the exemplary programs studied in Darling-Hammond

et al. (2007) report the use of the ISLLC standards was common. In Alberta the PQPG

gives all school based leaders a professional standard from which to measure their skills

and abilities.

The question of whether the PQPG is a quality document that school leaders in

Alberta should accept as the document to hold their practice against is easily determined

by the extensive process the document went through to come to realization. The Principal

Quality Practice Standard [Guideline] was the result of a collaborative effort from a

number of stakeholders. All stakeholders had vested interest in the content of the PQPG

and were determined to have their voices heard. The stakeholder advisory committee

studied the current work on quality practice standards for school leaders already proposed

by the ATA, CASS, ASBA, AHSCA and the Interstate School Leaders Licensure

Consortium (ISLLC). They developed a draft document which was then presented for

review and comment by all school principals, superintendents, school council

chairpersons and stakeholder groups as well as the general public through the Alberta

Education website. The stakeholders group then revised the draft document based on the

feedback (PQPG, p.3). The resulting document is the essence of extensive research as

well as stakeholder voice.

Support for the Principal Quality Practice Guideline was definitely shown in the

reaction of ASD#1 school based leaders. 34.08% (15) of respondents indicated that they

felt emphasizing the dimensions outlined in the PQPG was a very high priority element,

50% (22) of the respondents felt it was indeed a high priority and only 13.64% (6) of

respondents indicated it was a mid-range priority (see Table 15). A high priority mean

was generated by the responses at 7.98 with a standard deviation of 1.47.

As indicated earlier in the analysis of the confidence ASD#1 school based leaders

have toward the dimensions of the PQPG (see Table 13) and supported by responses to

this question, there is a sense among ASD#1 school leaders that this is a valuable and

necessary document. When it is used to help clarify their roles, provide much needed

professional development direction and act as an accountability document the PQPG is

seen by ASD#1 school based leaders in a positive light.

Standards-based curriculum emphasizing instructional leadership. Bottoms

(2001) argues that school leaders are, as well as many other things, leaders of

instructional practice and curriculum knowledge. He believes that it is the responsibility of school leaders to have a great understanding of the curriculum in their schools as well as the way it is being delivered to the students. He feels that school leaders must understand the curriculum "to determine whether students are being taught the body of knowledge, the understandings and the skills that they are expected to learn in the core curriculum" (p. 1). He argues that school leaders must take on the role of guiding teachers who are struggling with curriculum and "be able to help teachers identify the things that students should learn in greater depth" (p. 1). School leaders must have a deep understanding of what the standards of assessment are and be able to help teachers determine those standards for their students. Bottoms (2001) also advocates that school leaders should have "a working knowledge of research-based, student-centered instruction and an understanding of the conditions that will enable teachers to effectively use these methods" (p. 2).

Results from the Darling-Hammond et al. (2007) study clearly show the eight exemplary leadership programs focusing on instructional leadership as an essential element of their program design. The importance of instructional leadership as a key element in an effective program for school leadership development is supported by ASD#1 school leaders in the analysis of the quantitative data. 40.91% (18) of respondents indicated they believed that instructional leadership was a very high priority, another 40.91% (18) of respondents indicated a high priority and the remaining 18.18% (8) of respondents felt that instructional leadership was only a mid-range priority (see Table 15). A mean score of 8.00 indicates that the school leadership in ASD#1 put a high priority on instructional leadership as a key element of program design. A low standard

deviation of 1.45 further provides evidence that, collectively, school leaders in ASD#1 rank instructional leadership as a high priority.

Comments collected from the interviewees indicate a reflection of the high priority placed on instructional leadership. "Instructional leadership is definitely a high priority. If we're not doing that we are only managers" (Mr. B).

Some concern was expressed regarding the vastness of instructional leadership and the need to be all things to all people. One interviewee commented that there were a large number of so called experts in instruction; however he felt that that was not necessarily a good thing. "No one can agree on what good instructional leadership looks like" (Mr. H). This comment is supported by Leithwood et al. (2004) in that there has been considerable confusion over the years as to what exactly instructional leadership is and that, "the term is often more a slogan than a well-defined set of leadership practices" (p. 6). Leithwood and his colleagues do offer a simple explanation of what instructional leadership should be. They suggest instructional leadership "encourages a focus on improving the classroom practices of teachers as the direction for the school" (p. 6). Confusion notwithstanding, they point out that there are a number of very well-developed models of instructional leadership that provide specific leadership practices that have been proven to have positive impacts on student learning.

Although challenging, the importance of instructional leadership is not lost on the vast majority of ASD#1 school based leaders. This is also evident in the continuous requests from ASD#1 school based leaders for instructional leadership in-services at the division level.

Standards-based curriculum emphasizing organizational development. Leithwood et al. (2008) explain that successful leaders have developed unique qualities and skill sets that allow them to, "establish working conditions which, for example, allow teachers to make the most of their motivations, commitments, and capacities…by fostering organizational stability and strengthening the school's infrastructure" (p. 30).

The Darling-Hammond et al. (2007) study revealed the importance the eight exemplary leadership programs placed on a standards-based curriculum emphasizing organizational development as an essential element of their program design. Although ASD#1 school based leaders agreed with the Darling-Hammond et al. (2007) study and indicated that this element was still an important priority it was not as significant a priority as other elements of program design. ASD#1 leaders gave organizational development a mean priority of 7.43 with a standard deviation of 1.56. They indicated that 25% (11) favored organizational development as a very high priority, a larger group of 43.18% (19) of leaders placed this element as a high priority and 29.55% (13) felt this was a mid-range level of priority (see Table 15).

Standards-based curriculum emphasizing change management. Key findings in the Darling-Hammond et al. (2007) study point to the common issue of developing change management skills in all the exemplary leadership programs. Darling-Hammond et al. (2007) suggest:

> There is a close interplay between theory and practice as these districts develop leaders who understand curriculum and instruction and who have the ability to manage a process of change necessary to improve schools. Principals learn concrete, grounded strategies for supporting teaching, learning, professional development, and instructional improvement that are solidly based in research on instruction and organizational change. (p. 86)

A lower mean score of 7.59 and a standard deviation of 1.64 indicates that this key element of school leadership program design is not viewed as significant a priority as some, however it still holds a high level of priority. 36.36% (16) of respondents placed this element in a very high priority category of 9 or 10, 38.64% (17) indicated they felt that this element was a high priority and placed in a level or 7 or 8 and 10 respondents or 22.73% (10) believe that this element has a mid range priority of 5 or 6 (see Table 16).

When considering the connection between this program element and the PQPG, links can be made to the seventh dimension on *Understanding and Responding to the Larger Societal Context*. Earlier data suggested (see Table 13) that although most school based leaders in ASD#1 felt comfortable in meeting this dimension some indicated they were either lacking in this ability or didn't understand the depth of this dimension. I believe a solid link can be made between the school leadership program element that emphasizes an understanding of change management and the leader's understanding and responding to the larger societal context. Certainly understanding and responding effectively to the "political, social, economic, legal and cultural contexts impacting the school" (PQPG, p.7) requests skill and understanding around change management as it effects the school and education in general.

Standards-based curriculum emphasizing leadership skills. Leithwood et al. (2004) suggest that there are some basic leadership skills that are the foundation of all successful school leaders. They include in these basic core leadership practices setting direction, developing people and redesigning the organization. Setting direction as a set of leadership practices is aimed at, "helping one's colleagues develop shared understandings about the organization and its activities and goals that can under gird a

sense of purpose or vision" (p. 8). Leithwood and his colleagues argue that the research proves that the contribution of a skill set aimed at developing people is substantial. Leadership practices included in this skill set are, "offering intellectual stimulation, providing individualized support and providing appropriate models of best practice and beliefs considered fundamental to the organization" (p. 9). The third core practice of successful school leaders is in the redesigning of the organization to promote a culture of success. Too often the efforts and talents of teachers and students are suppressed by the educational organization that is supposed to be supporting them. School leaders must take whatever action is necessary to remove the obstacles that get in the way. The concern for high stake testing numbing the creative instructional practices in favor of drill-and-practice techniques or the limitations put on schools because of budget restraints are two examples that school leaders must navigate their schools around (Leithwood et al., 2004).

The Darling-Hammond et al. (2007) study revealed the importance the eight exemplary leadership programs placed on a standards-based curriculum emphasizing leadership skills as an essential element of their program design. ASD#1 school based leaders strongly support this research as the key element of leadership skills was a high priority for ASD#1 school based leaders. The mean score of 8.05 with a standard deviation of 1.54 indicates an overall high priority for school leaders. 40.91% (18) of ASD#1 school based leaders felt this element was of very high priority by choosing 9 or 10, another 40.91% (18) respondents felt it was of high priority by choosing 7 or 8 and 15.91% (7) indicated they only saw the development of leadership skills as a mid range priority (see Table 15).

The common pattern in the qualitative data also strongly supported the necessity of developing leadership skills as essential elements of effective school leadership development programs. With the exception of one interviewee the respondents mirror the high priority placed on this element by the Darling-Hammond et al. (2007) study.

Field-based Internships under the Guidance of Expert Practitioners

In the extensive research on effective leadership development program element Davis et al. (2005) determined, "There is a sizeable body of research that suggests most adults learn best when exposed to situations requiring the application of acquired skills, knowledge, and problem-solving strategies within authentic settings, and when guided by critical self-reflection" (p. 9).

The effective learning provided by expert supervisors in practical learning situations is a key leadership development program recommendation and supported by the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB), "Provide high-quality internships — with well-trained mentors — that engage candidates in sustained experiences in key areas of school leadership responsibility" (SREB, 2007, p.14).

Hale and Moorman (2003) suggest that the notion of internships is becoming more and more popular in leadership development programs because of the experience it provides. They argue that internships must be a key element in effective leadership development programs. "Extensive clinical activities and field-based, mentored internships integrate the practical lessons of academic coursework and ground them in the day-to-day realities of schools. Students are given opportunities to solve real problems in real schools" (p. 9).

The overall results of the ASD#1 survey as well as comments collected in the interviews strongly support the above research and again support the conclusions found in the Darling-Hammond (2007) study where they suggest that the success of field-based internships lie in their ability to enable candidates to apply leadership knowledge and skills under the guidance of an expert practitioner.

ASD#1 survey results produced a mean of 7.84 for this key element indicated a high priority for ASD#1 school leaders. This key element was not as strong as some of the previous elements due to the influence of a couple of outlier scores. The standard deviation was higher for this element at 1.76 which indicated that the variance was larger between scores. Close inspection of these responses shows that a large number, 40.91% (18), of the respondents indicated that this was a very high priority and an equal number, 40.91% (18), of respondents indicated that field-based internships for aspiring leaders was a high priority. Only 9.09% (4) of respondents felt that this element was a mid-range priority (see Table 15). The lower mean and higher standard deviation was the result of two responses below the mid-range priority level. There was one response at level 1 and one response at level 3 for a total of 4.54% of the respondents.

