Growing Our Own Leaders:
Creating Career Pathways for School Leaders' Success
Dr. Wendy J. Katz

"People do not develop the capacity for leadership without being in the throes of the challenge of leadership work."
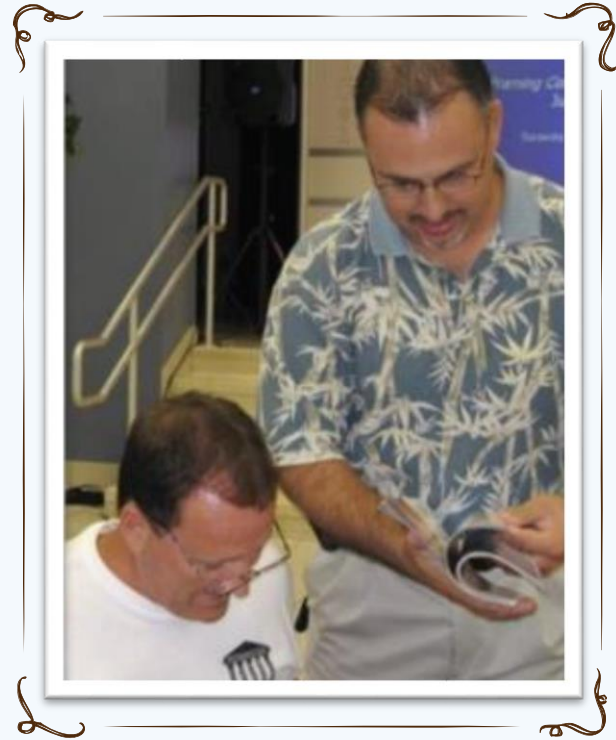
My Family

Leadership Matters Greatly in Sarasota County

❖ "Leadership is second to teaching among school-related factors in its impact on student learning

❖ Leadership's impact tends to be greatest in schools where learning needs are most acute."

University of Minnesota and Toronto Research

Purpose

❖ Provide the historical framework "Growing Your Own Leaders" nationally and locally

❖ Provide stats demonstrating Sarasota County's successes

❖ Discuss the merits of succession planning and intentional leadership development.

Purpose

❖Share one school district's programs that constitute the career pathway to high performing school leaders

❖Discuss curriculum content that is most relevant for aspiring leaders

Are there benefits for the program participants?

What are the possible gains for the school district?

Sarasota Ranks Top in Florida

❖ One of Five Districts designated as an "A" district by the Florida Department of Education in 2013

❖ Ninety percent of schools earned "A" or "B" grades in 2013.

❖ Ranked fourth in student achievement of 67 Florida school districts in 2013.

LINKAGES
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LEADERSHIP
TO PRACTICE

Our Impressive Results

❖ A 2012 independent study by MGT of America concluded: Sarasota is one of the best-run school systems

❖ Scholastic Assessment Test (SAT) scores exceed state and national averages

❖ Recognized for outstanding arts education by the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts and the National School Boards Association
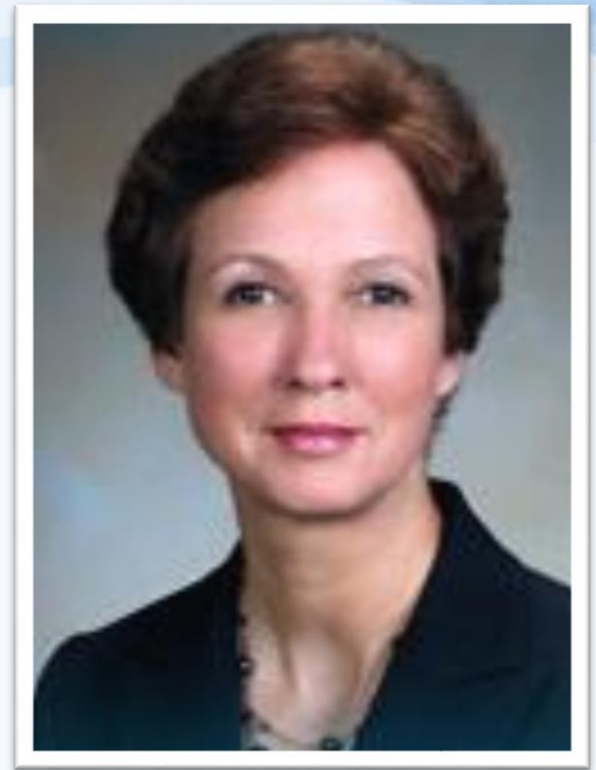
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What contributes to these remarkable successes?

Strong Leadership

❖ Lori White's wise leadership, financial stewardship, and unwavering commitment to the children, parents and all the residents of this community.

❖ For the past eight years, our school district has identified talent from within and has "grown our own leaders."

The Latest Research

A national research study has confirmed that the school districts which have shown the greatest progress in student achievement are those that had the foresight to identify the skills and knowledge they wanted in their leaders and own internal career pathways these jobs.

Schmidt-Davis & Bottoms, 2011

Principal Turnover Rates

❖ Frequent turnover of school leadership results in lower teacher retention and lower student achievement gains.

❖ Leadership changes are particularly harmful for high poverty schools, low-achieving schools, and schools with many inexperienced teachers.

Principal Turnover Rates

❖ Sarasota County average number of years in the principalship is 8-9 years

❖ Nationally the average is 2-3 years.

❖ One out of every 5 principals leave their school each year.

❖ Annual principal turnover rates in school districts throughout the country range from 15% to 30% each year with especially high rates of turnover in schools serving more low-income, minority and low-achieving students

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SCHOOL DISTRICTS FACE LEADERSHIP CRISIS

Preparing new school leaders has become urgent national priority

Accelerating demands and stress for new principals

Extraordinary challenges and complexities associated with 21st century school leadership

Baby boomers retirements creating urgency for succession planning

University Programs

Inadequate preparation for the realities of the job

Internship experiences = administrative projects

Theory Without Linking To Practice

Courses taught by professors who lack credibility.

