

Leadership Recruitment and Selection in School Districts: Trends and Issues

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ABSTRACT: This article offers a theoretical perspective on the various trends and issues in the recruitment and selection of school leaders that have drawn much attention as a result of the leadership shortages experienced in school districts across Canada and the United States. Drawing from a review of extant literature published over the last two decades the article identifies various issues within the scope of recruitment and selection systems and posits that when developed and implemented appropriately effective recruitment and selection can help replenish the pool of applicants for leadership positions in public schools. Combining themes developed during the literature review with author's personal communication, a list of implications and recommendation are provided that can assist school district personnel with their efforts to effectively integrate recruitment and selection into leadership development for effective schools.

Résumé: Ici, un regard théorique est posé sur les questions et les tendances utilisées lors du choix et du recrutement de dirigeants scolaires. Cela a permis d'attirer l'attention sur le fait que le Canada comme les Etats-Unis, connaissent une pénurie de personnel dans les écoles de quartier. Tiré d'un ensemble d'ouvrages publiés pendant les vingt dernières années, l'article cerne différentes questions sur les procédés de choix et de recrutement des candidats et avance que s'ils sont utilisés de manière efficace et adéquate, cela peut éventuellement aider à trouver des postulants pour l'ensemble des postes de dirigeants d'écoles publiques. L'auteur avec sa façon toute personnelle de communiquer, dresse une liste de recommandations et de responsabilités sur un ensemble de thèmes qu'il a préparé à partir de lectures littéraires. Afin de faire fonctionner au mieux les écoles, cette liste, alliée aux efforts que le personnel d'écoles publiques fait pour mettre en œuvre des dispositifs efficaces pour choisir et sélectionner des candidats aux postes de dirigeants, peut être un outil de travail utile.

Since the release of the 1983 report *A Nation at Risk*, there has been much discussion and debate on how public education needs to be improved in schools in the United States. Whatever else one might argue about the impact of the report, it clearly drew national attention to educational performance as a major concern. Three presidents elected since the release of the infamous report have passed a broad education plan, including George H.W. Bush's "America 2000," Bill Clinton's "Goals 2000," and George W. Bush's "No Child Left Behind," each with specific goals that have yet to be achieved. A decade after the release of *A Nation at Risk*, Bracey (1994, p. 4) indicated how little change had occurred: "Lousy schools are producing a lousy workforce and that is killing us in the global marketplace" went the refrain. Two decades after the report Serwach (2003) put it a little more eloquently: "They keep spinning their wheels, everybody wants their own plan, so we go through these big initiatives in an approach where we try a fad and don't really measure it to see where it really works" (p. 1).

As the United States and Canada prepared for and entered into the new millennium educational scholars and practitioners alike began to focus on the importance of effective leadership as key to ensuring the success and sustainability of public school effectiveness (Canadian Association of Principals, 1999; Canadian Education Center, 2002; Institute of Educational Leadership, 2000). Yet, the pipeline of qualified and interested candidates to fill leadership vacancies has heavily diminished. According to Lauder (2000) "more than one fourth of practicing school administrators are eligible to retire in the next 2 to 4 years, but there are not enough knowledgeable and skilled professionals on reserve and ready to take their places" (p. 23). In a survey of nearly 400 superintendents conducted by the Association of California School Administrators (2001), 90% of respondents reported a shortage in the pool of applicants. A total of 84% of superintendents reported an alarming shortage of middle level applicants, and 73% reported a shortage of elementary school principal candidates. By some estimates, 40% of the 93,000 principals in the United States are nearing retirement age. Further exacerbating the leadership crisis, nearly one-half of the 15,000 superintendents leading public school districts will soon reach retirement age. By the year 2008, the number of school site administrative positions is projected to increase 20%. Similarly, the situation in many Canadian cities has become particularly difficult due to the number of retirements. In a study conducted by the Ontario College of Teachers (OCT, 1998) findings indicated that retirement rate

of teachers with principal qualifications was growing at a faster rate than the general teacher population. As would be expected, leadership qualifications and leadership jobs are often achieved when one is well into a teaching career. The OCT study revealed that 44% of teachers with principal's qualifications were likely to retire within 5 years and 64% within a decade.

Researchers have identified various reasons for the shrinkage in the applicant pools for leadership vacancies including the pending retirements of baby boomers and individuals leaving school leadership positions for other types of employment in education or the more lucrative private sector (Lauder, 2000; Normore, 2002, 2004a, 2004b; Winter & Morgenthal, 2001). Other researchers point to the changed role of the school administrator, which is characterized by higher expectations, changing demands, and accountability related to student outcomes (Fenwick, 2000; Winter, Rinehart, & Munoz, 2002), lengthy work weeks with less job security (Checkley, 2000; Murphy & Beck, 1994; Normore, 2004c), inadequate leadership training and preparation (Begley, 2000; Castetter & Young, 2000; Normore, 2002; Rebore, 2001), supervision of after school activities (Grimmett & Echols, 2000; Seyfarth, 2002), mandated state and district paperwork, and the difficulty of getting veteran teachers to change their instructional methods (Bloom & Kravetz, 2001; Howley & Pendarvis, 2002; Madrid, 2001; Normore, 2004a, 2004c). Another reason is that effective leadership has been redefined significantly and has caused recruitment and selection of school leaders to loom large as a significant barrier to improve schools. The contemporary principal has to manage far more than the administrative tasks traditionally associated with leading schools. School leaders today can expect an increasingly complex and demanding job (Normore, 2004b). With the new leadership definition at the fore school districts are finding it progressively difficult to persuade teacher-leaders to consider leadership roles. While many teacher-leaders already have one or more advanced degrees and are reluctant to pursue another traditional degree, others are disappointed in the traditional theory-based preparation programs. These factors, coupled with public scrutiny and the demand for increased expertise in public school leadership, have deterred individuals from expressing any interest in leading schools.

