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EXPLORING NOVICE PRINCIPAL PERCEPTION OF WHETHER ALIGNMENT
EXISTS BETWEEN THEIR PRINCIPAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM
AND THEIR EVALUATION RUBRIC

by

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Dedication

I dedicate this to my grandfather, Robert Brown. Thank for you instilling courage, commitment, and consistency in me. I know you're smiling over me. Until we meet again, I will always love you.

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There are so many people I would like to thank for helping me throughout my journey. Whether it was through prayer, answering questions, checking on me or encouraging me, I appreciate each of those kind gestures. It truly takes a village and I'm abundantly blessed to know the value and blessing of having one. This has been one of the most difficult and rewarding experiences of my life. First, I have to thank God for keeping me. He blessed me with the fortitude to successfully complete and defend my dissertation. In Fall 2020, I set a goal to complete my coursework and successfully defend my dissertation by Fall 2022. I am thankful for His mercy, grace and favor to accomplish my goal.

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ABSTRACT

EXPLORING NOVICE PRINCIPAL PERCEPTION OF WHETHER ALIGNMENT
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AND THEIR EVALUATION RUBRIC

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University of Houston-Clear Lake, 2023

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This qualitative study explored whether novice principals believed their principal development program had adequately prepared them for high-performance ratings on the principal evaluation rubric. Over the past two decades, legislation has stressed that student achievement is an essential component of leadership effectiveness (Pannell & McBrayer, 2022). However, defining and clarifying the principal's impact on campus performance continues to remain challenging (Hutton, 2019). Fifteen semi-structured interviews were conducted with a purposeful sample of novice principals from 10 school districts in a Southeast Region of Texas. Typically, principal supervisors are responsible for the novice principals' evaluation and growth. Interview responses indicated that most principal supervisors performed these tasks in isolation. Participants agreed that their principal development program did not adequately prepare them for the principal role. The findings of this study and the parallels to the literature review indicate the significance of developing Principal Development Programs (PDPs) aligned with the

evaluation criteria in their rubrics. When developing high-performing principals, the educational community might benefit from exploring the curriculum design for PDPs in school districts and educator preparation programs. Novice principals did not perceive that their PDPs prepared them for a high-performance rating based on their principal evaluation rubrics. Participants' responses indicated their PDPs had limited overall value due to lack of comprehensive content to adequately prepare them for the principal role. The results from interview responses concluded that the role of the principal supervisor on the novice principal was more impactful on their development. A consensus surfaced in the interview responses when participants attributed their success to the support they received from their principal supervisor. Participants believed that mentoring and coaching had the most significant influence on their development. In addition, principal supervisors who understood how to perform their roles were equipped to align support and training opportunities geared to enhance principal performance. Therefore, school districts must develop principal supervisors who are knowledgeable about the principal role and capable of creating and modifying PDPs in ways that will produce high-performing principals.

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CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

Student academic performance is influenced by principal leadership performance (Oyugi & Gogo, 2019). Over the past two decades, legislation has stressed that student achievement is one measure of leadership effectiveness (Pannell & McBrayer, 2022). The role of the principal has transitioned from managerial to instructional leader (Indra et al., 2020). Research findings suggest that school leadership is one of the essential primary components of school-related factors that impacts student learning (Khanyl & Naidoo, 2020). The effectiveness of our nation's public schools is significantly impacted based on the quality of the principal (Khanyl & Naidoo, 2020).

Defining and clarifying the principal's impact on campus performance continues to remain challenging (Hutton, 2019). Hutton (2019) explained that since the 1940s researchers have attempted to unpack the characteristics of high-performing principals by examining state guidelines, evaluation tools, principal preparation programs, and principal supervisor perception. However, the ability to quantify the effectiveness of principal performance has remained elusive (Hutton, 2019).

Principal evaluation ratings have been influenced by the opinion that if the school is performing at a high level, so is the principal (Hutton, 2019). This is not always the case. Principal evaluation ratings should be consistently anchored in measurable, actionable characteristics that would automatically contribute to improvements in student performance (Hutton, 2019). While evaluation instruments differ from district to district, they have become a hot topic in educational discussions (Levin et al., 2020). There is an urgent need to create an evaluation system that clearly provides actionable feedback to novice principals. This system must be in alignment with the expectations and training

delivered through their district principal development programs (PDPs) (Kempa et.al, 2017).