Principal Preparation: National Concern

❖ Principal shortages noted nationally

❖ The need to identify key leadership behaviors for beginning principals

❖ Assistant principals primarily deal with management tasks leaving them unprepared for role of principal

The Overarching Goal

To ensure that Sarasota County has a cadre of **highly qualified, well-trained administrators** to sustain excellence.

"TO BUILD THE BENCH"

Sarasota County Schools Leadership Development Program

Specific Outcomes:

▶ **Transform** the leadership culture

▶ **Build** leadership capacity for 21st Century Leaders

▶ **Sustain** learning through job-embedded, authentic experiences and training.
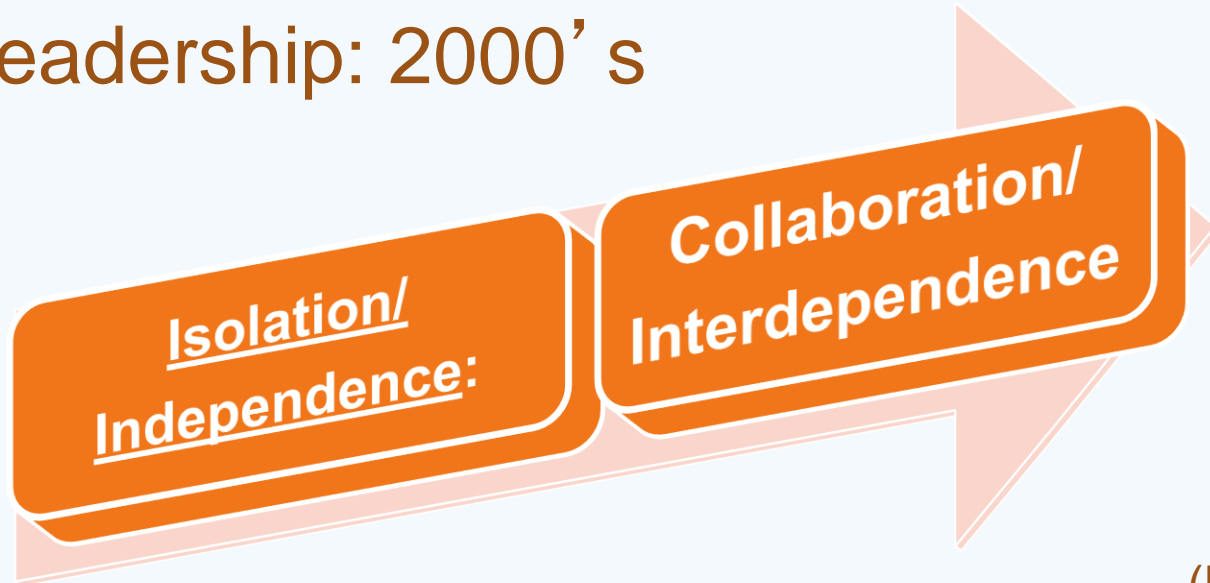
▶ **Increase** student achievement for all students.

School Leadership Changes in Sarasota County

Year	New Principals	New A.P.s
2003-04	6	13
2004-05	4	15
2005-06	7	10
2006-07	3	5
2007-08	12	15
2008-09	3	0
2009-10	2	0
2010-11	3	2
2011-12	3	5
2012-13	5	6
2013-14	3	7
Totals	51	78

Moving Our Organization to the Next Level

Standards: 1990's

as

Leadership: 2000's

Isolation/ Independence:

Collaboration/ Interdependence

(Fullan)

HISTORICAL DATA

30 new principals

Only 4 were from outside the district (87%)

2006 to 2014

12 of the 30 were graduates of the Leadership Academy (40%)

HISTORICAL DATA

51 new assistant principals

37 were internal hires
(71%)