It is common knowledge – or perhaps a common assumption – that effective leaders make effective schools. It is unlikely that anybody would argue that public schools both need and deserve high-quality educational leadership. Developing a more comprehensive source of

information about barriers to attracting good candidates and about ways in which school districts, professional associations, and institutions of higher education can contribute to ensuring that these candidates are prepared and ready to move into leadership positions is an investment that would pay high dividends to our public schools and the children they serve.

Across Canada and the United States, educational policy makers and school districts grapple with ways to address heavy administration attrition problems. Fenwick (2000) argues that a change in the recruitment and selection processes of school leaders must take precedence to attract and retain individuals. The quality of public education depends, in part, on the quality of the principals hired to lead public schools. Best recruitment practices (Barber, 1998; Castetter & Young, 2000; Normore, 2001; Pounder & Young, 1996; Rebore, 2001; Winter & Morgenthal, 2002) indicate that the target pool of potential job applicants should be large and contain sufficient numbers of highly qualified individuals.

The purpose of this article is to review extant literature on the various issues associated with recruitment and selection of school leaders as districts attempt to meet the challenge of leadership shortages in schools. Amidst the growing body of literature that recruitment and selection procedures matters in order to support effective leadership for schools, much remains about these processes that needs further understanding. The author of this article identifies some of the current trends and issues from the literature and offers further insights on how these strategies might further become integral components of leadership reform initiatives. A number of common themes and patterns emerged throughout the review. These themes are used as the basis of forming theoretical constructs throughout this article to allow the reader a summary of key, well-documented understandings about leadership recruitment and selection. It will add to the body of literature by seeking understanding and insights for recruitment and selection processes. The contention is that the knowledge can be used with confidence to guide recruitment and selection practices, policy and research. It can also open dialogue with diverse audiences about best practices for effective recruitment and selection processes.

The article is organized in the following way: First, there is a reiteration of the importance of the role of the school administrator with focus on changing expectations, position demands, required knowledge

and skills. An overview of the current issues on recruitment and selection in school districts is then presented. This is followed by a discussion of different recruitment and selection procedures. Finally, concluding thoughts and implications for educational practice, policy makers, and future research are proposed.

Role of School Administrators

School administration is a leadership position of critical importance in the compulsory schooling system of our democratic society (Dufour, 2001; Fullan, 1998, 2000; Renihan, 1999). Policymakers and “education engineers” have spent more than two decades looking for the magic bullet that fix schools. According to Crews and Weakley (1995) they do not have to look any further:

Show me a good school and I'll show you a good school leader. When you poke into the inner workings of a successful school, you will find-without fail – a skillful leader who understands how to transform educational practice, not just transact educational business. The flip side is also true. Show me a school that is failing, and I'll show you a school hungry for leadership. If leadership isn't the magic bullet, it's the oil that makes the mechanism fire. Put a strong leader in a troubled school, give that leader flexibility to make the important decisions, then watch the school rise to the top of the heap. (p. 5)

The role of the school administrator in successful schools has transcended the traditional notions of functional management, power, behavior style, and instructional leadership. Successful schools have principals who regularly engage in establishing a productive and professional school culture. Based on conventional wisdom, Leithwood and Riel (2003) assert: “Scratch the surface of an excellent school and you are likely to find an excellent principal. Peer into a failing school and you will find weak leadership” (p. 1). While this assertion may indeed be conventional wisdom it seems likely that the environment is a little more complex. Educational leaders are expected to guide and steer their schools through the daily challenges brought on by an increasingly complex set of demands. Principals are asked to respond to increasing diversity in student populations including cultural and language differences, socio economic status, emotional and physical disabilities, learning capacities, technology advances for teaching and communication, as well as managing collaborative efforts and consensus building with community and other social agencies. According to Ogden and Germinario (1995), whether through collaboration, consensus

building, personal influence, or modeling, the principal creates a school's vision for success by promoting a school culture where staff, students, and community members have common school goals that become more important than individual self interests (pp. 27-28).

Many principals today state that they spend a majority of their time on administrative and managerial tasks rather than on those that directly affect instructional leadership including curriculum and instruction (Daresh & Playko, 1992; Fullan, 2003; Murphy, Beck, Crawford, Hodges, & McGaughy, 2000; Normore, 2004c). While research supports the notion that one of the principal's key tasks is to build a structure of relationships in the school so that all children have the opportunity to learn very few principal's report that they can find or even manage their time to do so (Chirichello, 2001; Seyfarth, 2002). To help build this structure, along with a myriad of other responsibilities, the principal must have and use professional knowledge and skills to create and sustain a school environment in which all children achieve their potential. With this in mind it becomes critical to explore and understand the changing expectations and the new demands of school administrators.

Position Demands and New Expectations

Until the mid-1970s, the principal's job was clearly, although somewhat more narrowly, defined. Principals performed three roles: building manager, student disciplinarian, and line officer for the superintendent's office (Ashby & Krug, 1998). Carrying out orders from the superintendent's office may not have always been pleasant, but seldom was it difficult. After all, the principal was only doing what he (and it was usually *he*) was told, which was the only choice most school employees thought they had (and the only choice the superintendent *knew* they had). According to Ashby and Krug (1998), teachers taught, principals managed the buildings, and students were assumed commodities, and parents rarely, if ever, questioned any practices. These authors assert that principals knew who the good teachers were, and systematically visited (or ignored if that was more politically expedient) the classrooms of teachers they knew were bad. If some students chose not to learn, they were often ignored. In time they just faded away. This is not to say that principals of past decades did not do a good job. They did the job that was expected and did it well (D.R. Matthews, June 18, 2004, personal communication).