Earlier evidence from this study indicated that many current school based leaders either had a disappointing pre-service experience or did not engage in a pre-service experience at all (see Table 14). The indication from ASD#1 school based leaders that internship experiences would be very helpful in preparing them for the challenges of the school leadership role provides an avenue to explore in not only full program design but as pre-service activities. Mr. Bs experience, as a teacher, when his principal actively provided informal internship opportunities was, in his words, "the very best preparation

for the job I could have gotten". Clearly the advantage of internship activities within an effective school leadership program would be in the follow-up opportunities a comprehensive program would provide.

Mentoring and Coaching

"The primary role of the mentor is to guide the learner in his or her search for strategies to resolve dilemmas, to boost self-confidence, and to construct a broad repertoire of leadership skills" (Davis et al., 2005, p. 10).

The advantage of mentorship appears to not only benefit beginning leaders but also experienced leaders. The notion of coaching and networking is emphasized by the work done by Darling-Hammond et al. (2007). They suggest evidence from the exemplary schools in their study concluded that leaders in these schools receive more opportunities to participate in networking, receive coaching and experience more visits to other schools (p. 83). Fenwick and Pierce (2002) agree,

> One of the most powerful approaches to professional development is mentoring. A mentor is a professional colleague and critical friend who helps the principal understand professional norms and job expectations, and provides helpful advice about professional challenges and career ascension. (p. 4)

Mentorship for beginning school leaders was a high priority as a key element for a leadership development program for most of the ASD#1 school based leaders again supporting the conclusions of the Darling-Hammond et al. (2007) study where successful mentoring or coaching supports modeling, questioning, observations of practice, and feedback . The mean response from the group was 8.66 with a standard deviation of 1.38. Based on the mean response mentorship is the most important key element of school leadership in-service development for ASD#1 school based leaders. 59.09% (27) of respondents placed a very high priority on this element by assigning it a 9 or a 10,

31.82% (14) of respondents placed a high priority on this element by assigning a 7 or 8 to the element. This left only 9.09% (4) of respondents who chose 5 or 6 as a mid range priority. No respondents indicated that mentorship ranked lower than 5 (see Table 15).

Clearly the comments expressed by the interviewees supported the high mean of the survey data. ASD#1 school based leaders place a high priority on mentorship and coaching as a key element in a school based leadership development programs. Interviewees stressed however, that important issues around mentor selection, relationship building, and mentorship skill and understanding were a vital in the success of any mentorship program. Evidence from the study conducted by Davis et al. (2005) concurs with these comments and that with all the potential advantages possible within practice of mentorship the mentor must have a specific skill set to ensure success. "Mentoring relationships should serve to reduce the distance between a learner's independent problem-solving performance and his/her potential developmental level achieved through problem solving with guidance from an expert" (p. 10). However, several comments also suggested that the expert is sometimes right in the building and that some of the best mentorship opportunities happen as part of a school leadership team. Mrs. F stresses the value of unique school context and that mentorship, "comes from within the school…as part of a school leadership team."

Many of the interviewees suggested that the use of formal and informal mentorship should be encouraged. Informal mentorship could be a simple as "just calling and getting advice from a peer," (Mr. E) or as Mr. H comments, "Some of it has to be informal. It can't all be formal. Young administrators have to be able to pick up the phone and ask, 'What do you think?'" These two comments point to what Darling-

Hammond et al. (2007) and Fenwick & Pierce (2002) describe as networking. The

informal mentorship of peers whether they be experience or inexperienced was seen as

advantageous in the form of networking. Fenwick & Pierce (2002) refer to Owen (2000)

when stating, "Literature on organizational effectiveness indicates that the presence of

norms of mutual support and collegiality results in greater leadership longevity and

productivity" (p. 3). However, Fenwick & Pierce (2002) also point to the work of Daresh,

2002; Neufeld, 1997; and Clift, 1992 when suggesting that rather than unstructured social

gatherings, "true networking is regular engagement in activities that have been

deliberately planned by the principals themselves, as a way to encourage collective

movement toward enhanced professional performance" (p. 4).

Clearly mentorship has an important place as a key element in school leadership

development programs, however, the comments offered by the qualitative data which are

strongly supported by the research literature suggest mentoring will only be effective if

the mentor - protégée selection is open, there is a quality mentor skill set in place, and

purposeful activities have been planned.

Problem-based Learning Strategies

Research highlighted in the Davis et al. (2005) report speaks to the importance of

problem based learning. As Hallinger and McCary (1992) state, "It is not enough for

principals to have a repertoire of behaviors; they must know how and when to use them,

and they must be careful to monitor their effects on student learning" (as cited in Davis et

al., 2005, p. 9). By blending theory and practical knowledge into activities centered on

complex real-world simulations of school leadership, students improve their problem-

solving abilities and at the same time "develop new attitudes and skills, experiment with

various leadership roles, and, ideally, practice the discipline of self-reflection" (Davis et al., 2005, p.10).

      In her research into effective leadership development programs, Orr (2006) suggests that active learning strategies rooted in adult learning are vital for creating dynamic learning experiences. "Several preparation programs incorporate problem-based learning to ground aspiring leaders in the problems of their field and to expand their problem-framing and problem-solving capabilities" (p. 495). She highlights the leadership development program at the University of Texas, Austin, as being case-study centered. She suggests that the evidence is showing the benefit of using active learning strategies such as experiential learning, reflective practice, structured dialogue, problem-based learning, and cohort learning communities. "Together, these ideas of active learning undergird the signature pedagogical initiative of the UCEA, which seeks to identify pedagogical practices that strongly support the preparation of learning-focused leaders" (Orr, 2006, p. 496).

      Survey and interview data again support the Darling-Hammond et al. (2007) research where successful problem-based learning strategies include case methods, action research, and projects that link theory and practice and support reflection. Survey results show that ASD#1 school based leaders felt this was a high (8.08) priority in their mean response with a standard deviation of 1.64. The data also showed 65.91% (29) of respondents felt that this element was a very high priority with 47.73% (21) indicating that they felt this element was a high priority. Only four or 9.09% of ASD#1 school based leaders rated this element at a mid range priority (see Table 15).

Problem-based learning as a key element in an effective school based leadership program design attracted considerable support from ASD#1 school based leaders because it is central to how most adults learn effectively. Knowles' (1995) work on adult learning theory, as well as many other experts in this field, supports the benefit of the problem solving approach to teaching and learning.

Cohort Groups Emphasizing Collaboration and Teamwork

Darling-Hammond et al. (2007) describe, "The primary delivery strategy for professional development in all these [exemplary] districts has been to create leadership learning communities of practice" (p. 89). Here they suggest these school districts, as part of the leadership development program, have provided principals multiple opportunities to work in groups around instructional leadership development, participate in principal's networks, participate in specific groupings (ie. middle level leaders) in long term professional development courses, host book clubs, lead small workshops, take university courses together, attend conferences together, engage in collaborative research, and visit other schools to engage in peer observation or coaching or shared practice (p. 91). "Typically," Hale and Moorman (2003) suggest, "such programs are cohort-based and serve between 20 and 25 students who enter the program at the same time and are bonded into a community of learners" (p. 9).

Knowles' (1995) notions of adult learning are reflected in the research conclusion on effective leadership development programs found by Davis et al. (2005). "Proponents of cohort grouping strategies maintain that adult learning is best accomplished when it is part of a socially cohesive activity structure that emphasizes shared authority for learning,

opportunities for collaboration, and teamwork in practice-oriented situations" (Barnett, Basom, Yerkes, & Norris, 2000 as cited by Davis et al., 2005, p.10).

Davis et al. (2005) refer to Browne-Ferrigno and Muth's (2001) suggestion that cohorts model the type of team building that is increasingly encouraged among school faculty, this being a model that many educators are becoming familiar with in their daily lives.

Most ASD#1 school based leaders placed a high priority on cohort groups as an effective program element. This supports the above research and the Darling-Hammond et al. (2007) finding that the use of cohort groups creates opportunities for collaboration and teamwork in practice oriented situations. This key element saw a very high priority level of 61.36% (27) as respondents chose 9 or 10 with another 29.55% (13) of respondents indicating they felt it was a high priority by choosing 7 or 8 on the 10 point scale. Only 4 respondents or 9.09% felt it was a mid range or lower priority as a key element of a leadership development program (see Table 15). The high level mean of 8.61 further illustrates the importance school leaders place on this element, however the comparatively high standard deviation of 1.72 was influenced by the outlier score of one respondent at level 1.

Mr. A commented on the positive influence of collaborative work of a number of school leader groups already established in ASD#1 and how they have been successful in supporting school leadership and developing relationships through networking. This belief is supported by Hale and Moorman (2003) in what they refer to as the positive result of cohorts when groups of school leaders are "bonded into a community of learners" (p. 9). Mr. H supports the comments stated by Mr. A however, in frustration,

goes one step further to comment that, "We just don't spend enough time with other administrators talking about what we do. Every time we do that we run out of time. This tells you that it is meaningful and that people are engaged." In this manner he suggests that an organized cohort of school leaders, provided with the time and resources to meet, would satisfy much of what is currently missing in the school division. In recent years, however, an attempt by ASD#1 senior administration to provide time at monthly meetings for school based leaders to meet and discuss common issues and challenges has been met with enthusiasm by the school leaders. Much of divisional planning is approached through cohort structured committee work by school based leaders and senior ASD#1 administration. Relationships and trust are developed in these opportunities – allowing for an ongoing culture of support and learning.

Collaborative Partnerships between Universities and School Districts

This element of school based leadership program design demands that if a program is offered outside the school division there must be strong partnerships with the post secondary institution and ASD#1 to support quality, field-based learning. Orr (2006) suggests that traditionally schools of education have been very slow to reform to the new ideas of adult learning theory and promising practices. She argues there are many challenges facing these post secondary programs not the least of which is the "complacency of some faculty members, the lack of support or recognition from within their institutions, and a failure of the university to meet new resource needs" (p. 499). She does, however, agree that many of these institutional organizations are changing and reforming. Darling-Hammond et al. (2007) illustrate several exemplary leadership development partnership programs including, The Bank Street College and Region 1 of

the NYC Public Schools and The University of San Diego and San Diego Unified School District.

Research by Davis et al. (2005) concluded that there is an urgent need for stronger clinical training for school leadership development which has "encouraged a growing number of universities to collaborate with districts and schools as equal partners in the design, implementation, and assessment of pre-service principal preparation programs" (p. 11). The Davis et al. (2005) research also concluded that there is a strong movement to collaborate on in-service programs in order to blend theory and practice effectively as well as develop a continuation of professional learning throughout a school leader's career.

The Southern Regional Education Board (2007) argues that the partnership of school districts and universities is a very effective method of conveying "leadership knowledge and skills aimed at improving student achievement" (p. 14). They suggest continuous monitoring and assessment to ensure that the needs of both partners are being met.