2005
to
2014

33 of the 37 were graduates of the Leadership Academy
(89%)
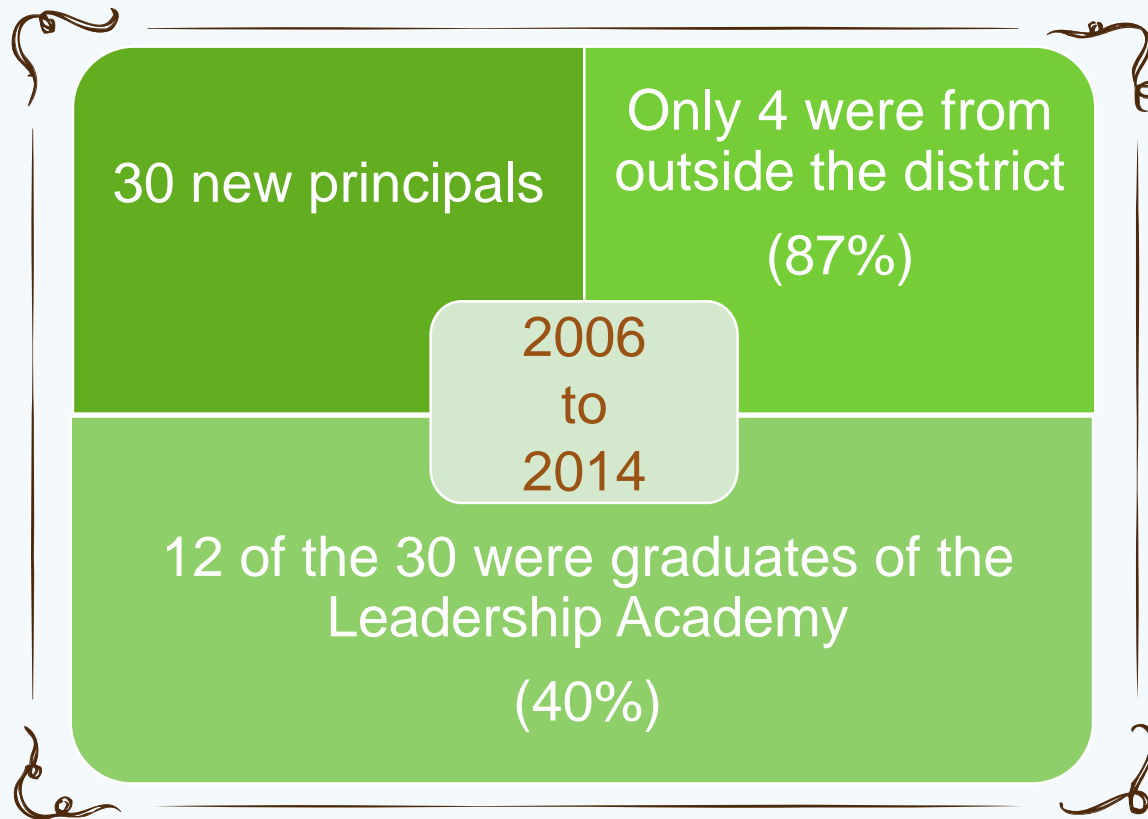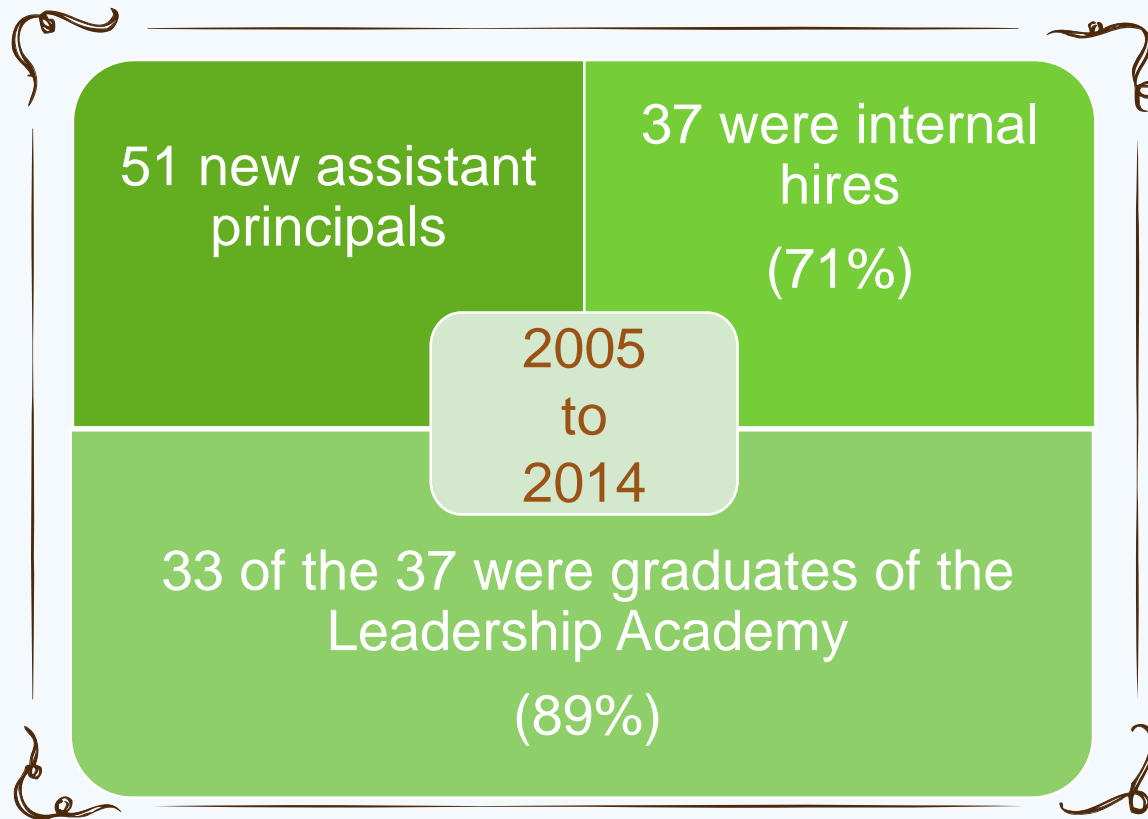
Bain Foundation Research

"Most leading public and private organizations do things very differently. They prioritize leadership development and succession planning as two of the most critical human resource functions. Strong and sustainable leadership stems from an understanding by senior management that leadership competencies take time to develop and that retaining top talent requires clear development pathways, ample training and a healthy dose of inspiration."

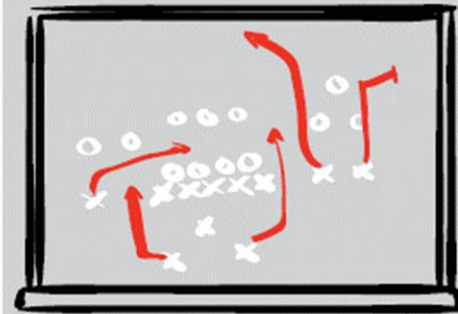*Best practices:* Three steps for creating a better leadership development model
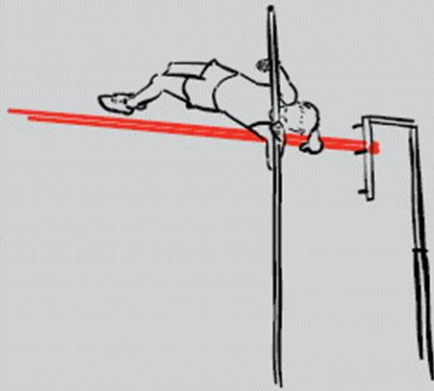
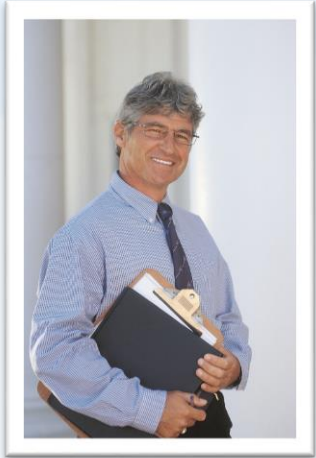| Standards	Structure	Management
Set a high bar for school leadership	Build a talent development organization	Promote, monitor and support the talent pipeline