Today's principals face more complex expectations forged by a very different student population and a new generation dissatisfied with the educational status quo. At a time when many view the schools as one of the few intact social organizations, students come with very different attitudes, motivations, and needs than students of generations past. Past generations of principals needed largely to serve as administrators of a commodity-learning – perceived as valuable and desirable by most students. Schools, and the principals who lead schools into the 21st century, must adapt to different roles, different needs, and different strategies in order to survive under the continuous scrutiny of the public eye. They need to be effective leaders for effective teaching and learning to occur.

Who is this successful school leader according to the new expectations and the current demands? Research shows that effective principals are vital to successful restructuring (Peterson, 1999), to change and improvement (Fullan, 1995, 1998, 2000), and student learning (Hallinger & Heck, 1996; Schlechty, 1990; Sergiovanni, 2001). The diversity and complexity of the role make the job exciting, challenging, and very demanding. In addition to the demands of the job, there is some role ambiguity. The role of the principal includes instructional leader, disciplinarian, supervisor, fundraiser, public relations expert, conflict mediator, police, and fiscal manager (Begley, 2000, 2001; Dufour, 2001; Nye, 2000; Riehl, 2000). More accountability and responsibility have been added to the job over the years causing some of the best principals to be bogged down to the extent that they have lost much of their leadership, rather than management, quality (Normore, 2004d). It should be noted that principals do not do it all (IEL, 2000; Leithwood & Riehl, 2003) but the actions and the context they shape with others (teachers, staff, parents, students) make it possible to teach and learn (Larson & Murtadha, 2002; Stout, 1973; Tanner & Stone, 1998).

Research supports the notion that successful schools seem to be headed by principals who have a clear vision of where they are going, who are knowledgeable enough about teaching and education to help teachers and students work toward desired ends, and who are able to protect schools from the kinds of demands that make it difficult for schools to operate on a professional basis (Hall & Mani, 1989; Leithwood & Riehl, 2003; Norton, 2002; Normore, 2002; Renihan, 1999; Schlechty, 1990; Sergiovanni, 2001; Seyfarth, 2002; Tekeste, 1996; Wilmore, McNeil, & Townzen, 1998; Winter, Rinehart, & Munoz, 2002). Moreover,

principals in successful schools not only come to their positions with a greater interest in the educational missions of their schools, they also seem to maintain that interest while they are there (Cascadden, 1998). Principals in less successful schools seem to perceive their role to be more that of a middle manager while principals in highly successful schools view themselves as knowledgeable and skillful educational leaders (Murphy et al., 2000). An area of vast importance that has gained much attention in the past few years is the required new knowledge and skill sets needed for effective leadership in schools.

Knowledge and Skills

In 1996, a special report from the National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP) called for “all stakeholders to unite in a rational attack on the common problems associated with the recruitment, identification, selection, preparation, and development of school administrators” (p. 34). Since that call major efforts have resulted in the development of a knowledge and skill base for the preparation of aspiring school administrator for the leadership role (Thompson, 1993; Van Berkum Richardson, & Lane, 1994; Normore, 2004a, 2004b). School districts are encouraged to recruit and select administrators with expert leadership qualities.

In response to the need for a current image of the administrator role, some staff developers and researchers have developed a “leadership profile” resource to support principal preparation that conforms to the key roles and current expectations of the principalship (Normore, 2004b). Begley (2000, 2001) identifies several key dimensions of professional practice for principals. He proposes the use of leadership profiles as a support to the cognitive apprenticeship experiences of aspiring and incumbent school administrators. In efforts to respond to the leadership challenges and issues of school administrators, Begley explored the different dimensions of leadership profiles of professional practice as a foundation for expert school leadership practices. The five key dimensions of school leadership, as outlined by Begley, include the principal as manager; program leader and learning facilitator; school-community facilitator; visionary; and problem-solver. Understanding these dimensions is key to effective leadership. The study has produced several regional profiles of effective leadership practices in Canada, United States, Australia, Russia, and Hong Kong. These profiles are considered in the literature as a sufficient and effective means for knowledge construction and skill enhancement needed for effectively

leading schools. Although principal preparation programs, or in-service courses intended for incumbent school administrators, can now be grounded in more than just context-bound practices, recruitment, and selection issues continue to be at the fore.

Issues in Leadership Recruitment and Selection

Effective recruitment and selection of school administrators continue to be one of the more challenging human resource tasks in educational organizations. This challenge is due, in part, to the inexact science of attracting, screening, and identifying candidates of good quality to fit the complex leadership needs of schools today (Baltzell & Dentler, 1992; McCarthy, 1999; Pounder & Young, 1996; Seyfarth, 1999, 2002). It's clear that school districts are losing their school administrators. What is unclear is the response to the problem. Evidence indicates that while some school districts ponder on how to replenish the shrinking supply of school leaders, the leadership shortage continues to lull. Fenwick (2000) describes the leadership recruitment and selection process as "haphazard and serendipitous" (p. 39). Other evidence also exists that educational policymakers are not working as diligent as they might to confront the continuing attrition of school administrators (Quinn, 2002). According to Quinn (2002) a poll conducted by the Principals' Center at Harvard Graduate School of Education in 2001 indicated that more than 30% of school districts across the United States were not using any strategy to respond to the shortage problem of school principals while a mere 10% of the reporting districts cited collaboration with local universities as a strategy to address the shortage. To add fuel to the fire, when President Bush and Congress passed the No Child Left Behind Act in 2002, the law contained a \$10 million initiative to support principal recruitment, retention, and training programs. However, within a matter of months the \$10 million funding appropriation had been removed from the federal fiscal year 2002 budget. If the policy makers are at all serious about salvaging schools it would seem appropriate to provide the much needed support and resources to assist school districts with their efforts to recruit and select school leaders.