When asked where ASD#1 school based leaders would prioritize this element of school leadership program design 47.73% (21) of the respondents place this element in a very high priority category. 40.91% (18) of ASD#1 school leaders indicate they felt that this element should have a high priority. 15.91% (7) of respondents prioritized this element of school leadership development as a mid-range priority (see Table 15). Although still determined to be an important priority with a mean of 7.91 and a standard deviation of 1.75 (one respondent indicated a level 2) on the 10 point Likert Scale this element scores a lower priority than several of the other elements. It is clear, however

that ASD#1 school based leaders support the research and see the benefits of this type of program element.

With almost 50% of ASD#1 school based leaders putting partnership between a school division and a university as very high priority on the survey results there is still an element of reservation that seems to come from the interview data. The thought of cooperation between these two institutions may be a difficult concept to grasp. Given the current reality of post secondary schools in Alberta a suspicion of whether or not this partnership could work may have been on the minds of many of the respondents. Clearly the idea appealed to the ASD#1 school based leaders as the benefits of mixing university level theory with the realities and practicality of the school context is obvious, however Alberta universities and school divisions may still have a long way to go before commonly held values and visions on school leadership are realized. Progress is indeed evident, as with the examples of Royal Roads University and more recently an agreement to provide a school leadership Masters program to school based leaders in Grasslands School Division by the University of Lethbridge.

Davis et al. (2005) argue that the university faculty and school division leaders must work cooperatively to ensure a common vision of school leadership development. Mrs. C's comment sums up the necessity of making this program element work, "Ideally that's your pool of future leaders and if you can make that connection with what our values and mission are early on it can only reap benefits for us in the long run."

Vigorous Recruitment and Selection of Candidates and Instructors

There is a significant amount of literature that argues for the careful selection of candidates into leadership development programs. Many authors are appalled at the

traditional recruitment processes employed by universities in order to fill leadership

development programs. Browne-Ferrigno and Shoho (2002) cite Tyack and Cummings

(1997) when they suggest, "The only criteria for entrance into educational leadership

programs in the middle of the 20th century was a 'B.A. and the cash to pay the tuition'"

(p. 8). This is a practice they believe is still wide spread today. Murphy (1992) as cited by

Browne-Ferrigno & Shoho (2002) suggests that, "the recruitment and selection processes

for entry into university programs remain 'informal, haphazard, and casual'" (p. 8).

> If states and districts want to place high-performing principals in all schools, they cannot depend on a volunteer pipeline that produces a large pool of aspiring principals who have untested competence in improving curriculum and instruction. Nor can they rely on traditional university admission criteria that emphasize academic credentials over proven classroom expertise and the ability to work with teachers to improve student achievement. (SREB, 2007, p. 11).

Milstein (1992) suggests that candidate selection must be purposeful with a

movement of emphasis from simply academic potential to a focus on leadership potential

to produce leaders not scholars (p.10). Norton (2002) goes farther to argue that, "The

tapping process for principal preparation should include criteria for selecting teachers

with a content master's degree, demonstrated leadership and a proven record of raising

achievement among diverse groups of students" (Norton, 2002, p. 8).

Table 15 illustrates that 52.27% (23) of respondents indicated they felt that the

rigorous recruitment and selection of both leadership candidates and instructors was a

very high priority. A further 36.36 % (16) of respondents indicated they believed that

recruitment was a high priority. Just 9.09% (4) of respondents indicated a mid range and

only one respondent felt this element was of lower priority placing the priority at level

one thus raising the standard deviation of the data to 1.77. A mean of 8.18 indicates that

an over whelming number of respondents place this element as an important priority in a

school leadership development program. This position again supports the research from Darling-Hammond et al. (2007) where vigorous recruitment of high-ability candidates with experience as expert, dynamic teachers and a commitment to instructional improvement is an important school leadership program design element.

By far the greatest common concern reported in the interview data was for the quality of the person placed in the leadership role. "It's all about the roster. It's all about the roster. How we tap those people on the shoulder…who we tap are priorities that should be determined" (Mr. A). To highlight this notion, Norton (2002) quotes Gene Bottoms, Senior Vice President of SREB, as saying,

> We have no business putting people in assistant principal positions who are not principal material. We've got to get better at choosing assistant principals who will seize the opportunity to learn and grow and prepare themselves for the top job (p. 8).

Participants highlighted the importance of selecting the right people for the job. This is balanced, however, with the belief that the system of selection should go beyond the simple tap on the shoulder because it excludes a group of potentially effective leaders who go unnoticed or ignored by their immediate supervisors. The selection process must take into account more than the candidates' current principal making a recommendation and include a detailed collection of data that paints the picture of the candidates' leadership potential. Equally important is the selection of school based leadership instructors. Only those instructors with a commitment to high quality instruction based on the principles of effective adult learning design and delivery should be involved in a school leadership development program.

A Continuum for Life Long Learning

      This element of the Davis and Darling-Hammond Model of effective school based leadership program design speaks to the need for a career long strategy for continued professional development. Peterson (2002) is hopeful when he concludes that, "One theme that has begun to shape the dialogue on program design is the idea that professional development activities should be ongoing, career-staged, and seamless" (as cited by Davis et al. 2005, p.11). Davis and his colleagues also suggest that there must be a closer link between teacher preparation, school leader's preparation and school leader professional development in order to develop a sense of continuity of learning experience that focus on instructional leadership and teaching. In this manner all training activities are built on previous experience and continue through one's career. They suggest the research is showing a similarity between innovative pre-service and in-service programs based on the continuation of one into the other. Models of mentorship and coaching are becoming far more extended than the "traditional one-shot workshops often criticized for their limited impact" (Davis et al., 2005, p.12).

      Darling-Hammond et al. (2007) study results supported Davis and his colleagues when it was determined that a "critical feature of the learning context for leaders in these districts is that they have conceptualized a continuum of opportunities from pre-service, through induction, and ongoing throughout the careers, with both group and individual supports for principals." (p. 86)

      In ASD#1 47.73% (21) of respondents felt that a career long strategy for continued development deserved a very high priority in a school leadership development program. 40.91% (18) of respondents indicated they believed that this element was of a

high priority. 6.82% (3) respondents placed this element in a mid range priority with only two respondents (4.55%) determining that this element was a low priority and placing it at a level 2 on the 10 point Likert Scale (see Table 15). The mean of 8.14 further supports the overall belief that a continued strategy for professional growth is a key element of high priority for school leaders in ASD#1. The comparatively higher standard deviation of 1.74 reflects the larger range created by the two outlier responses of level 2.

The PQPG is designed to promote continuous development of the skills and understandings of school based leaders. As a measure of necessary characteristics for effective principals, the document illustrates for new and veteran leaders areas to develop over the course of their careers. It would be expected that those school based leaders with more experience and training would have honed their skills and understanding in all seven dimensions by the end of their careers.

The above elements were considered by the Davis and Darling-Hammond Model to be highly effective elements of school based leadership program design. Research from the qualitative and quantitative data supports the elements purposed in the Davis and Darling-Hammond Model and, in fact, places all of these elements in a high level of priority.

ASD#1 School Leaders' Perception of the Methods of Delivering School Leadership

In-Service Programs

Davis et al. (2005) determined that one of the key findings in their research review was that there are several ways to deliver pre-service and in-service school leadership development programs. School leadership preparation and development programs can be structured under four categories; university based programs, school

district developed programs, programs designed and delivered by third party

organizations, and partnership programs between the first three.

Given a list of program delivery options, ASD#1 school leaders were asked to

determine what they perceived was the most effective method of delivering in-service

program key elements. In order to reflect the Alberta experience specific examples of

organizations were used for clarity of understanding. ASD#1 school leaders were asked

to indicate the effectiveness of each delivery method presented on a 10 point Likert

Scale, with one being very ineffective and 10 being very effective. For the purposes of

this study respondents indicating that a delivery method rating of 9 or 10 will be

considered very effective, a delivery method receiving a respondent rating a of 7 or 8 will

be considered effective, delivery methods receiving ratings of 5 or 6 will be considered

moderately effective, and delivery methods with ratings lower than 4 will be considered

ineffective.

Alberta Education Provincial Leadership Program

Hale and Moorman (2003) and Davis et al. (2005) describe a number of what they

consider highly effective examples of government run leadership preparation programs.

Government leadership academies often provide a range of programs for pre-service and

in-service school leaders' needs depending on the school leader's career stage. This study

concluded, however, that the use of Alberta Education as an organization to deliver a

school leadership program was not considered by most participants to be a highly

effective method. The mean rating of this method was 5.61 which falls into the

moderately effective range. A comparatively high standard deviation of 1.86 indicates

that school leaders in ASD#1 were fairly diverse in their rating. Only 4.55% (2) of

respondents perceive this method as very effective, 29.55% (13) indicated that they see

this method as effective, 50% (22) indicated moderate effectiveness and 15.91% (7)

indicated that using Alberta Education as a delivery organization would be ineffective. It

is worth noting that 6.81% (3) of respondents felt this method of delivery would be very

ineffective and rated it a 1 on the 10 point scale (see Table 16). These results were

supported by the qualitative data with the general belief that using Alberta Education as a

delivery method would ignore the importance of the local context.

However, as seen in Davis et al. (2005) and the Hale and Moorman (2003),

governments do have the potential to deliver effective school leadership programs. The

Alberta context should also be considered given this research. The Principal Quality

Practice Guideline is designed for all school based leaders in Alberta. To have a

centralized program of instructional delivery, one where a common curriculum is

delivered in a consistent manner to all Albertan school based leaders, seems to have value

as a consideration.

Alberta Teachers' Association Leadership Program

Davis et al. (2005) lists programs operated by third parties generally serve

multiple school divisions and focus on particular theories of leadership. They can be for

profit or nonprofit. The Alberta Teachers' Association falls into this category as a

professional association that provides development courses and workshops. The

Association currently offers multi-day, full day and half day courses focusing on specific

leadership issues. They do not, however, offer a comprehensive school leadership

development program. Another example of this type of delivery method in Alberta may

include programs offered by the College of Alberta Superintendents, however they too do not offer a comprehensive school leadership development program.

There was slightly more support for this method of program delivery as shown by the moderately effective mean rating of 6.16 with a standard deviation of 1.85. The data showed 6.82% (3) of respondents indicated they felt the Alberta Teachers' Association would provide very effective delivery of a school leadership development program. 43.18% (19) perceived the ATA would be effective in delivery, 40.91% (18) perceived the ATA would do a moderately effective job of delivering the leadership program, while 9.09% (4) respondents felt this organization would be ineffective (see Table 16).

The delivery of a school based leadership program by the Alberta Teachers' Association was not highly supported by the qualitative or the quantitative data. This perception by ASD#1 school based leaders may be the result of notions around the size and complexity of meeting diverse needs in a wide range of communities. The qualitative data brought forth concerns on the "top down" model and the lack of grassroots contextual consideration that might be realized in this delivery method. Consideration, however, must be made for the same reasons consideration of the Alberta government approach must be made. The centralization of a common curriculum with common learning strategies for all school based leaders would provide benefit.