"Leadership roles have to serve a dual purpose: addressing the challenges of today while giving an opportunity for high-potential leadership talent to further develop."

www.bain.com

Best practices (Management)
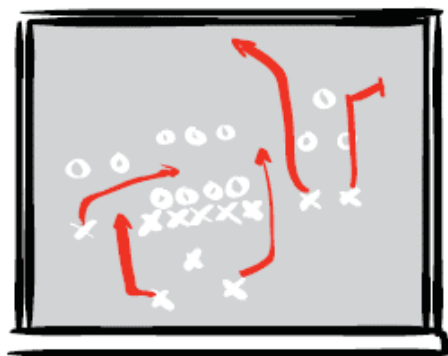
Promote

- Promote the importance and attractiveness of the school leader's role

- Enhance communication about leadership pathways and opportunities

- Systematically encourage high-potential talent to pursue leadership roles

Monitor

- Regularly review and assess talent in the pipeline against standardized competency criteria

- Make sure a high percentage of stepping-stone roles are filled by high-potential leaders

Support

- Create robust leadership training programs across all key stepping-stone roles

- Provide residency programs for school leaders and APs to connect high-potential talent with the best leaders

Leadership Development

❖Is based on Leadership Standards

❖Builds capacity

❖Is developmental

Leadership Development

▶Emphasizes continuous professional growth

▶Promotes sequential learning

▶Links leadership to practice

Florida Leadership Standards

- ✓ Emphasize instructional leadership.
- ✓ Strengthen leadership preparation programs.
- ✓ Provide a common framework for attaining excellence.
- ✓ Serve as the cornerstone for professional development for existing administrators

Leadership Standards Are Designed To…

- ✓ Raise the expectations for state licensure

- ✓ Develop future school leaders

- ✓ Provide professional development for the veteran school leaders.

- ✓ Be practical yet research-based

Compare strategies for inculcating new teachers vs. administrators

Teachers	Administrators
■ Internships	■ _____
■ Induction Programs	■ _____
■ Mentoring	■ _____

School Leadership Programs

ExCEL

↓

Leadership Academy

↓

Administrative Internships

↓

Induction

↓

Preparing New Principals

↓

Transition for New Principals
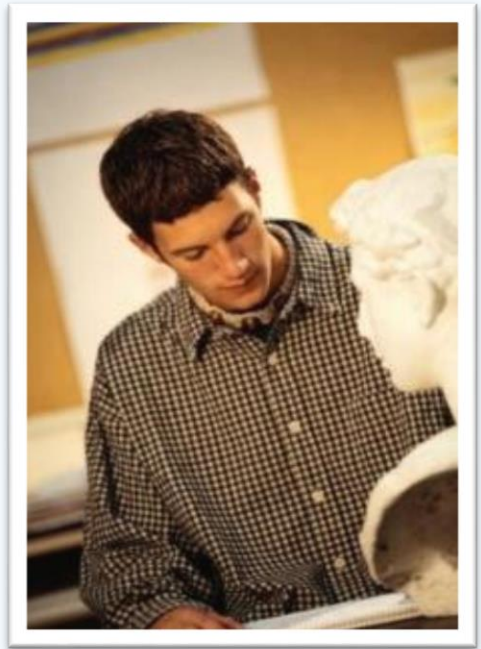
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Veteran Principals/APs

ExCEL

Exploring Careers in Educational Leadership

A first glance at the various types of education leadership roles and responsibilities:

- Principal
- Assistant Principal
- District Administrators
- Administrative Interns
- Leadership Academy Grads

Leadership Academy

Two Year Cohort

Bridge Between Theory And Practice

Develop Lasting Relationships
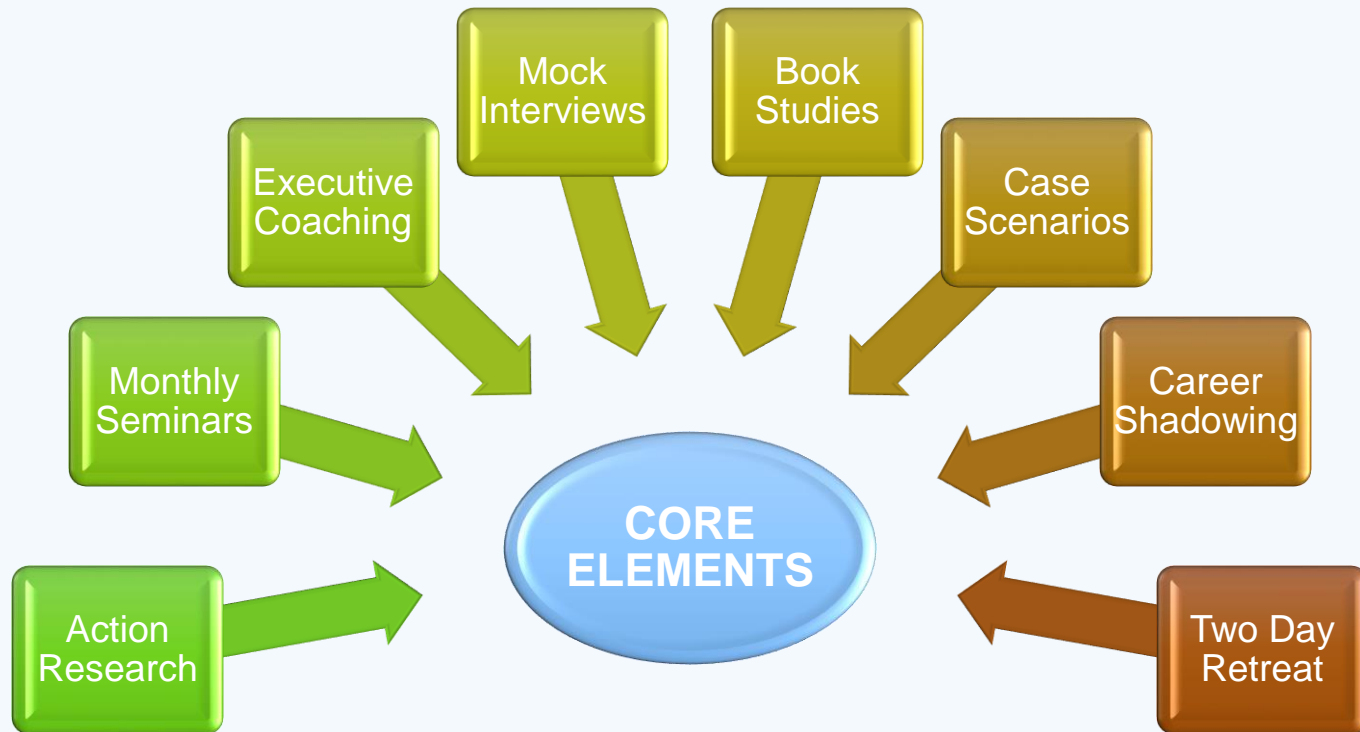
Career Focus