Many issues loom in the foreground for human resource personnel when engaging in recruitment of school leaders. Oftentimes the process is not as aggressive and thorough as one would imagine and sometimes results in making "bad choice". Yet, research indicates that prudence is required. Miklos (1996) indicated that making the wrong choice may have severe implications that can haunt a central office administrator

and a school division for years. Research indicates the importance of having an extensive and aggressive recruitment process in place that is directed toward placing and keeping qualified and satisfied individuals (Caldwell & Tymko, 1990; Castetter & Young, 2002; Lauder, 2000; Normore, 2002; Rebore, 2001). Furthermore, two decades ago Lipham, Rankin, & Hoeh (1985) emphasized the level of difficulty associated with the dismissal of an incompetent leader to correct problems stemming from mediocrity in administration – much of which could be avoided in districts if effective processes are in place. Some of the leadership recruitment and selection issues are identified in the following section.

Attracting, Screening and Identifying

The lack of clarity concerning the most desirable image of a school administrator causes practical problems for school systems that seek new leaders. That same issue also has an effect on individuals who wish to pursue leadership careers. Because of the growing recognition of the importance of the school administrator, it is not surprising to find a parallel concern for the recruitment and selection process of school administrators. In the past, it was relatively easy to attract teachers into the ranks of school administrators because educators saw administration as a normal part of career advancement. Traditionally, if teachers wanted to earn more money, achieve higher status, or earn greater respect, they would leave the classroom and move toward a principalship or some other administrative role. Teachers no longer see administration as a way to improve their salaries, prestige, or respect among other colleagues. When opportunities are presented to school personnel to move towards careers in administration, there is often a negative reaction (Seyfarth, 1999). People without school administrative experiences have negative perceptions and views of the role of the school administrator (Ashby & Krug, 1998; Canadian Association of Principals, 1999; Castetter & Young, 2000; NASSP, 1999; Normore, 2004a, 2004b; Rebore, 1992; Robinson, 2000; Ross, 1989). Many highly qualified, competent, and talented teachers dismiss careers in administration because they do not want to sit in an office all day, hassle teachers, discipline students, work with unhappy parents, or push paper – all activities frequently associated with the stereotypical role of the school administrator (Normore, 2004a). Many individuals do not consider the fact that alternative images of school leadership are possible. Until some of those alternatives become better accepted and understood, there will always be a problem of individuals prescreening and for administration,

despite the realities of the job (Bredeson, 1996; Normore, 2004b; Norton, 2002; Parkay & Hall, 1992).

*Self-Selection or Tapping Only the
Most Promising Leadership Candidates*

The social trends and problems of a changing student population imply that districts need to recruit and select administrators with strong problem-solving skills who can unite diverse constituents to address the complex learning and social problems of children (Daresh, 2000; Leithwood, Steinbach, & Begley, 1992; Normore, 2002; Parkay & Hall, 1992). Consequently, it seems likely that school district personnel should deliberately invest time, energy, and money in developing good recruitment practices and policies as a way to promote more qualified and interested leaders for public schools (Barbour, 1995; Baltzell & Dentler, 1992; Bredeson, 1996; Coffin & Leithwood, 2000; Musella & Lawton, 1986; Normore, 2002; Rebore, 2001). When a recruitment and selection program is designed with the promise of employment and promotion, in all likelihood a tighter connection is built. Communication with candidates becomes critical during the recruitment and selection process and must be consistent in order to be reliable in its treatment of all employees, both present and future. A rigorous system that chooses only the best candidates for leadership preparation will likely encourage more talented educators to seek out leadership programs.

Candidate self-selection has been a common practice in most school districts – and in some cases the *de facto* state policy. The problem with self-selection is the lack of guarantee that these candidates will want to move into leadership positions once they have been recruited and trained. While some candidates may indeed want to take on leadership roles, others are often motivated to obtain a leadership license and a master's degree to receive a master's level teacher pay and still keep their options open (Norton, 2002). According to Norton (2002) research conducted in Missouri revealed that half of the licensed administrators have never held leadership positions. In corroboration of these findings, Normore (2002) found that more than two-thirds of the participants in his Canadian study had used the self-selection process for leadership positions with a high percentage having no plans on leading a school. Meanwhile, many candidates had been “tapped on the shoulder” by a principal or a supervisory officer to apply to the applicant pool for assistant principals. Tapping in this sense is the process of selecting individuals who demonstrate promise for leadership preparation.

Research asserts the importance for practicing administrators at school sites, central offices, and universities to identify potential administrators and encourage them to pursue leadership roles (Castetter & Young, 2000; Leithwood et al., 1992; Norton, 2002; Normore, 2002, 2004a, 2004b; Robinson, 2000). An effective tapping system could shift the process of self selection strategy to a collaborative strategy that might involve not only the school district, but also the university and professional associations to take a joint, in-depth look at the candidate's record of accomplishments and demonstrated leadership skills.