Educational Professional Development Organization Leadership Program

Alberta is fortunate to have the Alberta Regional Professional Development Consortia (ARPDC). This is an organization made up of seven smaller regional consortiums that service the educational needs of educators and students at the provincial level, regional level and local level. The consortium is influenced by a number of

stakeholders including Alberta Education, the Alberta Teachers' Association, the College of Alberta School Superintendents, the Alberta School Boards' Association, and post secondary institutions. There are also several examples of highly effective professional development organizations in the United States such as the Southern Regional Educational Board and the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory that have long histories of success.

As third party organizations, the regional professional development consortiums like the Edmonton Regional Consortium (ERC) or the Central Alberta Regional Consortium (CARC) are in a position to offer a variety of short courses to school leaders throughout their region. Here we see more support for the effectiveness of this delivery method. The use of a third party educational professional development organization has a mean rating of 7.05 and a standard deviation of 1.83. This delivery method was rated very effective by 20.46% (9), effective by 40.91% (18) of the respondent, moderately effective by 27.27% (12) of the respondents and ineffective by 6.82% (3) of the school leaders in ASD#1 (see Table 16).

The closer the program gets to the local context the more support it seems to collect from the ASD#1 school based leaders. Connections to local and personal context are key to effective adult learning. The more removed from their personal experience and understanding the more difficult learning seems to be.

Local School Division Leadership Development Program

A local school division development program was perceived to be a promising method by the average school leader in ASD#1. The mean rating given to this method was 7.90 with a standard deviation of 1.84. The data revealed that 38.64% (17) of

respondents perceive this method to by very effective with an additional 47.73% (21) indicating they believe that this method would provide effective delivery of leadership program elements. Only 6.82% (3) of respondents indicated moderate effectiveness and 6.82% (3) respondents felt this method would be ineffective (see Table 16).

"Many large urban districts provide in-service professional development, but only a few offer pre-service preparation programs or wrap-around programs that help teachers prepare for the principalship and then support their practice once they become school leaders" (Davis et al., 2005, p. 15). There are several examples of in-service programs that have been developed and maintained by school divisions in Alberta including programs in the larger centers of Calgary and Edmonton but also in small divisions such as Battle River and Wild Rose School Divisions. In their extensive research project Darling-Hammond (2007) highlight the effective practices of the Hartford Pubic School District and the Jefferson County (Kentucky) Public Schools. Both districts were found to develop "a leadership program tailored to the needs of principals working in the district" (p. 19). After surviving multiple screenings in the research project to come out as examples of effective leadership development programs these two programs offer insight to the importance of the contextual development of school based leaders.

University or College Leadership Development Program

The notion of using a university or college developed and delivered leadership program rated an average of moderately effective by the ASD#1 school based leaders. The mean rating was 6.59 with a standard deviation of 1.87 giving it the widest range of variance in all the delivery methods studied. Table 17 illustrates that 11.36% (5) respondents indicated they felt this would be a very effective method of delivery, 52.27%

(23) indicated they believed this method of delivery would be effective, 25% (11) indicated a rating of moderate effectiveness, while 11.36% (5) perceive the use of a college or university delivered program would be ineffective.

Although most universities focus on educational leadership Master's degrees several innovative university based pre- and in-service programs were uncovered by Davis et al. (2005). Many of the programs offered effective program elements such as clinical internships with strong mentoring relationships, collaborations with school districts for high quality placements, and cohort groups engaged in studying a tighter, more coherent and more relevant curriculum. Alberta universities offer a variety of options for school based leaders in their development of leadership skills and understandings. One Alberta example might include an annual leadership series from the University of Calgary called the Centre for Leadership in Learning, where leadership specific issues are discussed.

Partnership Program with a University or College and a Local School Division

A partnership program with a University or College and a local School Division as a delivery method of providing a school leadership program rated a mean of 7.98 with a comparatively low standard deviation of 1.55. This method of delivery had the highest mean rating for effectiveness and lowest standard deviation among all other methods of delivery studied. 40.91% (18) of respondents perceive this method as a very effective way of delivering a school leadership development program, an additional 43.18% (19) believe this would be an effective method, and 13.64% (6) feel it is a moderately effective method of delivery. Only one respondent (2.27%) out of 44 felt this method was

ineffective as a mode of delivering school leadership development programming (see Table 16). Qualitative data also supported this method of delivery.

Davis et al. (2005) suggests that these types or arrangements can be very powerful in delivering school leadership development programs. The important factor that ensures success in this delivery method is when district and university partners have "developed a common vision of education and school leadership and where the principal preparation offered by the university is closely consistent with the instructional initiatives of the district and features internships in the district's schools" (p.18).

All of the exemplary school leadership programs examined by Darling-Hammond et al. (2007) highlighted the partnership between a school district and a post secondary institution. Hale and Moorman (2003) note the successful and effective relationships built between the University of Kentucky and Pike Country Schools and well as Austin Independent School District and the University of Texas. A successful example of this partnership may also be found in Alberta with the partnership of Royal Roads University and a number of Alberta School Divisions to deliver a Masters degree in Leadership. The program utilized the talents of not only university instructors but also those of Division personnel to deliver their curriculum. However, there is little evidence of follow-up training after the degree has been granted by Royal Roads University.

Research from the Southern Regional Education Board advocates that educational policy makers must make school leadership programs "the joint responsibility of university-district partnerships to ensure relevant content, quality school-based experiences and support for candidates" (SRED, 2007, p. 14).

In-service Based on Individual Professional Development Plans

Although this is not a specific school leadership program it is an indication of what ASD#1 school leaders feel about the current professional development situation they find themselves in. The respondents were asked to rate their current arrangement of choosing specific conferences and workshops based on individual professional development plans. The mean rating for this method of delivering professional development was 7.59, however the standard deviation was comparatively high at 2.59 indicating a fairly wide range of views. 36.36% (16) of school leaders in ASD#1 feel that this is a very effective method of leadership development, an additional 38.64% (17) perceive this method as effective, 18.18% (8) see this method as moderately effective and only 6.82% (3) feel this is an ineffective method of delivering school leadership development elements (see Table 16).

Alberta educational Policy 2.1.5 states that, "'Teacher Professional Growth' means the career-long learning process whereby a teacher annually develops and implements a plan to achieve professional learning objectives or goals that are consistent with the Teaching Quality Standard" (ATA, 2008). The traditional use of growth plans applies to school leaders as well as teachers. Some divisions within the province have asked school leaders to expand on this to include portfolios and evidence of growth. Because contracts for school leaders are renewed every five years formal evaluation procedures are in place for each school division.

Pasi Sahlberg, a Lead Education Specialist at the European Training Foundation (ETF) in Torino, Italy, spoke at the 2009 Palliser Convention in Calgary, Alberta. He spoke of the need to replace accountability with responsibility in education in Alberta. He

described the intrinsic responsibility of teachers in Finland to develop themselves

professionally and the trust that as been instilled in teachers and administrators to develop

personal plans to do so. Sahlberg's message was that educators are professionals and that

they have the ability to be responsible for their continued life-long learning. This belief is

reflected in the support that ASD#1 school based leaders have in the continuation of

professional development growth plans.

Chapter 6: Conclusions and Recommendations

This study was guided by two main research questions: first, do school leaders in one rural school division feel prepared to meet the demands of the Principal Quality Practice Guideline? Second, what type of program design for leadership development do school leaders in one rural school division need to help them build capacity to ensure they successfully meet the seven dimensions of Alberta's new Principal Quality Practice Guideline?

Data from the study indicates that ASD#1 school based leaders believe that the PQPG is necessary and important with over 93% of ASD#1 school based leaders agreeing or strongly agreeing that the PQPG is necessary in today's educational environment. The comments from the qualitative data indicate that the Guideline has not only given them a clear description of what the role of the principal is but also a basis from which to evaluate their practice and measure their growth. The idea of the complexity of the role was indicated in the interview data which has led to the confusion and some frustration that many have felt as the role of school based leader evolves and grows. The PQPG helps to organize the many hats of the school based leader in an understandable and even efficient manner. With this arrangement and clarification comes the notion of accountability. "Finally," as one interview participant observed, "we have the beginning of a job description that I can hold on to. A description of what I am supposed to do and a set of targets to aim for" (Mr. H). A general feeling of "relief" was noticed as participants explained that although the dimensions were wide ranging there was a sense that the target was now recognizable and somewhat stationary.

Overall, a high degree of confidence has been shown by the school leaders in ASD#1. At the beginning of the study, I was fairly certain that the Principal Quality Practice Guideline would be overwhelming and cause a great deal of anxiety among school leaders in ASD#1. This has not been the case according to the data collected in the surveys and interviews.

There are possible explanations for the high degree of confidence in meeting the demands of the PQPG expressed by the school based leaders in ASD#1. First, there has been a high level of effective professional development already in place in this school division. Second, the exposure to the PQPG and the resulting discussions and collaborative activities at the ASD#1 School Board and Administrators' Retreat in the spring of 2008. Third, follow-up activities from the Retreat such as team focus discussions around the dimensions and encouragement from senior administration to include the dimensions in their professional growth plans. Finally, the in-service school leadership training opportunities already provided by the district and the collaborative nature of this school based leadership group might have also added to the confidence expressed by the school leaders.

Another important key may have been the approach the senior administrative team had taken with the Principal Quality Practice Guideline. Their initial philosophy and key message to ASD#1 school based leaders was to take the PQPG as opportunity to develop the skills and understanding of highly effective school leaders. The focus was not on formal evaluation of school leaders as they measure up to the dimensions but on the opportunity to reflect on areas of strength and weakness and to develop action plans in the form of professional growth plans. These plans have been developed individually and

collectively as school leadership teams. The notion of intrinsic responsibility has been developed in ASD#1 school based leaders through this process and the resulting confidence in personal leadership skill is showing.

The qualitative and quantitative data collected in the study clearly indicates the perceived value school based leaders have placed on their in-service and pre-service training. ASD#1 school leaders not only have far more training after their formal appointments as principals and vice principals, they indicated they have more focused and effective school leadership training in their in-service experience. The data is very clear that pre-service training for ASD#1 school based leaders has very little value for their current positions. It is reasonable to assume that once placed in their formal roles as school leaders many have determined that focused professional development into areas of growth have naturally fallen under one or more of the PQPG dimensions. Leaders sought in-service opportunities that fit their needs. Additionally, within this mind set, many ASD#1 school based leaders were pleased with the initiatives of their district leaders to provide in-service training to meet much of what is expected in the PQPG.

Although experience, in terms of number of years in their formal role as a principal or vice principal, seems to be relatively diverse, the data concludes that the ASD#1 school based leaders in general have a relatively high level of educational training. This is seen by the large number who are either pursuing or who have already earned their Masters Degree. Masters Degrees with educational leadership and general leadership focuses were also noticeably the most popular choices for ASD#1 school based leaders. This additional higher level education certainly has been influential on the

high confidence levels of ASD#1 school based leaders in their ability to meet the demands of the PQPG.