Assistant Principal Mentors

Project Manager Opportunities

Summer School Internships

Leadership Academy

Leadership Academy New Hires

Year	Leadership Academy Hires Total Hired	Percent From Leadership Academy
2002-2003	8/12	66%
2003-2004	2/9	22%
2004-2005	6/14	43%
2005-2006	7/10	70%
2006-2007	2/5	40%
2007-2008	9/16	56%
2008-2009	3/4	75%
2009-2010	2/2	100%
2010-2011	5/5	100%
2011-2012	8/8	100%
2012-2013	9/11	82%
2013-2014	3/7	43%

Administrative Internships

❖ Leadership Academy Fellows

❖ Non-evaluative Administrative Tasks

❖ Length of service – one year or more

❖ Application and Screening Process

Induction

❖ Flipped Classroom Model

❖ Sets up new leaders for success

❖ Reduces District liability by providing training proactively

❖ Reduces costly errors

Induction
All District Departments Prepare a Session

- ✓ Safety and Security
- ✓ Human Resources
- ✓ Research, Assessment, & Evaluation
- ✓ Curriculum
- ✓ Finance/Budget
- ✓ Professional Development
- ✓ Facilities/Construction
- ✓ Long-Range Planning
- ✓ Communications and Public Relations
- ✓ Transportation

- ✓ Food & Nutrition Services
- ✓ Pupil Support Services
- ✓ Academic Intervention

Induction

❖ Connects new administrators with key people and faces in the district

❖ Identifies where critical information is located for easy access

❖ Focuses on areas where frequent administrative errors occur or ones where liability and risk are the greatest

❖ Uses scenarios to encourage interaction, discussion, and problem-solving

Supporting New Principals

"Getting acquainted with a new organization can feel like drinking from a fire hose." (Watkins, 2003)

Transition Teams for New Principals

- Establish teams as soon as the new principal is hired

- Select a retired mentor and principal coach for new principal and to serve on team

- Meet prior to the start of the new principal's tenure

  - Develop an Entry Plan

  - Discuss anticipated issues and site analysis data?

- Meet 6-8 times throughout first year

Resources for Transition Support Teams
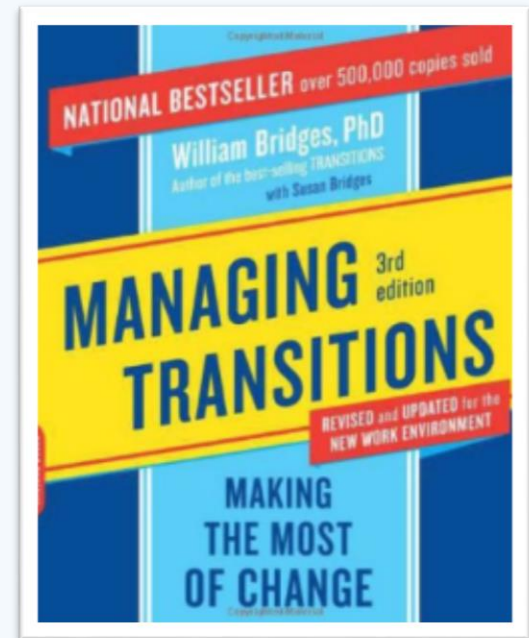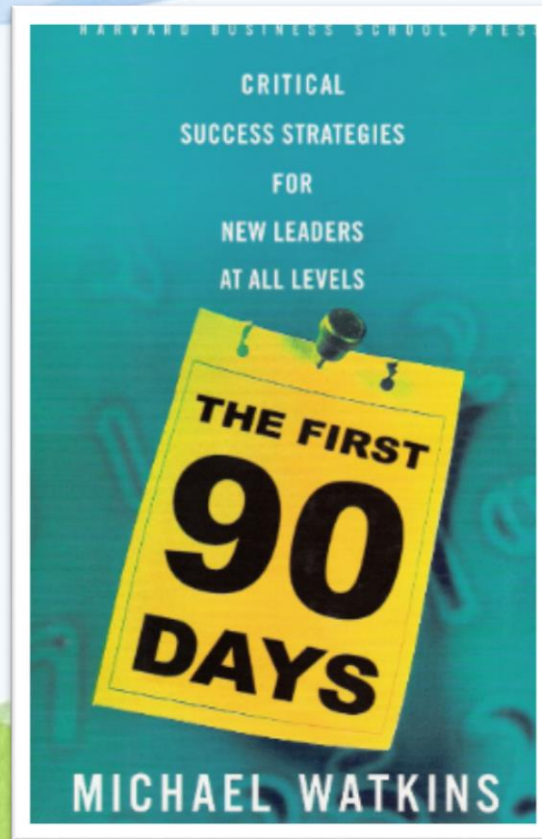
Preparing New Principals
Principal Certification

❖Administrators must demonstrate proficiency in each of the 4 Leadership Domains, 10 Leadership Proficiencies/Standards, & 45 Indicators

❖Portfolio documentation

❖Emphasis is on:

- Direct Involvement

- Impact or Results (can be negative – ok to learn from mistakes)

- Their own professional learning

Preparing New Principals

What have they learned as a result of their work in a given area or project?