It has been demonstrated that well-designed recruiting programs result in greater employee commitment, high productivity, and higher quality of work (Castetter, 1992; Pounder & Young, 1996; Seyfarth, 2002). By recruiting high quality school administrators, schools become more effective and, therefore, the goal of excellence is more attainable (Lezotte & Peterson, 1991; Renihan, 1990). Miklos (1996) asserts that it is important to consider how the demands of the position, expectations, and responsibilities of school administrators are evolving in order to select the appropriate administrators.

Job Complexity and Workload

According to Robinson (2000), job complexity and workload are perceived by school districts as the two considerations having had the greatest impact on the number of applicants for administrative positions. These two reasons are closely followed by union grievances, health and welfare, and morale of principals and assistant principals (Castetter & Young, 2000; NASSP, 1996; Rebore, 1992; Tekeste, 1996). In a study on school leadership for Saskatchewan Schools (Renihan, 1999), the most frequently identified reason for teachers not applying for administration roles relates to the perception of the overwhelming workload and the hassle that goes with it. Other factors, in order of frequency determined in Rehihan's study included: poor remuneration as it relates to responsibilities and the expectations of the job; location/relocation issues; lack of support; and reluctance to take on parental and community issues.

Leadership Preparation Programs

Leadership development programs have long been criticized for not adequately preparing school administrators for school and societal changes (Anderson, 1988a; 1988b; Begley, 2000; Bradshaw & Buckner, 1994; Clark & Clark, 1996; Hallinger & Heck, 1996; Larson & Murtadha,

2002; Normore, 2002, 2004a, 2004b). Graduate training in educational administration has been severely admonished as having little or no effect on the success of principals and their ability to improve schools (Clark et al., 1996; Daresh, 1994, 1997, 2000). In the last decade, there have been extensive calls for reform and increased standards in the preparation of school administrators (Bradshaw & Buckner, 1994; Bartel, 1994; Begley, 2000; Daresh, 1997; Daresh & Playko, 1996; Leithwood & Riel, 2003; Normore, 2004b, 2004c; Riel, 2000). Castetter & Young (2000) suggested that, as competition increases, finding qualified, talented personnel to conduct the work of educational systems requires a recruitment and selection program that must be extensive and aggressive. A process or strategy is necessary to deal effectively with equal opportunity issues, to hire the right people, to minimize the cost, and most importantly, to identify marginal performers before they are hired (Norton, 2002). It seems unlikely that school districts can do this alone. Forming partnerships with professional associations and local universities would seem the obvious direction to take for it could well lead to good recruitment practices and policies which can enable school district personnel to find the best candidate for their schools. Universities can certify school leaders and help them become credentialed. However, this certification does not guarantee an increase in the interested candidates to lead schools, but rather only an increase in the certified pool of candidates.

Research indicates that the traditional principal preparation programs offered by colleges and universities are often disconnected from the daily realities and needs of schools (Begley, 2000; Bredeson, 1996; Normore, 2004a, 2004b; Sackney, 1991; Seyfarth, 2002; Tekeste, 1996; Van Berkum et al., 1994). Further research indicates that university faculties need to continue revisiting their leadership programs and recreate these components for more practical use to assist in the preparation of school administrators (Barbour, 1994; Chirichello, 2001; Clark & Clark, 1996; Crews & Weakly, 1995; Daresh, 1994, 2000; ERS, 1999; McCarthy, 1999; NASSP, 1996; Wilmore, McNeil & Townzen, 1998). Universities have traditionally focused on introducing potential administrators to the latest trends and theories in educational leadership, but provide few practical skills for applying that knowledge to the real world. To better prepare future administrators, universities, national professional associations (i.e., NAESP, NASSP, NMSP) and school districts must work together to develop programs that more appropriately and more realistically address the daily realities faced by

the principal. Schools and universities need to coordinate university classes with practical field experiences (Peel, Wallace, Buckner, Wrenn, & Evans, 1998). University and school districts are uneasy collaborators and often engage in "turf wars" (J. Powell, March 24, 2004, personal communication). They are institutions that operate and think quite differently. Norton (2002) noted that "the history of school-university relationships is marked by fits and starts, failed initiatives, and the residue of distrust" (p. 6). As universities work to redesign their school leadership programs, they must also work to overcome this history and find common ground upon which to collaborate (Norton, 2002). If university leadership programs expect to prosper in education's high stakes environment, it seems appropriate that these programs need to convince skeptical school systems that they can produce graduates who can lead schools to greater levels of achievement.

Other research indicates that the most effective leadership preparation programs use practical teaching methods such as role-playing, simulation activities, internships, and mentoring to encourage students to transfer their theoretical knowledge to the practice of educational leadership (Cordeiro, Boutilier, Panicek, & Salamone-Consoli, 1989; Oldaker, 1995; Daresh & Playko, 1992; Stewart, 1991). Peel et al., (1998) maintain that the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) incorporates internships and mentoring opportunities in their standards by requiring universities to design internships in collaboration with schools and teaching professionals (p. 28). The challenge for universities, as well as systems, is to find a practical model of collaboration to ensure quality internship experiences. The Potential Administrator Development Program (PADP), created by NASSP in conjunction with a school district, and School of Education at East Carolina University, was created "to unite key elements of administration preparation" (1996, p. 27). The program focused on mentoring and experiential learning to provide practical applications to support theories being taught in classrooms. After a two year implementation the program yielded promising results and leadership recruits had increased in numbers. Several participants had moved into administrative roles, others indicated they were better equipped in their current roles, and still others shared a better understanding of the administrative role (Peel et al., 1998, p. 27). School systems that experience difficulty attracting and retaining administrative personnel would benefit from collaborating in a partnership using key practices developed in the PADP model.