Data from both the qualitative and quantitative research indicated that the large majority of ASD#1 school based leaders clearly agreed and supported the research literature on effective delivery and design of school leadership programs. There was strong support for the key characteristics presented in the Davis and Darling-Hammond Model.

With mean scores of 7.90 and 7.98 respectively, local school division developed leadership programs and partnership programs with school divisions and universities or colleges rated the highest with ASD#1 school leaders as the most effective methods of delivering leadership programs. A pointed message, however, collected from the interview data was that although the university or college partnership had the potential to be exceptionally successful, the type of relationship between the local school division and the post-secondary instruction would dictate the degree of success. The philosophy of school based leadership and its key elements vary from one university to another as the belief in key school leadership characteristics differentiate from one school district to another. It was hoped that with the framework established in the PQPG the commonly agreed upon curriculum would be set. The PQPG would set the standard for school based leadership program design for all post-secondary, school division and post-secondary partnerships, and independent school division developed programs in Alberta.

The conclusion that must be reached through careful analysis of this data has important consequences for ASD#1 and its development of a school leadership program. It is clear that both the research literature on effective school based leadership program

design and delivery and the perception of ASD#1 school based leaders correlate in the findings of Darling-Hammond et al. (2007) and Davis et al. (2005) as summarized in the Davis and Darling-Hammond Model. It is also clear that ASD#1 school based leaders support the creation of a strong development program at the local level with the theoretical backing of a post-secondary institution. Further, they support a strong standards based program that will lead them throughout their careers. The implications of such a program will not only benefit the current ASD#1 school division leadership but the increase in the quality of leadership will have long lasting effects on the quality of school based leadership and therefore teaching and learning.

The support of the research literature and the corresponding agreement by ASD#1 school based leaders to the effective school leadership development and delivery characteristics as summarized in the Davis and Darling-Hammond Model is important for the future of school based leadership development in ASD#1. It is recommended that ASD#1 adopt these program elements of design as the foundation of a highly effective school leadership development program. It is also recommended that the school leadership development program be developed and maintained by ASD#1 through a partnership with a post-secondary institution.

Although not explored in detail in this study, the research literature presented by Darling-Hammond et al. (2007) indicates the importance of also having a program champion and policies that highlight financial considerations. It is recommended that further study into the impact of these additional characteristics be undertaken.

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Appendix A

Alberta Teachers' Association: Leadership Quality Standard

(Approved by the 2004 Annual Representative Assembly)

Quality leadership occurs when the administrator, through ongoing analysis of the school context, demonstrates professional actions, judgments and decisions that are in the best educational interests of students and supports the provision of optimum teaching and learning opportunities. In all aspects of the role, the administrator operates in a fair and ethical manner.

Elements of the Knowledge, Skills and Attributes of the School Administrator
The following descriptors comprise a repertoire of selected knowledge, skills and attributes from which an administrator can draw as situations warrant. The role of school administrator is a multifaceted one and achieving balance within the immediate and contextual demands of the school is critical to providing adaptive leadership that focuses on teaching and learning.

The administrator's role is to facilitate teaching and learning by acting as:

1. An educational leader

The administrator is foremost an educational leader with a vision for education based on sound research, beliefs and values. The administrator is a visionary, change agent and risk taker. As an educational leader, the administrator sees the important role of public education in society and works with staff and community to chart the direction of the school and to provide opportunities for students to prepare for the future. In a professional learning community, the administrator collaboratively develops school mission and vision statements, builds school improvement plans, encourages participation in educational research, promotes changes in keeping with current and future needs, and facilitates appropriate parental and community involvement.
As an educational leader in a Catholic school, the administrator is called upon to minister to staff and students. The administrator provides opportunities for the continued spiritual growth of teachers in order to facilitate their ministry to students. The administrator is viewed as a faith development leader within the Catholic school community.

2. An instructional leader

The administrator is an instructional leader who ensures quality teaching and learning. While recognizing that the teacher is responsible for instruction and evaluation, the administrator is responsible for facilitating a climate and conditions that are conducive to student learning. This role involves supporting the work of teachers in implementing curricula, demonstrating an understanding of the programs of study and pedagogy, and facilitating classroom conditions that will lead to student success.

In this role the administrator is responsible for staff development, including selection and supervision of staff, support for professional development and teacher evaluation. In this role the administrator is coach, motivator, mentor, model, counsellor and teacher.

3. A decision maker

The administrator is a decision maker and problem solver responsible for establishing and nurturing stakeholder involvement in the school. The School Act, the Alberta Teachers' Association Code of Professional Conduct and board policy confer responsibility for certain types of decisions on the principal, however, an important part of this role is to identify areas of shared decision making and the ability to facilitate various decision-making processes. This involves the skills of facilitating, problem solving, team building, modeling, and empowering and encouraging the development of leadership skills in others.

4. A school manager

The administrator is responsible for directing the management of the acquisition, organization, utilization of resources and operation of the school to ensure a safe and effective learning environment. This includes management of provincial regulations, board policies, processes, human resources, time, technology and the school budget. The administrator functions as a planner, facilitator, negotiator and bureaucrat. The management role is supportive of the educational and leadership roles and is balanced with the other important roles.

5. An advocate

The administrator is an advocate for the school and for public education and is responsible for establishing and maintaining positive working relationships with all stakeholders. In this role, the skills of communication, conflict resolution and public relations are essential for working with students, parents, the school council and the school community. It is important for the administrator to be able to influence conditions and respond to local political, economic, social and cultural challenges. In this role the administrator promotes and supports those activities which will lead to fulfillment of the school mission and vision.

6. A professional colleague

The administrator is a professional colleague who is committed to being a leader of teachers in the practice of education. This role supports the collaborative approach to education in Alberta and affirms the importance of teachers and administrators working together to provide an educational environment conducive to student learning and professional growth. The administrator models career-long learning and is a teacher, team player and professional colleague.

Summary

The school administrator's role is to facilitate teaching and learning by acting as: an educational leader who facilitates the development, promotion and maintenance of a shared vision for the school community; an instructional leader who supports and ensures quality teaching; a decision maker who is responsible for establishing an appropriate collaborative, shared decision-making model for the school; a school manager who is responsible for organizing and operating the school to ensure a safe and effective learning environment; an advocate who promotes the school and public education in the community; a colleague within the profession who works with teachers to provide an educational environment conducive to student learning and professional growth.

(Alberta Teachers' Association, 2004)

Appendix B

Quality Standards of Practice for School Principals

College of Alberta School Superintendents (2008)

Seven quality standards of practice for school principals have been developed through an extensive review of current research on leadership, and extensive feedback from Alberta school principals and education stakeholder groups. Each standard focuses on the central purpose of the role of the principal to promote improved student learning and development. These standards are not ranked on a priority basis.

Knowledge, skills, and attributes are identified for each standard. Knowledge is information obtained through formal education, work, life experiences and learning situations that enable a principal to perform from an informed perspective. Skills are demonstrated abilities or proficiencies that have been acquired and developed through formal training and work and life experiences that allow a principal to effectively conduct activities and complete tasks. Attributes are qualities of character that a person must have to be effective and successful as a school principal.

Some of these indicators are ones that the principal will possess when hired while others can be learned through experience and professional development.

1. The school principal focuses on and promotes improved student learning and development by collaborating with students, staff, parents, school council and community to develop, implement, and monitor a shared vision for the school.
    a. Knowledge Indicators: The school principal understands:
        i. effective communication.
        ii. effective consensus-building and negotiation.
        iii. effective goal-setting and strategic planning.
        iv. methods to collect and analyze data.
        v. community culture and students and staff needs.
        vi. the school district's strategic plan.
        vii. the role of the school council.
        viii. in a Catholic school, the importance of serving in a faith leadership role to students, staff and community.
    b. Skill Indicators: The school principal:
        i. communicates effectively both verbally and in writing.
        ii. applies team-work and team-building skills to meet goals, objectives and a shared vision.
        iii. implements problem solving skills that will lead to a positive outcome.
        iv. works effectively with the school council.
        v. establishes and maintains workable relationships with a diverse range of individuals and groups.
        vi. reaches mutually acceptable or workable solutions.
        vii. reviews and interprets the school jurisdiction's priorities and utilizes school planning and goals to complement them.

        viii. seeks resources to support the implementation of the school's vision, mission, and goals.

    c. <u>Attribute Indicators:</u> Personal attributes that may link with these skill statements include:

        i. visionary, people-oriented, creative, task-oriented, patient …

2. The school principal focuses on and promotes improved student learning and development through cultivating and nurturing relationships between and among students, staff, parents, school council and other community members for continuous growth.

    a. <u>Knowledge Indicators</u>: The school principal understands:

        i. his/her strengths, limitations, values, and motives.

        ii. self-management.

        iii. the components of social leadership and relationship building.

        iv. the importance of cultural sensitivity and political acumen.

        v. the importance of creating a positive learning environment for staff that will foster collaboration.

        vi. the importance of working effectively with the superintendent and other central office staff.

        vii. the processes involved to bring about change in a school's learning culture.

        viii. the importance of student success and wellness as the central focus for the role of principal.

        ix. the importance and power of social awareness and relationship management in building relationships.

    b. <u>Skill Indicators</u>: The school principal:

        i. generates optimism and passion for teaching and learning and the collective work at the school.

        ii. cultivates an atmosphere of cooperation and trust.

        iii. motivates, guides, inspires, listens, and leads to reach positive outcomes.

        iv. works effectively under stressful conditions and periods of high demands, and assists staff to do the same.

        v. anticipates the needs for, and fairly applies the principles of teamwork and teambuilding to meet goals and objectives.

        vi. establishes and maintains effective professional relationships or partnerships with a diverse range of individuals.

        vii. leads the change process.

        viii. advises and guides employees in conflict resolution and negotiation with individuals and groups.

        ix. implements effective problem-solving skills in a variety of situations.

      c. <u>Attribute Indicators</u>: Personal attributes that may link with these skill statements include:
  - i. approachable, positive, perceptive, sense of humor, people-oriented, enthusiastic, fair, optimistic ……

3. The school principal focuses on and promotes improved student learning and development through utilizing school organization and management practices that reflect consultation and demonstrate sound fiscal responsibility and resource management in creating a safe, caring, efficient, and effective learning environment.

    a. <u>Knowledge Indicators</u>: The school principal understands:
  - i. processes and activities involved in organization and management at the school and district level.
  - ii. human resources management including interviewing, supervising and evaluating.
  - iii. processes and activities related to school safety and security.
  - iv. financial management and school-based budgeting processes.
  - v. issues related to school facilities and use of space.
  - vi. technology that supports both instruction and management purposes.
  - vii. applicable legislation, regulations, collective agreements, programs, and policies that relate to the role of the principal.
  - viii. legal issues impacting school administrative practices.
  - ix. processes involved in collaborative decision-making with stakeholder groups to obtain meaningful input in school organization and management practices.
  - x. the importance of staff and student wellness.
  - xi. the broader political, social, economic, legal and cultural context in which the school operates.

    b. <u>Skill Indicators</u>: The school principal:
  - i. reviews and interprets the school jurisdiction's long-range plans and utilizes school planning and goals to complement them.
  - ii. uses technology both administratively and for promoting student learning.
  - iii. ensures that the school plant, equipment and support systems operate safely and efficiently.
  - iv. promotes the creation of an aesthetically and stimulating environment.
  - v. manages the school in accordance with provincial legislation, regulations, contracts, and board policy.
  - vi. establishes harmony in relations with staff, students, and stakeholder groups in management and organization practices that maximize both student and staff learning.
  - vii. effectively deploys financial and human resources to meet the goals of the school based on data such as portfolios, demographics, surveys, assessments, test results, and other information relating to school operations.

       viii. cooperates with other leaders within the school system to support the educational interests of all students.

  c. <u>Attribute Indicators</u>: Personable attributes that may link with these skill statements include:

      i. task-oriented, people-oriented, accountable, fair, resourceful …..