What have they learned about themselves and others?

What would they do differently next time?

How can they apply what they have learned to other situations?

How is Your District Currently Addressing Succession Planning?

- Do you have similar programs in place?

- Have you had positive results?

Retrospective Study of Five First Time First Year Principals

- Over the past five years in the school district where the novice principals work, there had been a 76% turnover of the principals and 92% turnover of assistant principals.

- Of the 41 schools in the district, 36 schools had changes in principals between the years of 2002-2007.

- Seven schools experienced two changes in principals and two schools had three changes in principal leadership
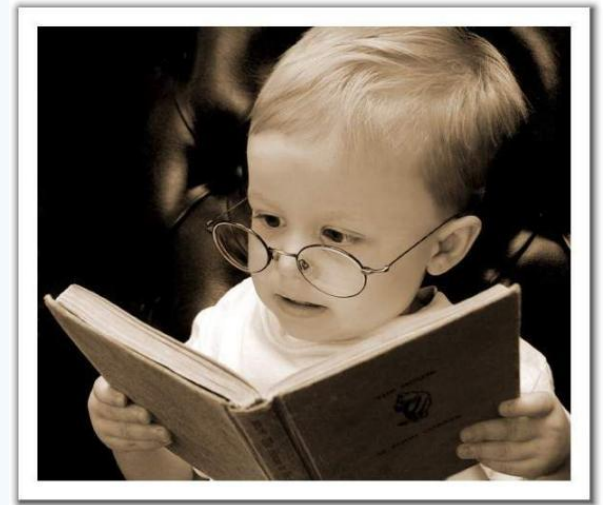
Background For the Research Study

- All schools in the study underwent tremendous disruption that resulted in teacher transfers and resignations, changes in instructional programs, and other school structures.

- This study examined the impact of these intentional efforts as new principals navigated through their first year.
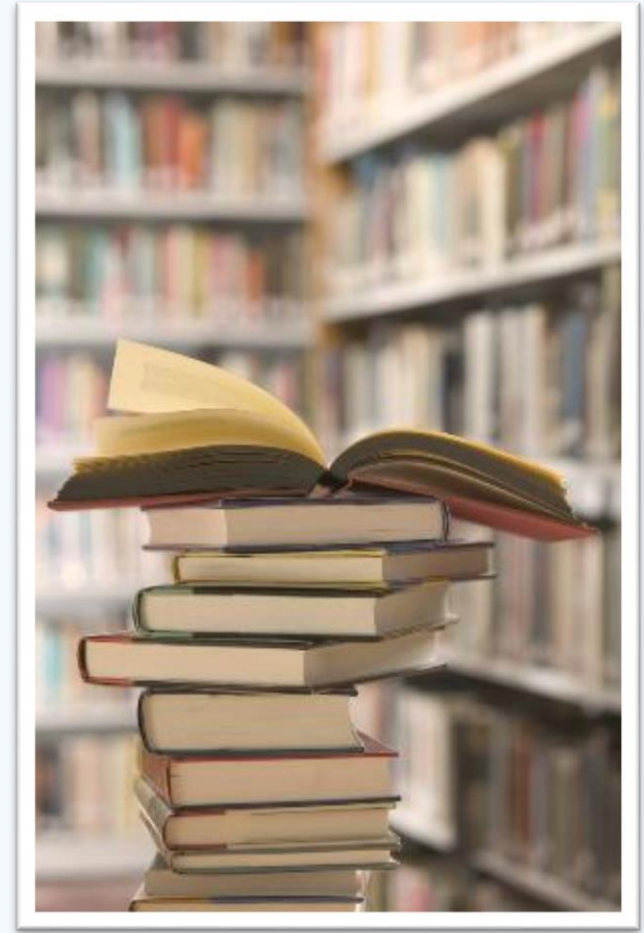
Purpose of Study: Impact Future Principal Preparation and Training

- Unveil the deep challenges and complexities

- Uncover the principal perceptions of how they transfer and apply learning from district-offered professional development and support programs

- As critical incidents or issues occurred, what experiences or prior learning did these new principals draw from in making decisions?

Findings and Analysis

Breakdown of Critical Incidents By Categories

Categories	#/21 Incidents	%
Negative Incidents	18/21	86%
Positive Incidents	3/21	14%
Teachers	14/21	67%
Non-instructional staff	10/21	48%
Parents	8/21	38%
Students	6/21	29%
Community	3/21	14%
District Office	14/21	67%

Findings and Analysis

"Understanding comes from trying to put oneself in the other person's shoes, from trying to discern how others think, act and feel"

Patton, 2002, p. 49

Findings and Analysis 21 Critical Incidents

- Veterans' Day Ceremony
- Feuding PTO
- Open Door Policy
- Clinic Coverage
- Front Office Redecoration
- Student Recognition
- Loss of key teacher leader
- Loss of 2nd, 3rd staff members in two week period
- Staff member with intoxication
- Security monitor-inappropriate touching with student
- Competition for hiring eight new teachers