External and Internal Recruitment

Rebore (1992, 2001) states there are several common methods and procedures of recruiting and selecting administrators, including internal searches, referrals, contacting employment agencies, and advertising vacancies with college and university placement services. Recruitment activities entail organizing staff, generating applicant pools, matching individual talents with interests and opportunities, and adjusting and developing personnel (Castetter & Young, 2000). The issue lies within the parameters of recruitment. Most school districts have two pools of candidates from which to recruit; internal and external (Herman, 1994) while other districts recruit internally only. If the number of internal applicants falls short, some school districts will re-advertise for applicants. In such school districts promotional policies are in place for internal candidates only. It is widely believed that promoting internally is favored over external appointments because of school district culture. In the study conducted by Normore (2002) external candidates for leadership roles were perceived not to have the required knowledge of the school district's culture. Normore noted that while one school district had guidelines in place for external recruitment, these guidelines were rarely practiced. Another school district had no guidelines in place for external promotions and recruited internally only. While the internal recruitment practice may hold ground for smaller school districts it seems unlikely that such a process would be effective in larger districts. According to Rebore (2001) recruitment practices are highly impacted and affected by issues and factors in the school division and its community. These factors include size of school district, geographical area, employment conditions in the community, working conditions, salary levels, fringe benefits, and increase or decrease in student population.

Human Resources Management

In a study conducted by Castetter (1992) on the effects of human resource management on the hiring and promotion procedures of school administrators, assertions were made that school districts have human resource management personnel who are not abreast of the policies that directly impact recruitment and selection processes. In order for the personnel office to function effectively, the human resource management personnel need working knowledge of the management process and the school environment and an understanding of the collective agreement and the key players in the bargaining process. However, before any

contact is made with candidates, human resource planning must identify current and future staffing needs (Rebore, 2001). A job vacancy is analyzed to see what the actual job specifications are and what method of recruitment will be most effective. The personnel function, as one of the modules of a total information system, consists of a planned network of forms, files, reports, records and documents (Tekeste, 1996). Herman (1994) and Seyfarth (1999, 2002) support the fact that the personnel function becomes especially important when recruiting or selecting new administrators. District superintendents and school administrators, along with other stakeholders, need to collaborate for the same reasons that principals and teachers are expected to collaborate in the recruitment and selection processes. As an ongoing task they need to foster school and district cultures that are collaborative and support an atmosphere of inquiry. They need to encourage the talents, creativity and contribution of all school members within their districts. This should happen when the recruitment and selection process begins in order for it to become an essential and integral component of leadership development and preparation (Baltzell & Dentler, 1992; Castetter & Young, 2000).

Under-Representation of Women in Leadership Recruitment

Despite the predominance of female teachers in public schools, administrative leadership positions are held predominantly by men, especially at the elementary level. Even with increased numbers of female and minority group educators preparing for leadership roles, school districts continue to hire white men (Glass, Bjork, & Brunner, 2000). Research indicates that what matters to women leaders in education is servicing, making a difference, and providing direction to improve the school system (Grogan, 1994; Hall, 1994; Kleine, 1994; Trinidad & Normore, 2005; Wesson & Grady, 1993; Williamson & Hudson, 2001). The goals of some leading women may extend even beyond the primary focus of 'making a difference for teachers and staff' to positively affect the teaching process (Bascia & Young, 2001). Both making a difference and influence the teaching process go hand in hand with the new leadership paradigm for women in education and their responsibility as change agents. Women school leaders focus on a vision of what the school should be and where the school should head (Fennell, 2002; Funk, Pankake, & Schroth, 2002; Gold, 1996; Grogan, 1994; Kleine, 1994; Wesson & Grady, 1993).

Qualified women educators provide an important resource for meeting current and impending administrator shortages (Cooper, Fusarelli, & Carella, 2000). Encouraging applications from women seems to be a powerful source for districts and universities to tap into when recruiting for leadership positions (Howley & Pendarvis, 2002; Trinidad & Normore, 2005). Female educational leaders focus on their primary responsibility which is the care of children and their academic success. Women heads are in a position to define the cultural norms that create the working conditions to support learning and development (Hall, 1994). Leadership then is a critical factor for the school's performance by shaping teachers' beliefs, values, attitudes, and behaviors that impact performance (Shum & Cheng, 1997). If women educational leaders are more involved with curriculum and instruction (Brunner, 1998; Grogan, 1994; Schmidt, 1992; Shakeshaft, 1993) and accountability for student achievement becomes local (Logan, 1998), women leaders can prove that their primary responsibility is being met.

The ways women approach the job of school leadership are related to the models of leadership they encounter in their careers and the goals they hope to achieve through their positions as school leaders (Young & McLeod, 2001). It is likely that teachers' satisfaction with their principals' leadership styles is connected to the traditional and accepted understanding of what it means to be a school leader or what women understand as the norm (Grogan, 1999; Trinidad & Normore, 2005). What influences women's leadership styles in education is the *degree of identification* with a leadership model, whether to be adopted or discarded. When women identify with her administrative role model, they lean towards a leadership orientation to be non-traditional, transformational or different; otherwise, they begin considering becoming administrators themselves to change the model of the current administration (Young & McLeod, 2001). The role of change agent for women leaders in education is that of substituting an ineffective leadership model with a transformative one.