4. The school principal focuses on and promotes improved student learning and development through effective leadership practices.

  a. <u>Knowledge Indicators</u>: The school principal understands:

      i. current research essential to effective leadership.

      ii. the qualities of leadership necessary for students, staff, and parents and school council to achieve shared goals and objectives.

      iii. the qualities of leadership necessary to create ownership by students, staff, parents, school council and community members with the school's goals.

      iv. the qualities of leadership necessary to build long-term capabilities to improve and maintain performance.

      v. the qualities of leadership necessary to connect people to each other to create a positive learning environment.

      vi. the qualities of leadership necessary to gain input from stakeholders in decision making.

  b. <u>Skill Indicators</u>: The school principal:

      i. demonstrates adaptability in using effective leadership for the situation.

      ii. anticipates the need for, and fairly applies the principles of teamwork and teambuilding to meet goals and objectives.

      iii. encourages, motivates, and leads employees toward professional growth.

      iv. fosters and encourages effective relationships or partnerships with a diverse range of individuals.

      v. utilizes appropriate methods to obtain input from students, staff, parents, school council and community.

      vi. develops leadership capacity in others.

  c. <u>Attribute Indicators</u>: Personal attributes that may link with these skill statements include:

      i. flexible, proactive, self-confident, supportive, approachable, perceptive, intuitive…

5. The school principal focuses on and promotes improved student learning and development through demonstrating ethical leadership.

  a. <u>Knowledge Indicators</u>: The school principal understands:

      i. the codes of professional conduct for employee groups.

      ii. the school jurisdiction's ethical beliefs.

      iii. the importance of treating people fairly, equitably and with dignity and respect.

      iv. the importance of protecting the confidentiality of students, staff, and parents.

      v. the values of the community.

      vi. the importance of ensuring that ethical principles are an essential part of the decision-making process.

      vii. the importance of meeting the learning needs of all students.

   b. <u>Skill Indicators</u>: The school principal:

      i. serves as a role model for students, staff, and community.

      ii. promotes ethical behavior in the school community.

      iii. treats all students, staff, parents and community members with dignity and respect.

      iv. makes decisions based on values, beliefs, and attitudes that are based upon ethical standards.

      v. acts in accordance with the codes of professional conduct of employee groups.

      vi. acts in accordance with the school jurisdiction's ethical beliefs.

      vii. considers the impact of administrative practices on others.

      viii. protects the rights and confidentiality of students and staff.

      ix. fulfils legal and contractual obligations in an ethical manner.

      x. advocates and implements programs to meet the needs of all students.

   c. <u>Attribute Indicators</u>: Personal attributes that may link with these skill statements include:

      i. honest, fair, objective, trustworthy, reflective, reliable, courageous

6. The school principal focuses on and promotes improved student learning and development through cooperatively developing a school culture and program that is outcomes based and meets the curriculum requirements and the needs of all students.

   a. <u>Knowledge Indicators:</u> The school principal understands:

      i. the central role of the principal is to focus on student learning and wellness.

      ii. pedagogy, curriculum and learning resources.

      iii. the importance of communicating the school's strengths to students, staff, parents, school council, community members, and the media.

      iv. the processes of conducting assessments to determine the needs and achievements of students and staff.

      v. the components of social leadership and relationship building.

      vi. learning leadership, professional learning communities, and staff professional growth.

      vii. building a program that will focus on the diverse abilities, needs, and interests of students and the strengths and capabilities of staff.

      viii. components of effective schools.

      ix. excellence and the importance of high expectations in all aspects of the school program.

      x. human resources management including supervision and evaluating.

      xi. professional learning communities.

      xii. current research on child development and how students learn.

b. <u>Skill Indicators</u>: The school principal:
    i. facilitates, initiates, clarifies outcomes, assesses, monitors, supervises, evaluates, and analyzes results in order to maximize student learning as part of a school improvement plan and focus of the professional learning community.
    ii. builds on students' and staff strengths and recognizes and celebrates accomplishments.
    iii. assists teams of teachers to foster student learning and meet desired outcomes.
    iv. organizes the instructional program to provide time for professional interaction for teaching and learning.
    v. collaborates with students, staff, parents, school council and community members to receive input, assistance, and support in building a learning community.
    vi. aligns human resources within the school to maximize student learning based on the strengths and talents of students and staff.
    vii. supervises and evaluates staff.
    viii. promotes differentiated instruction as a way to meet student needs.

c. <u>Attribute Indicators</u>: Personal attributes that may link with these skill statements include:
    i. accountable, task-oriented, supportive, perceptive, fair, reflective

7. The school principal focuses on and promotes improved student learning and development through leading and encouraging professional growth activities that demonstrate a commitment to life-long learning and continuous improvement.

a. <u>Knowledge Indicators:</u> The school principal understands:
    i. the need for professional growth plans.
    ii. current research on leadership and best practices for student and staff learning.
    iii. the importance of a balanced life style.

b. <u>Skill Indicators:</u> The school principal:
    i. develops a personal professional growth plan based on an assessment of his/her strengths, limitations, and a balanced life style.
    ii. participates in professional growth activities and models life-long learning.
    iii. facilitates the professional growth of staff.
    iv. collaborates with staff to reflect on best practices for student and staff learning.
    v. builds leadership capacity in staff.
    vi. balances work and personal commitments.
    vii. recognizes symptoms of stress in self and others and takes steps to promote good health and well being.

c. <u>Attribute Indicators</u>: Personal attributes that may link with these skill statements include:

    i. dedicated, self-disciplined, perceptive, reflective, proactive, people-oriented, approachable

Appendix C

Dimensions and Descriptors from the Principal Quality Practice Framework: Successful

School Leadership in Alberta

June 2007

1. Fostering Effective Relationships

The principal builds trust and fosters positive working relationships, on the basis of appropriate values and ethical foundations, within the school community -- students, teachers and other staff, parents, school council and others who have an interest in the school.

The principal:
- acts with fairness, dignity and integrity
- demonstrates genuine caring for others and cultivates a climate of mutual respect
- promotes an inclusive school culture sensitive to diversity
- demonstrates responsibility for all students and acts in their best interests
- models and promotes open, inclusive dialogue
- uses effective communication, facilitation, and problem-solving skills
- supports processes for improving relationships and dealing with conflict within the school community
- adheres to professional standards of conduct.

2. Providing Visionary Leadership

The principal collaboratively involves the school community in creating and sustaining shared school values, vision, mission and goals.

The principal:
- communicates and is guided by an educational philosophy based upon sound research, personal experience and reflection
- provides leadership in keeping with the school authority's vision and mission.
- meaningfully engages the school community in identifying and addressing areas for school improvement
- ensures that planning, decision-making, and implementation strategies are based on a shared vision and an understanding of the school culture
- facilitates change and promotes innovation consistent with current and future school community needs
- analyzes a wide range of data to determine progress towards achieving school goals
- communicates and celebrates school accomplishments to inspire continuous growth.

3. Leading a Learning Community

The principal nurtures and sustains a school culture that values and supports learning.

The principal:
- promotes and models life-long learning for students, teachers and other staff
- fosters a culture of high expectations for students, teachers and other staff
- promotes and facilitates meaningful professional development for teachers and other staff
- ensures parents are informed about their child's learning and facilitates their involvement as appropriate.

4. Providing Instructional Leadership

The principal ensures that all students have access to quality teaching and learning opportunities to meet the provincial goals of education.

The principal:
- demonstrates a sound understanding of current pedagogy and curriculum
- implements strategies for addressing standards of student achievement
- ensures that student assessment and evaluation practices throughout the school are fair, appropriate and balanced
- implements effective supervision and evaluation to ensure that all teachers consistently meet the Alberta Teaching Quality Standard
- ensures that appropriate pedagogy is utilized in response to various dimensions of student diversity
- ensures that students have access to appropriate programming based on their individual learning needs
- recognizes the potential of new and emerging technologies, and enables their meaningful integration in support of teaching and learning
- ensures that teachers and other staff communicate and collaborate with parents and community agencies, where appropriate, to support student learning
- supports the use of community resources to enhance student learning.

5. Developing and Facilitating Leadership

The principal promotes the development of leadership capacity of teachers, and other staff, students, and parents in a variety of leadership roles for the overall benefit of the school community and education system.

The principal:
- demonstrates informed decision making through open dialogue and consideration of multiple perspectives
- promotes team building and shared leadership among members of the school community

- facilitates meaningful involvement, where appropriate, of staff, students, and school council in the school's operation using collaborative and consultative decision-making strategies.
- identifies and mentors teachers for future educational leadership roles.

6. Managing School Operations and Resources

The principal manages school operations and resources to ensure a safe and caring, and effective learning environment.

The principal:
- plans, organizes and manages the human, physical and financial resources of the school and identifies the areas of need.
- ensures that school operations align with legal frameworks such as: provincial legislation, regulation, policy and school authority policy
- utilizes principles of teaching, learning and student development to guide management decisions and the organization of learning.

7. Understanding and Responding to the Larger Societal Context

The principal understands and responds to the political, social, economic, legal and cultural contexts impacting the school.

The principal:
- advocates for the needs and interests of children and youth
- demonstrates a knowledge of local, national, and global issues and trends related to education
- assesses and responds to the unique and diverse community needs in the context of the school's vision and mission
- advocates for the community's support of the school and the larger education system.