Many countries have begun to redefine principal competencies to successfully fulfill the role (Lambert & Bouchamma, 2019). The United States Department of Education adopted the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), which required districts to recruit effective campus leaders (Fuller et al., 2017). To facilitate this mandate, the federal government suggested that each state develop its own evaluation system (Fuller et al., 2017).

In Texas, the Texas Education Agency (TEA) adopted the Texas Principal Standards to be used as the framework for principal evaluation (TEA, 2018). The State of Texas developed a principal evaluation system using these Texas Principal Standards. This system is known as the Texas Principal Evaluation and Support System (T-PESS).

Since Texas districts are not required to use T-PESS, they are able to create their own evaluation systems (TEA, 2017). This created a situation in which misalignment between PDPs and principal evaluation rubrics became inevitable. Ensuring the alignment of an effective evaluation tool and PDP is vital to the development of high-performing principals. Alkaabi and Almaamari (2021) explained that principals were once classified as managers. Therefore, the implementation of an evaluation rubric, with actionable feedback, is critical for the emerging roles of principals as instructional leaders and change agents (Alkaabi & Almaamari, 2021).

Research Problem

The research problem for this study was that it is unknown whether PDPs within a Southeast region in Texas are aligned to the evaluation criteria in their principal evaluation rubrics. DeMatthews et al. (2020) reported that many of the evaluation tools currently being utilized are unmethodical, due to their lack of actionable feedback. This is

problematic since principal evaluations have the potential to be an essential tool for enhancing leadership practices (DeMatthews et al., 2020).

While teacher efficacy (confidence in one's ability to impact student performance) is considered the primary factor for improving student outcomes, school leadership is the second most influential factor (Pannell & McBrayer, 2022). In 2019, Hermann et al., completed a study that indicated a gap exists between PDPs and the performance of novice principals. One plausible explanation for this is a lack of alignment between the curriculum and training methods utilized in PDPs and the performance criteria embedded in the principal evaluation rubrics. Clearly this would impact the novice principal's ability to receive a high-performance rating on their principal evaluation rubric.

Over the last decade, policy makers have begun to focus on principal evaluation. Donaldson et al. (2021) questioned whether principal expectations are properly aligned to their evaluation tools. Donaldson et al. (2021) explained that the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) urged states to re-design principal evaluation to hold principals accountable for the performance of their schools and the development of quality principal leadership. Donaldson et al. (2021) reported, after extensive data collection and analysis, that the majority of principals did not understand the purpose of principal evaluation, did not find them useful, and felt that principal evaluation had a minimal impact on their performance.

The roles and responsibilities of the principalship are challenging and in constant evolution. Once assuming this role, many principals feel ill-prepared due to lack of the foundational leadership skills for managing the numerous demands of successfully leading a campus (Hermann et al., 2019). Lack of leadership skill development and preparation has many principals questioning their capability to manage a school

successfully, especially if their leadership effectiveness is based on student outcomes and performance evaluations (Hermann et al., 2019). Traditionally, PDPs are designed to help teachers navigate the transition into leadership more successfully.

Principals attend PDPs through a variety of platforms (Hermann et al., 2019). These programs are offered through colleges and universities, district leadership academies, and online modules. Hermann et al. (2019) stated that most programs have qualifying criteria for acceptance, as well as completion goals, to ensure their candidates are poised and prepared to transition into the role of principal. Most PDPs utilize a mixture of approaches to improve principal performance, but there is limited research to guide their program design (Hermann et al., 2019). In fact, the only previous large-scale, random-assignment study of intensive PDPs found that the McREL Balanced Leadership Program, which focuses on 21 leadership responsibilities, had minimal impact on principal practices (Hermann et al., 2019). Unfortunately, no positive impact on student achievement was noted either.