The principal reason most women enter administration is to become educational leaders after they have been exposed to administrative role models who use transformational leadership styles (Young & McLeod, 2001). Inspiration and motivation in transformational leadership theory, is what drives these women to adopt this leadership style as their own. The female leadership styles in education are more democratic, participative, inclusive and collaborative (Bascia & Young, 2001; Grogan, 1994; Powney & Weiner, 1991; Skrla, 2000; Trinidad & Normore, 2005;

Young & McLeod, 2001). Consequently, women envision their leadership through shared problem solving, and decision-making (Gold, 1996; Grogan, 1994; Kleine, 1994). Shared decision-making and problem-solving with all involved leaves enough space to deviate from the hierarchical systems of approval and concentrate on the solution of the problem for the general good. As a result, school decisions are based on what is in the best interest of the students and what is right, not necessarily on policies (Williamson & Hudson, 2001)

To tap into this resource research supports the notion that districts need to be more open-minded about the types of individuals whom they believe can achieve success as school leaders and to recruit accordingly (Bloom & Krovetz, 2001). It seems appropriate that leadership recruitment programs, especially those at universities, will need to make special efforts to encourage women and minority applicants by partnering with local "grow-your-own" (Bloom & Krovetz, 2001) and "aspiring principal" programs (Howley & Pendarvis, 2002).

Trends in Selection of School Leaders

Specific hiring procedures across school districts have considerable variation in general trends for the selection processes (Schmitt & Schechtman, 1990). The purpose of selection as outlined by various researchers (e.g., Castetter & Young, 2000; Kirkpatrick, 2000; Normore, 2004a, 2004b; Rebore, 2001; Seyfarth, 2002; Tekeste, 1996; Wildman, 2004) is to fill existing vacancies with personnel who meet established qualifications, appear likely to succeed on the job, will find sufficient position satisfaction to remain in the system, will be effective contributors to unit and system goals, and will be sufficiently motivated to achieve a high level of self development (Anderson, 1988a; Castallo, Fletcher, Rossetti, & Sekowski, 1992; Castetter, 1992; Castetter & Young, 2000; Herman, 1994; Rebore, 2001). Various trends in the selection process are presented in the following section.

Position-Matching Plans and Interviews

The selection process is the key activity wherein decisions are made about which personnel will fill positions that become vacant. Selection requires a position-matching plan designed to link available personnel with the position requirements. Selection procedures and interviews are usually structured around information relating to the work history of the candidates, their education and training, present social adjustment, mental ability, motivation, and maturity (Anderson, 1988a, 1988b;

Kirkpatrick, 2000; Lipham et al., 1985; Tekeste, 1996). According to Seyfarth (2002), and other researchers, some of the selection procedures include resumes, prescreening interviews often done by telephone, employee testing, reference checks and consulting services (Anderson, 1988b; Herman, 1994; Musella & Lawton, 1986; Normore, 2002; Stout, 1973). Ross (1989) observed that for some school districts, routinely favoring the selection of administrative applicants with experience in curriculum consulting roles make the most promising school leaders. Musella and Lawton (1986) found procedures in Ontario school districts that ranged from a single brief interview with a hiring official to very elaborate procedures that included mandatory participation in locally-sponsored courses or attendance at assessment centers. Tremendous variation also exists in terms of mechanisms found at varying points in the process (Little & Miller, 2003; White & White, 1998). Elkins (1987) found that the vast majority of candidates were screened out early in the process, never advancing beyond application submission. Madrid (2001) asserts:

Undoubtedly, keeping a competent principal is difficult, but 'there's the rub' in finding a good one in the first place ... most selection procedures are adequate in terms of assessing a candidate's ability to withstand the rigors of an interview, but an interview is not a job. ... 'But she was so good in the interview,' seems to be the typical lament uttered by the dismayed superintendent and personnel administrators who discover the apparent weak correlation between interview performance and job performance. (p. 32)

While the interview is not a job, the selection process should gauge a candidate's ability – certainly potential – to perform well. It seems appropriate that an effective selection procedure should include an assessment of a candidate's ability to deal with situations that likely will be encountered on the job.

Leadership Portfolio / Profile

Yerkes and Guaglianone (1998) suggest a portfolio configuration to meet districts' needs and presented to a panel comprised of a central office administrator, principal, teacher, and instructional assistant. The portfolio consists of: (a) individual development, (b) competencies and experiences in administration, (c) professional development, and (d) service to education and community. Kirkpatrick (2000) asserted that a performance-based selection process for hiring school leaders is needed

that parallel the improvements in leadership preparation. Furthermore, Kirkpatrick noted that the leadership selection process in Kentucky was based on the Interstate School Leadership Consortium (ISLLC) standards and a leadership profile adopted by the school districts. With a combination of the ISLLC standards and the leadership profile, selection committees are able to view the attributes, skills and knowledge desired in a school leader. Some of the areas that are evaluated during the selection process include writing, technology usage, data analysis, teacher evaluation and conferencing, oral communication, strategic planning, knowledge of instruction, change process, and procedural and substantive due process (Kirkpatrick, 2000, p. 42).

For Ontario school districts, Normore (2002) noted that leadership portfolios were used as a factor for selection of school leaders in which potential leaders' demonstrated philosophies and practices in various areas. In its development, aspiring and practicing school leaders construct their own philosophy of leadership and a vision for teaching and learning. They develop both school and professional goals linked to their own professional development and the needs of their students and teachers. They collect "artifacts" throughout their careers on a yearly basis to document their progress, engage in peer-sharing with a friend or mentor, reflect on their insights and growth, and create a rubric to self-assess their progress in meeting their goals. Generally, the administrators are required to share their showcase portfolios in group conferences and an exhibition to celebrate becoming more effective and reflective leaders (Normore, 2002, 2004b).