(Alberta Education, 2007)

The following are individuals appointed by their respective stakeholder organizations to the stakeholder advisory committee and contributed to the development of this document:

- Dr. Mark Swanson, Alberta Education
- Dr. Garry McKinnon, Committee Facilitator
- Sig Schmold, Alberta School Boards Association
- Jacqueline Skytt, Alberta Teachers' Association
- Dr. Brian Boese, Alberta Teachers' Association-Council of School Administration
- Dr. Mark Yurick, Alberta Teachers' Association-Council of School Administration

- Dr. Alyce Oosterhuis, Association of Independent Schools and Colleges in Alberta
- Diane Gibson, Association of Public Charter Schools
- Dr. James Brandon, College of Alberta School Superintendents
- James Gibbons, Council on Alberta Teaching Standards
- Gérard Bissonnette, Le Fédération des conseil scolaires francophone de l'Alberta
- Dick Baker, Concordia University College
- Dr. Florence Gobeil-Dwyer, Faculte St. Jean
- Dr. Glenn Rideout, The King's University College
- Dr. Janice Wallace, University of Alberta
- Dr. Jacqueline Ottmann, University of Calgary
- Dr. George Bedard, University of Lethbridge
- Elizabeth Dobrovolsky, Alberta Home and School Councils' Association (AHSCA)
- Gail Sarkany-Coles, Alberta Education

Alternate representatives:
- Dr. Bob Garneau, Alberta Teachers' Association-Council of School Administration
- Henri Lemire, Le Fédération des conseil scolaires francophone de l'Alberta
- Caroline Parker, Association of Alberta Public Charter Schools
- Duane Plantinga, Association of Independent Schools and Colleges in Alberta

Appendix D

Educational Leadership Policy Standards: ISLLC 2008

as adopted by the National Policy Board for Educational Administration on December 12, 2007

Standard 1: An education leader promotes the success of every student by facilitating the development, articulation, implementation, and stewardship of a vision of learning that is shared and supported by all stakeholders.

Functions:

Collaboratively develop and implement a shared vision and mission
Collect and use data to identify goals, assess organizational effectiveness, and promote organizational learning
Create and implement plans to achieve goals
Promote continuous and sustainable improvement
Monitor and evaluate progress and revise plans

Standard 2: An education leader promotes the success of every student by advocating, nurturing, and sustaining a school culture and instructional program conducive to student learning and staff professional growth.

Functions:

Nurture and sustain a culture of collaboration, trust, learning, and high expectations
Create a comprehensive, rigorous, and coherent curricular program
Create a personalized and motivating learning environment for students
Supervise instruction
Develop assessment and accountability systems to monitor student progress
Develop the instructional and leadership capacity of staff
Maximize time spent on quality instruction
Promote the use of the most effective and appropriate technologies to support teaching and learning
Monitor and evaluate the impact of the instructional program

Standard 3: An education leader promotes the success of every student by ensuring management of the organization, operation, and resources for a safe, efficient, and effective learning environment.

Functions:

Monitor and evaluate the management and operational systems
Obtain, allocate, align, and efficiently utilize human, fiscal, and technological resources
Promote and protect the welfare and safety of students and staff
Develop the capacity for distributed leadership

Ensure teacher and organizational time is focused to support quality instruction and student learning

Standard 4: An education leader promotes the success of every student by collaborating with faculty and community members, responding to diverse community interests and needs, and mobilizing community resources.

Functions:

Collect and analyze data and information pertinent to the educational environment
Promote understanding, appreciation, and use of the community's diverse cultural, social, and intellectual resources
Build and sustain positive relationships with families and caregivers
Build and sustain productive relationships with community partners

Standard 5: An education leader promotes the success of every student by acting with integrity, fairness, and in an ethical manner.

Functions:

Ensure a system of accountability for every student's academic and social success
Model principles of self-awareness, reflective practice, transparency, and ethical behavior
Safeguard the values of democracy, equity, and diversity
Consider and evaluate the potential moral and legal consequences of decision-making
Promote social justice and ensure that individual student needs inform all aspects of schooling

Standard 6: An education leader promotes the success of every student by understanding, responding to, and influencing the political, social, economic, legal, and cultural context.

Functions:

Advocate for children, families, and caregivers
Act to influence local, district, state, and national decisions affecting student learning
Assess, analyze, and anticipate emerging trends and initiatives in order to adapt leadership strategies

Appendix E

The United Kingdom's National Standards for Headteachers (2004)

1. Shaping the Future – Critical to the role of headship is working with the governing body and others to create a shared vision and strategic plan which inspires and motivates pupils, staff and all other members of the school community.

2. Leading Learning and Teaching – Headteachers have a central responsibility for raising the quality of teaching and learning and for pupils' achievement.

3. Developing Self and Working with Others – Through performance management and effective continuing professional development practice, the headteacher supports all staff to achieve high standards.

4. Managing the Organization – Headteachers need to provide effective organisation and management of the school and seek ways of improving organisational structures and functions based on rigorous self-evaluation.

5. Securing Accountability – With values at the heart of their leadership, headteachers have a responsibility to the whole school community. In carrying out this responsibility, headteachers are accountable to a wide range of groups, particularly pupils, parents, carers, governors and the LEA.

6. Strengthening Community – School leadership should commit to engaging with the internal and external school community to secure equity and entitlement.

Appendix F

On-Line and Interview Questionnaire

School Leaders Reflect on the Principal Quality Practice Guideline and Implications for Capacity Building in One Rural School Division

School leaders are those participants who have assumed the formal leadership roles of principal and vice principal in ASD #1.

For the purposes of this study **in-service training** shall be defined as all non-degree advancement training provided to the participant by the school division, government agency, educational association and all other third party educational organizations after the participant has begun his or her role as a formal school leader.

Pre-service training shall include all of the above training before the participant has begun his or her formal leadership role. In terms of pre-service training it is expected that the participant would have participated in these training opportunities as a teacher employed by a school board.

Section I

1. For the following question, please indicate your level of agreement by choosing the appropriate number from 1 to 5, with 1 being *"Strongly Disagree"* to 5 being *"Strongly Agree"*.

Statements	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
The Principal Quality Practice Guideline is necessary in today's educational climate.	1	2	3	4	5

Section II

What is the baseline of current experience, training and education for ASD#1 school based leaders?

2. What is your gender?
    a. Male
    b. Female

3. What is your role as a school based leader?
   a. Principal
   b. Vice Principal

4. Indicate total number of years of experience as a formal leader (principal and/or vice principal)
   a. First year
   b. 2 to 3 years
   c. 4 to 5 years
   d. 6 to 10 years
   e. 11 or more years

5. Indicate number of years as vice principal before assuming a principalship.
   a. Less than 2 years
   b. Less than 5 years
   c. More than 5 years
   d. I am a vice principal now

6. Indicate your formal education.
   a. 4 year education degree
   b. 6 year education after degree
   c. Masters with educational leadership focus
   d. Masters with leadership focus
   e. Masters with other focus
   f. other

7. How many books on school leadership do you read in a year?
   a. None
   b. Fewer than 5
   c. Between 5 and 10
   d. More than 10

8. How often do you read school leadership books or articles?
   a. Never
   b. Only when required by activities in ADCOS
   c. Once or twice a year
   d. Monthly
   e. Weekly

9. How many school leadership professional organizations are you actively involved in? Examples may include, but are not limited to, the Association of Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD), National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP), Alberta Teachers' Association Council for School Administrators (CSA), etc.
   a. None
   b. 1 to 2
   c. 3 to 5
   d. More than 5

10. What pre-service training (taken **before** your first formal leadership role as vice principal or principal) have you had? (check all that apply)

Masters completed	
Masters started	
University credit courses with focus on Leadership	
Start Right (CASS)	
Leading for Learning (CASS)	
Leadership Essentials for School Administrators (ATA)	
Educational Leadership Academy ELA (ATA Summer Conference)	
Banff Leadership Conferences (ATA)	
ATA School Leadership focused workshops	
Western Canadian Educational Administrators' Conference	
ASD#1 leadership workshops, courses, and programs	
Other school division aspiring leadership programs	
Other specific school leadership development courses, conferences, workshops or programs	

Please indicate other specific school leadership development courses, conferences, workshops, or programs you participated in **before** your formal appointment to a leadership role.

Courses	Conference	Workshop	Program

11. What in-service training (taken **after** your appointment to your first formal school leadership role) have you had? (Check all that apply)

Masters completed	
Masters started	
University credit courses with focus on Leadership	
Start Right (CASS)	
Leading for Learning (CASS)	
Leadership Essentials for School Administrators (ATA)	
Educational Leadership Academy ELA (ATA Summer Conference)	
Banff Leadership Conferences (ATA)	
ATA School Leadership focused workshops	
Western Canadian Educational Administrators' Conference	
ASD#1 leadership workshops, courses, and programs	
Other school division leadership programs	
Other specific school leadership development courses, conferences, workshops or programs	

Please indicate other specific school leadership development courses, conferences, workshops, or programs you have participated in.

Courses	Conference	Workshop	Program

12. How often do you participate in school leadership in-service activities?

In-service Program	Never	Once every 10 years	Once every 5 years	Once a year	Twice a year	Monthly
University credit courses with focus on Leadership						
Start Right or Leading for Learning (CASS)						
Leadership Essentials for School Administrators (ATA)						
Educational Leadership Academy ELA (ATA Summer Conference)						

Banff Leadership Conferences (ATA)						
ATA School Leadership focused workshops						
Western Canadian Educational Administrators' Conference						
ASD#1 leadership focused workshops, courses, and programs						
Other school division leadership focused programs						
Other leadership focused courses or programs						

Section III

How prepared do school based leaders feel they are to meet each of the seven dimensions of the PQPG?

13. Please indicate your level of confidence in meeting the demands of the Principal

   Quality Practice Guideline (PQPG) with each by choosing the appropriate number

   from 1 to 10, with 1 being *"Not Confident at All"* to 10 being *"Very Confident"*.

PQPG Dimension	*Not Confident at All*									*Very Confident*
Fostering Effective Relationships	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Providing Visionary Leadership	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Leading a Learning Community	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Providing Instructional Leadership	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Developing and Facilitating Leadership	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Managing School Operations and Resources	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Understanding and Responding to the Larger Societal Context	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Section IV

What training, education and experience do school based leaders believe has served them best to meet the PQPG?

14. Please indicate your level of agreement with each by choosing the appropriate

number from 1 to 5, with 1 being *"Strongly Disagree"* to 5 being *"Strongly*

Agree".

Statements	*Does not apply*	*Strongly Disagree*	*Disagree*	*Neutral*	*Agree*	*Strongly Agree*
My undergraduate Degree has prepared me for the demands of the PQPG	0	1	2	3	4	5
My Masters Degree has prepared me for the demands of the PQPG	0	1	2	3	4	5
My experience as a school leader has prepared me	0	1	2	3	4	5

for the demands of the PQPG						
Pre-service training (not a Masters) such as Start Right or similar has prepared me for the demands of the PQPG	0	1	2	3	4	5
In-service training after my appointment to a formal school leadership role has prepared me for the demands of the PQPG	0	1	2	3	4	5

Section V

Do school based leaders feel their pre-service and in-service training and education has left gaps, if so where?