- Transition from AP to principal
- Monitorial aide job performance
- Dysfunctional teacher team
- Student with sexually explicit behavior/self mutilation
- Bus driver and failure to report suspect sexual child abuse
- Class size adjustment
- Rebuild morale due to prior principal sudden resignation
- Teacher stealing credit card from another teacher
- Student threatening to bring a gun to school to shoot AP
- End of the year surplussing

Critical Incident Sample Analysis

| Principal Behaviors, Strategies, Concerns Enabling or Hindering Perceptions of Effectiveness and Self-Efficacy	
Principal A	
Critical Incident: Student Recognition	
Topic	**Reported Actions & Responses**
Enabling Behaviors	• listening to teachers' ideas • to negotiate and compromise • teamwork • validating others opinions, suggestions
Hindering Behaviors	• relying on past practices • assumed what worked in one school would transfer to another
Proactive Strategies	• use a whole team process for input and approval • make programs user friendly for teachers
Concerns	• keeping composure • not wanting to give in • wanting to do it my way

Findings and Analysis 11 Themes

- Change
- Communication
- School Culture/Climate
- Safety/Law Enforcement
- Organizational-Operational Stability
- District Support
- Social and Emotional Student Needs
- Interpersonal Orientation/Relationships
- Conflict
- Federal/State Law and Regulations/Contractual Issues
- Socialization/Role Clarification
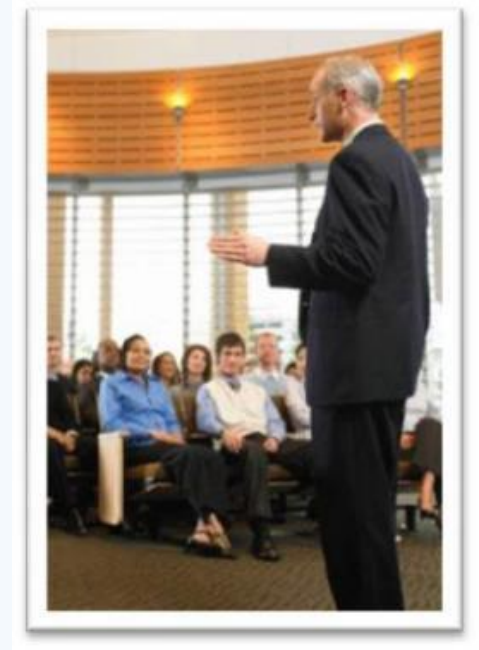
Findings and Analysis

- All principals seemed able to keep children at the forefront of their decisions, revealed genuine care and concern for their staff, were comfortable in soliciting district office assistance and a willingness to learn from their mistakes.

Findings and Analysis

- 99% of the decisions made during first year were made with prior knowledge from being an assistant principal.

- All novice principals acknowledged the influence of a former principal.

- Human Resource University was the most commonly referenced professional development that assisted these novice principals.

District Support Structures

District Professional Development for School Leaders	
Professional Development	# of Times Cited in Incidents
Human Resource University modules	5
Special Education Laws	1
Quint Studer Rounding/Relationships	2
Recruitment of Teachers	2
Team Building	1
DCF Training (Child Abuse)	2
Ruby Payne	1
How to Handle Media	1
Professional Reading	3
Summer Leadership Institute	2
Outside District Training (Harvard)	2

District Support Structures

District Leadership Support Structures	
District Support Structures	# of Times Cited in Incidents
Mentoring by Retired Principal	7
Preparing New Principals Program	3
Induction	1
Coaching by Veteran Principal	3
Principal Transition Team	4
Reflection	1
Executive Directors	1
Director of Leadership Development	4
Support by Fellow Colleagues	4
District Training (unspecified)	3
New Principal Quarterly Dinners	0

Findings and Analysis

- Critical Incidents Alignment with Leadership Standards

| Leadership Standard	Incidence /21 Incidents
Ethical Leadership	16/21
Human Resource Management	13/21
Communication	12/21
Managing the Learning Environment	12/21
Change	11/21

Human resource and personnel management trumped instructional leadership as knowledge and skill areas deemed important for principal initial success (Petzko, 2008).

Conclusions- Research Question #1

What deeper insights and understandings of the complexities and challenges about the first year experiences of the novice principal can be learned through in-depth study of multiple novice principals using critical incident technique (CIT) methodology?

- Principals encountered significant barriers:
  - Heavy workload
  - Exorbitant expectations
  - Shortage of time to focus on what matters most
  - Inequities in the system
  - Contractual agreements that dictated policy, practices, and procedures.
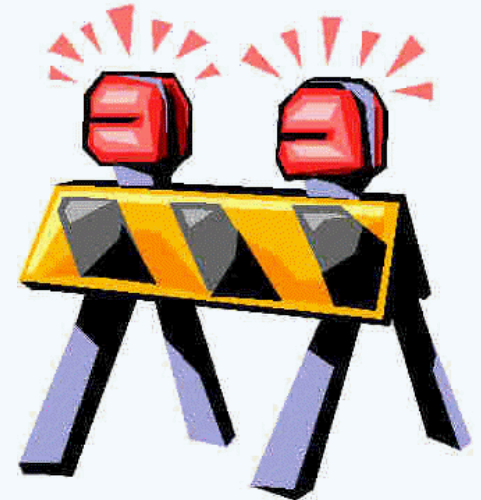
Conclusions- Research Question #1

- The diversity and severity of 21 critical incidents underscore mammoth nature of principalship and bring into question the reasonableness of the job.

  - Myth of the superprincipal

- Leadership is both art and skill.

- Human Resource Management assumed a predominant role in incidents.

- Principals tackled complex problematic issues involving moral and ethical dilemmas, political and legal repercussions, safety and security matters.

Conclusions- Research Question #1

- All critical incidents involved people inside or outside school organization.