Successful schools need effective leaders. Kempa et al. (2017) outlined a daunting list of principal responsibilities, including:

- (a) establishing a vision for academic success of students based on high standards; (b) creating a friendly and comfortable environment that enables the implementation of education; (c) establishing harmonious interactive cooperation and conditions; (d) developing a harmonious leadership that allows teachers and students to understand their responsibilities as a realization of school vision; and (e) managing subordinates, data and processes to improve school quality (p. 306).

Based on these expectations, it is imperative to align PDPs and principal evaluation criteria with clear measurable standards that are outlined in the principal

evaluation rubric. These accountability standards, in the form of an evaluation rubric, have the potential to guide novice principals toward more effective leadership practices.

According to Mestry (2017), ineffective leaders are often unskilled and unprepared. As a result, many may have low-performing schools. Novice principals are faced with many demands while navigating this role, including making adjustments if they are overwhelmed in their new leadership role (Mestry, 2017). Feelings of inadequacy, coupled with the absence of the necessary leadership skills to lead and manage schools successfully, may result in low-performing schools (Mestry, 2017). Therefore, it becomes essential that alignment exists between principal PDPs and principal evaluation rubrics. This alignment would ensure that principals are adequately trained to deliver the positive campus and student outcomes needed in today's schools.

Chapter 149 BB of the Texas Administrative Code (TAC) outlines the Commissioner's Rules for Administrator Standards. Chapter 149.2001 of the Texas Principal Standards explicitly states that the indicators in this section shall align with the training, appraisal, and professional development for principals (TEA, 2014). Chapter 150, 1501022 of the TAC highlights a requirement that principals shall be appraised using the Texas Principal Standards, which consist of: "(a) Instructional Leadership; (b) Human Capital; (c) Executive Leadership; (d) School Culture; and (e) Strategic Operations" (p. 1). While the Texas Principal Standards are the framework for principal evaluation, principal evaluation rubrics vary from district to district.

The research explored whether novice principals believed their PDP had adequately prepared them for high-performance on their principal evaluation rubric. This research provided narrative feedback based on novice principals' personal experiences. Discovery of these perceptions was one way principal supervisors can evaluate their

developmental impact on novice principals and make necessary adjustments to ensure improved alignment.

Significance of Study

The significance of the study was that it offered insight as to whether principal supervisors need to modify PDPs in ways that will produce high-performing principals. In 2020, Davis. et al., performed an analysis on PDPs around five themes using the following indicators: “(a) Theme 1: Effective PDP is required, individualized, and based on data; (b) Theme 2: Effective PDP is job-embedded, ongoing, and sustained; (c) Theme 3: Effective PDP is collaborative process providing a safe setting for consultation and problem solving; (d) Theme 4: Effective PDP is reflective; and (e) Theme 5: Effective PDP is supported through on-going coaching and/or mentoring.” (pp. 11-12).

Davis et al. (2020) indicated that PDPs improve multiple levels of school performance. At the state and district level, more time and resources are allocated for teacher development. The focus needs to shift to include principal development as well. Also, when PDP is offered it often fails to meet research-based recommendations (Davis et al., 2020). Davis et al. (2020) produced evidence that confirmed a need for enhanced PDP, but also for effective PDP guidelines to evaluate and assess whether district PDPs follow research-based recommendations.

Davis et al. (2020) also revealed that only one state, Oregon, met all indicators. Therefore, it was concluded that state accountability for PDP implementation is not a priority. Understanding the significant impact school leadership has on student achievement, as well as further research on PDP implementation should be a priority for principal supervisors. Davis et al. (2020) provided research with implications that engaging in opportunities for enhanced training development and implementation can facilitate positive, measurable campus outcomes.

Research Purpose and Questions

The purpose of this study was to explore whether novice principals believed their PDP had adequately prepared them for high-performance ratings on their principal evaluation rubric. The following questions were used to guide this study.

1. How do novice principals perceive the alignment between their principal evaluation rubric and characteristics of high performing principals?
2. What are novice principal perceptions on the developmental supports and training offered by their school district?
3. How do novice principals perceive their supervisors and the use of the principal evaluation rubric for their leadership development?
4. In what ways do novice principals believe their districts provide improved and sustained support for novice principals through PDPs?