15. Please indicate your level of agreement by choosing the appropriate number from 1 to 5, with 1 being *"Very Ineffective"* to 5 being *"Very Effective"*. Professional development opportunities currently in place to assist school leaders in meeting each of the specific dimensions of the Principal Quality Practice Guideline are…

PQPG Dimension	*Very Ineffective*	*Ineffective*	*Somewhat Effective*	*Effective*	*Very Effective*
Fostering Effective Relationships	1	2	3	4	5
Providing Visionary Leadership	1	2	3	4	5
Leading a Learning Community	1	2	3	4	5

Providing Instructional Leadership	1	2	3	4	5
Developing and Facilitating Leadership	1	2	3	4	5
Managing School Operations and Resources	1	2	3	4	5
Understanding and Responding to the Larger Societal Context	1	2	3	4	5

Section VI

What do school leaders feel should be the key elements of effective school leadership in-service program design?

16. Listed are several elements of effective school leadership in-service program design. For the following questions, please indicate your level of agreement with each by choosing the appropriate number from 1 to 10, with 1 being "*Low Priority"* to 10 being *"High Priority"*.

Key Elements	Low Priority									High Priority
Clear focus and values about leadership and learning around which the program is coherently organized	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Standards-based curriculum emphasizing instructional leadership	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Standards-based curriculum emphasizing organizational development	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Standards-based curriculum	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

emphasizing change management									
Standards-based curriculum emphasizing leadership skills	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Standards-based curriculum emphasizing the dimensions outlined in the PQPG	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Field-based internships for aspiring leaders with skilled supervision	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Mentorship for beginning school leaders	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Cohort groups that create opportunities for collaboration and teamwork in practice-oriented situations	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Active instructional strategies that link theory and practice, such as problem based learning	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Rigorous recruitment and selection of both candidates and instructors	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
If a program is offered outside the school division there must be strong partnerships with ASD#1 and its schools to support quality, field-based learning	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Career long strategy for continued development.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Please indicate other key characteristics that you believe **must** be included in a highly effective leadership program. (optional)

a.

b.

Section VII

What do school leaders feel the most effective way of delivering in-service program key elements?

17. Listed are several methods of delivering school leadership in-service programs.

For the following questions, please indicate your level of agreement with each by

choosing the appropriate number from 1 to 10, with 1 being *"Very Ineffective"* to

10 being *"Very Effective"*.

Program delivery	Very Ineffective									Very Effective
Alberta Education Provincial Leadership Program	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
ATA Leadership Program	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Local School Division Developed Program	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
University or College Developed Leadership Program (not a Masters)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Educational Professional Development Organization (ie. CARC)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Partnership program with a University or College and a local School Division	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Current arrangement of	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

school leaders choosing specific conferences and workshops based on individual professional development plans										

Thank you very much for taking the time to complete this survey. Individual responses will not be published. Data will only be reported in aggregate form and used by myself to draw statistical conclusions about the current formal education and training of ASD#1 school leaders, the confidence ASD#1 school leaders perceive they have in meeting the demands of the Principal Quality Practice Guideline, and what steps ASD#1 school leaders perceive are needed in order to build capacity to meet these demands.

If you have any questions regarding this survey or the analysis and presentation of the data please contact me at jthompson@asd#1.ab.ca

Appendix G

Participant (Adult) Consent Form

School Leaders Reflect on the Principal Quality Practice Guideline and Implications for Capacity Building in One Rural School Division

You are being invited to participate in a study entitled, *School Leaders Reflect on the Principal Quality Practice Guideline and Implications for Capacity Building in One Rural School Division*, that is being conducted by Jeff Thompson. Jeff is a graduate student in the Faculty of Education at the University of Lethbridge and you may contact him if you have further questions at 403-555-8702 or jthompson@asd1.ab.ca

As a graduate student, I am required to conduct research as part of the requirements for a Masters Degree in Educational Leadership. It is being conducted under the supervision of Dr. George Bedard. You may, if you wish, contact my supervisor at 403-329-2525. Dr. Rick Mrazek, Chair of the Human Studies Research Committee can also be contacted at 403-329-2425.

The introduction of the Principal Quality Practice Guideline (PQPG) by Alberta Education has highlighted a number of competencies that school based leaders must attain to. The purpose of this research is to determine if school based leaders in Alberta School Division #1 (ASD#1) feel confident in meeting the demands of the PQPG and what elements of professional development program design and delivery do they perceive would most effectively build their capacity to meet the demands of the PQPG. The data collected in the study will be analyzed and results should bring forth recommendations to inform the creation of a leadership program in ASD#1.

The PQPG has forced school leaders to reflect on their practice and determine if they have the skills and understanding to meet the dimensions. This research is important as it will be useful in, not only the creation and implementation of a leadership development program in ASD#1, but also in determining the confidence of school leaders to meet the requirement of the PQPG. It will also contribute to the overall understanding of rural school leaders' professional development needs and desires.

You are being asked to participate in this study because you are a practicing principal or vice principal within ASD#1, which is the pool from which I am drawing my research sample. All but eight members of the ASD#1 Administrators' Association will be asked to participate in the quantitative (on-line survey) portion of this study by introductory letter via e-mail. Eight participants willing to participate in the qualitative (semi-structured interview) portion of the study will be chosen based on their indication of interest and the formation of a representative sample.

If you agree to voluntarily participate in this research, your participation will include the completion and submission of the on-line survey which is expected to take no longer than 10 to 15 minutes. Those participants involved in the semi-structured interviews will be

asked to commit approximately 30 to 60 minutes of their time to adequately answer the questions. Participants in the semi-structured interview should be aware; however, that additional time may be required for follow-up questions and clarification. The time required for school leaders to participate in the survey and semi-structured interviews will be the only known inconvenience. Because the survey will be done on-line the participants are at some liberty as to when they complete it. A date range will be indicated on the introductory letter. To reduce the intrusion on the school leaders' day arrangements will be made in advance as to the most convenient time to conduct the semi-structured interview.

There are some potential risks to you by participating in this research. Participants will be asked to share how their educational training and experience affects their confidence in meeting the PQPG. Participants will also be asked to share beliefs and values about the PQPG and school leadership professional development. In both of these cases participants may experience feelings of anxiety in sharing this type of information. Participants need to rest assure that steps will be taken to protect their identity.

To prevent or to deal with these risks every attempt to clearly inform participants of the intent of the study, the type of information requested, and the safe guards in place to protect individual identity will be outlined in the consent form and the introductory letter to the on-line survey. By following these steps it is hoped that participants will not feel surprised or anxious in participating in this study.

There are potential benefits of your participation in this research. The intent of the study is to provide knowledge and understanding in the areas of capacity building to meet the PQPG. This study gives school based leaders in ASD#1 a voice to express their beliefs and values in what would be the most effect elements of design and delivery of a leadership program. The results of the study will be shared with the ASD#1 Administrators' Association as well as with ASD#1 with the intention of recommending steps in the creation of an effective school leadership program in ASD#1.

Your participation in this research must be completely voluntary. If you do decide to participate, you may withdraw at any time without any consequences or any explanation. If you do withdraw from the study, your data will not be included as research data and be destroyed.

Anonymity of participants will be protected. Data collected by the on-line survey will not identify participants by name. Possible responses by participants that result in identification will be coded or deleted to assure anonymity. Participants will be identified by the interviewer in the interview process; however, participants will not be named at any time in the procedure. If appropriate or necessary, pseudonyms and non-identifying references will be created to protect identities. A potential risk that may occur might be that in the course of the interview where participants may use names and places in their descriptions. All references to names and places will be edited out or replaced with non-identifying markers.

Confidentiality of the participant and the confidentiality of the data will be protected by the use of aliases and coding. The interviewees will be identifiable by the interviewer; however, data shared will not be reported in such a way as to identify the participants. Access to any identifying data will be limited to the principal researcher. Participants will be provided with a copy of their partial transcript of their interview. Data will be stored securely; under lock and key for written documents and password protected for digital documentation.

Other planned uses of this data may include use in other scholarly writing and/or educational stakeholders using the data to support and create professional development opportunities.

Digital voice recordings and written transcripts will be kept, off work premises, under lock and key or password protected, where no one has access to it until it is time to dispose of it. Digital data will be deleted and written data will be shredded after five years.

It is anticipated that the results of this study will be shared with others in the following ways; (1) participants will receive a copy of their interview transcript, (2) access to the completed thesis when finished, (3) results may be included in other scholarly writing or presentations, (4) results may be shared directly with the participants in administration meetings within ASD#1 and (5) results will be used to make recommendations to ASD#1 in the development of a leadership program.

In addition to being able to contact the researcher and the supervisor at the above phone numbers, you may verify the ethical approval of this study, or raise any concerns you might have, by contacting the Chair of the Faculty of Education Human Subjects Research Committee at the University of Lethbridge (403-329-2425).

Your signature below indicates that you understand the above conditions of participation in this study and that you have had the opportunity to have your questions answered by the researcher.

Name of Participant	*Signature*	*Date*

A copy of this consent will be left with you, and a copy will be taken by the researcher.

Appendix H

E-mail Letter to Potential On-Line Survey Participants

Hello fellow ASD#1 school leaders,

We have been engaged, as a school division, in the Principal Quality Practice Guideline (PQPG) for over a year now. The work done at Administration and Central Office Staff (ADCOS) meetings and then at retreat this year has certainly led to reflection and discussion. As some of you know I am working on my Masters at the University of Lethbridge and am currently researching my thesis. My thesis topic is on school based leaders, their reaction to the PQPG and their beliefs around how they would best build capacity to meet the demands of the seven dimensions of the PQPG. I am hoping to get your input into a number of questions I have based on this topic.

You are being asked to participate in this study because you are a practicing principal or vice principal within the Alberta School Division #1, which is the pool from which I am drawing my research sample. Most members of the ASD#1 Administrators' Association will be asked to participate in the quantitative (on-line survey) portion of this study.. Participants (total of eight) willing to participate in the qualitative (semi-structured interview) portion of the study will be chosen based on their indication of interest and the formation of a representative sample. The representative sample will be based on years of the school leaders experience (four school based leaders with four or less years of experience and four school based leaders with five or more years of experience) and school leadership role (four principals and four vice principals).

Although this information is intended to inform my thesis I am also a member of the ASD#1 leadership development team and hope to use your reflections to help in the next steps for leadership professional development in ASD#1. By completing this survey you will not only be helping me out but you will also have a voice in the direction of leadership development in ASD#1. I believe, through this research, we will develop a rich bank of data to more accurately move us forward with leadership development. I plan to share the results of this survey with you at a future ADCOS meeting.

You need to know I will be very conscientious in protecting your identity and the data I collect and you should feel free to answer all questions as freely as you can. If appropriate or necessary, pseudonyms and non-identifying references will be created to protect identities.

Your participation in this research must be completely voluntary. If you do decide to participate, you may withdraw at any time without any consequences or any explanation. If you do withdraw from the study, your data will not be included as research data and be destroyed.

It is anticipated that the results of this study will be shared with others in the following ways; (1) access to the completed thesis when finished, (2) results may be included in other scholarly writing or presentations, (3) results will be shared directly with the participants in administration meetings within ASD#1 and (4) results will be used to make recommendations to ASD#1 in the development of a leadership program.

Please click on the first <u>Click Here</u> button below to begin the survey.

Thanks everyone,

Jeff Thompson
Principal
Southglen School