  - Humanistic side of leadership

  - Importance of building trusting respectful relationships

  - The need for listening, patience, diplomacy, accessibility, flexibility, problem-solving talents, and willingness to compromise

  - The ability to diagnose and align strategies, structure, systems and skills of people in the school

Conclusions- Research Question #1

- Emotional responses permeated reflections:
- All principals during interviews expressed:
  - Self doubt
  - Discomfort
  - Self-blame
  - Uncertainty
  - Disappointment
  - Fear
  - Impatience
  - Overwhelming sense of responsibility
 - Desire to please and keep people happy
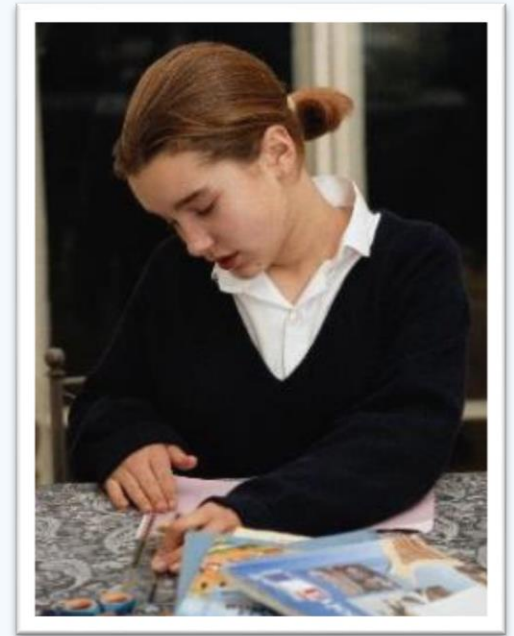
Conclusions

❖The novice Principals were unprepared for the emotional aspects of being a new principal based on the 36 emotional responses.

❖Organizational stability and safety issues were initial priorities for these beginning school leaders.

Conclusions

Novice principals:

❖ Needed to be extremely knowledgeable about union contracts, school board policies, federal and state regulations.

❖ Valued highly the district support and leadership development support structures currently in place within the district:

- Mentoring and coaching
- On-going professional learning
- Induction
- Transition Support Teams
- Collegial peer support
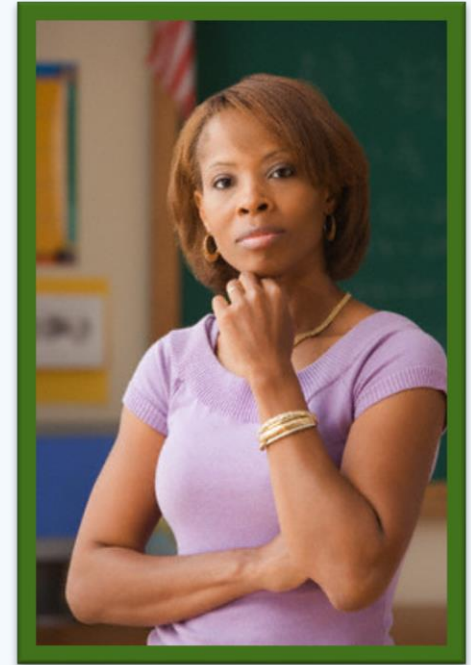
Implications for Leadership Development Practice

❖School districts should provide comprehensive principal preparatory programs that "grow their own leadership" such as academies and incorporate research-based practices. Brown-Ferrigno, 2001; Darling- Hammond et al., 2007; Davis et al., 2005; Farkas et al., 2001; Lyons, 2008

❖Foster a cohort experience with a greater involvement of practitioner-led sessions to ensure content is centered on current job realities.

Implications for Principal Preparation

❖Emphasize human resource and personnel management content with greater emphasis on situational and ethical dilemmas.

❖Communication skills to ensure competency with conflict resolution, coaching strategies, clarity and conciseness of language

Brown-Ferrigno, 2001; Goldring, Porter, Murphy, Elliot, & Cravens, 2007

Implications for Principal Preparation

❖ Require competency in specific skill sets that encompass legal processes and procedures such as Weingarten hearings, due process (Villani, 2006).

❖ Teach the union contract and include training that concentrates on the historical, political, and social influences that are unique to the community and school district.

Implications for Principal Preparation

❖Address the emotional side of leadership and be differentiated based on socialization stages (Crow, 2006; Ginsburg, 2008; Normore, 2004; Parkay et al., 1992).

❖Promote and develop the abilities associated with emotional intelligence (Stone et al., 2005).

❖Incorporate an understanding of self-efficacy (Oplatka, 2004; Tschannen-Moran & Gareis, 2004).

Implications for Leadership Development Practices

- Mentors assigned to new principals should have continuous training and those who come from out of state should participate in the Induction program with new principals
(Brown-Ferrigno, 2001; Davis et al., 2005; Farkas et al., 2001; Lyons, 2008).

- School districts should seek financial resources, grants to fund year-long internships School district should foster collaborative learning experiences to build collective wisdom, supportive relationships, celebrate successes, and share challenges (Davis et al., 2005; Knapp et al., 2003).

Implications for Practice

- University and school district partnerships should be enhanced (Davis et al., 2005; Hess, 2003).

- School Districts should integrate leadership development with succession planning, hiring, induction, and evaluation. (Gray & Bishop, 2009).

Closing Comments

❖The opportunity to reflect back on critical incidents allowed them to expand their limited awareness, connect past learning to new experiences, challenge their own practices and assumptions, and to gain additional insights for informing their future practice.

All Write Round Table

How does this new information impact your decision making regarding leadership development in your own district?

Are there benefits for the program participants?

What are the possible gains for the school district?

"I found out it was amazing how much you have to learn as you go..."

"Figuring out how to do and actually doing it are two different things."

"I've had all the nuts and bolts, but taking the time to actually apply it is what I need to do differently next time."

Growing Our Own Leaders: The Tradition Continues…

IT'S ALL ABOUT THE
LEADER

"The quality of leadership, more than any other single factor, determines the success or failure of an organization."

Improving Leadership Effectiveness

Fred Fiedler & Martin Chemers

Thank You!

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