According to NASSP (1996) the selection of school administrators needs to be based on qualities of leadership rooted in established knowledge and skills that result in dedication to good instructional practice and learning (p. 100). This likely means that an appointee should already have established his or her credentials (ERS, 1999) or shows unquestioned promise of performing as a leader once in the post (ERS, 2000). The selection process holds candidates accountable and promotes a healthy sense of competition. As Kirkpatrick (2000) stated: "It is leverage that drives the need for in-service, and it reinforces the idea that to be principal requires the best he or she can be" (p. 43).

Conclusion

Recruitment and selection of school leaders involves attracting, screening, and identifying potential leadership candidates. It also involves administrator preparation and support. In order to attract

potential administrators within a school district there needs to be a process in place for identifying future leaders who are committed to the improvement of education. While self-selection is a common strategy for leadership pools, practicing principals, supervisory officers, and superintendents need to recognize strong leadership qualities among their teachers and encourage them to pursue and prepare for administrative roles. More minority and women candidates need encouragement to apply for leadership roles. The application process must be made clear to all aspiring administrators and structured to suit the needs of the school district. The application process must be aligned with the selection process and must include any considerations that may hinder and/or support the appointment of any administrator. As part of the recruitment process, school districts need to ensure emotional and financial support in the preparation of aspiring administrators. Districts need to consider how they prepare future leaders. Development of a structured administration preparation program for aspiring administrators is a key part of leadership preparation and planning.

School districts are encouraged to fully and clearly articulate the changing demands and expectations of leadership roles in their districts before embarking into specific recruitment and selection procedures. Certain recruitment and selection procedures produce the best candidates for particular job vacancies. Currently, school administrators are very conscious of the pressure of the changing social, political and professional expectations for them. They perceive a push from stakeholders to adopt new and expanded administrative roles within a context of much increased demands for professional accountability. The challenge is for school and district office administrators to meet these changing social and professional demands, without losing sight of the need to meet the needs of children and protect their best interests.

In the spirit of effective recruitment, opportunities should be provided to classroom teachers and teacher-leaders for developing leadership skills that can eventually lead to leadership in a team, a school, or throughout a school district. Aspiring leaders need a mentor and leadership role model to aspire to. School leaders should be identified early in their professional development. University undergraduates who show commitment and interest in school leadership should be given opportunities to shadow an exemplary school leader. Teachers who have knowledge of best teaching practices and see themselves as skillful facilitators of change leadership with their peers will likely make the

best recruits. Reflection on practice should be a prime consideration in the recruitment of school leaders.

New demands and changing expectations have implications for the selection and training of school administrators. In the following section implications and recommendations are summarized.

Implications and Recommendations

Based on this review of relevant research it seems that the traditional principal preparation programs offered by colleges and universities are often disjointed from the realities and needs of schools. Universities tend to provide broad and academic foundational thinking in preparation programs for school leaders. University faculties will need to continue revisiting their leadership programs and recreate the practical components to assist in the preparation of school administrators. Universities and local school systems interested in improving leadership recruitment, selection, preparation and training would benefit from forming symbiotic relationships with each other and with professional organizations to ensure smooth and accurate transfer of theory to practice in school settings. The partnership becomes a support mechanism for the school leader in training. In turn, partnerships of this nature exemplify the best of both worlds: a school system that offers an excellent leadership development program and a university that offers an excellent graduate program. That, combined with the expertise of a viable professional organization, would likely make for effective school leaders. At the same time in order to meet the changing expectations and accountability demands of the administrator's role there needs to be greater rigor and higher standard required for the accreditation of leadership training programs which will be responsible for delivering the upgraded and re-configured training for the leadership role.

A second implication focuses on recruitment and selection within and between school districts. School districts might benefit from policies that focus, not only on internal recruitment, but also on external recruitment and selection. Human resources personnel need to think about investing time and funds for outside district sources for attracting and retaining school leaders. For example, subsidies for housing, salary incentives, signing allowances to cover relocation costs, larger budget for advertising vacancies, and targeting potential applicants in geographical areas not targeted in previous recruitment areas might very well open the window of opportunity for individuals who otherwise might not be interested in leadership roles.

A third implication is for school districts to re-configured internal recruitment and selection methods to include more aggressive mentoring of potential principals by individuals already holding the job by using exemplary practicing and retired school leaders to mentor and train aspiring leaders in conjunction with university professors in their initial preparation year. Additionally, school districts can establish a policy to partially fund tuition costs of certification courses.

Finally, perhaps a restructuring of the job of a school leader to make it more attractive is necessary whereby assignment of some job duties to other personnel can be delegated so principals can focus more on curriculum, instruction and student learning. Meanwhile, policy makers can alleviate the unnecessary stresses placed on their administrators by supporting the primary role of the school administrator as leader for student learning. One person cannot provide effective leadership for student learning while tending to the myriad of tasks traditionally faced by the administrator. Perhaps the school districts could recognize the need to provide administrators with the resources and flexibility to delegate specific responsibilities and to distribute leadership as needed. School district and community support continue to be vital to the new leadership role of the school administrator.

While many of the current trends and issues used in school districts across the United States and Canada on recruitment and selection have been catalogued there is room for more empirical research on the range of best practices and effective strategies available to be employed by school districts when engaged in recruitment and selection of school level administrators.

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