Definition of Key Terms

There are several terms related to this study. As such, the following terms are operationally defined below. Rubric performance terms vary from district to district. For the purposes of this study, high-performing and effective are synonymous. Therefore, an effective principal is one who consistently receives a high-performance rating in their evaluation.

Agency – The combination of one’s belief in their effectiveness, or self-efficacy, and their actual knowledge and skills (Calvert, 2016).

Effective Principal – A degree to which administrators are successful in satisfying their objectives, obligations, or functions (Darling-Hammond et al., 2022).

Evaluation Rubric – A tool that serves as the foundation for the appraisal process and incorporates a series of essential actions and practices that should be consistently applied (TEA, 2022).

Novice Principal – Reiterated as a principal or assistant principal who is within the first three years of his/her leadership assignment (Viloria et al., 2019; Shoho & Barnett, 2010).

Principal Development Program (PDP) – A continuum of relevant learning opportunities for school leaders (Darling-Hammond et al., 2022).

Principal Supervisor – An individual charged with the evaluation of principal performance, based on standards and indicators, through delivery of feedback and development of positive relationships during campus visits, online platforms, or other forms of interaction (McKim et al., 2019).

Conclusion

This chapter discussed the research problem, research purpose, significance of the study, research questions, and definitions of terms related to the study. The researcher believes lack of alignment between PDPs and principal evaluation rubrics is a contributory factor to low-performing principals. This study was designed to augment the existing body of research by exposing any discovered alignment gaps and by presenting opportunities for system improvement. Chapter 2 will provide a review of literature related to this study.

CHAPTER II: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The research in this study explored whether novice principals believed their principal development programs (PDPs) has adequately prepared them for high-performance ratings on their principal evaluation rubrics. A review of literature relative to the role and expectations of school principalship was essential to assess what has currently been researched to address this issue. Program alignment, or lack thereof, provided the educational realm with the specificity needed to establish more successful PDPs. These adjustments in program implementation are imperative to ensure novice principal success. This review of literature focused on: (a) principal supervision; (b) elements of principal development; (c) characteristics of high-performing principals; (d) novice principal expectations and challenges; (e) summary of findings; (f) theoretical framework; and (g) conclusion.

Principal Supervision

Our nation's public schools is significantly impacted by the effectiveness and quality of the principal (Khanyl & Naidoo, 2020). Principals are expected to foster professional growth of staff members by facilitating engagement, frequent interaction, collaborative opportunities, and effective task delegation. While quantifying principal effectiveness presents a challenge, the principal supervisor is the conduit to prepare novice principals for this vital and vigorous role (Hutton, 2019).

In 2019, McKim et al. attempted to examine principals' perceptions regarding their own supervision and evaluation in comparison to superintendents' perceptions of the same. The main result of the study was that superintendents and principals were in agreement on 19 of 20 statements describing the supervision and evaluation of principals. However, McKim et al. (2019) noted a significant difference in perceptions between

superintendents and principals, specifically in views regarding what “supervision” means. The biggest difference between superintendents’ and principals’ perceptions of supervision and evaluation was related to the experience level of the supervisor. Feedback indicated that the novice supervisor offered more support to struggling principals than the seasoned supervisor. A recommendation resulting from this research to improve the supervision cycle was to increase formative opportunities that build trust and allow for more coaching and mentoring. The research implication of this study is that the difference in perceptions between principals and principal supervisors may be an impediment to ensuring that principal performance goals are understood and consistently met.

Coaching and mentoring are both terms used to train working professionals. Aguilar (2020) explained, “The title coach has been loosely and widely applied to the field of education” (p. 32). As a result, coaching principals can be compared to coaching a sports team. The most effective coaches perform an analysis referred to as SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats). This analysis was created by Albert Humphrey while he worked at Stanford Research Institute (Gurel & Tat, 2017). Humphrey’s SWOT Analysis makes abstract data more concrete through the use of a matrix (see Figure 2.1).



Figure 2.1 Albert Humphrey's SWOT Analysis

A matrix to make abstract data concrete

Aguilar (2020) explained that learning is a basic human need that provides leaders with skills and knowledge to become “critical thinkers, compassionate leaders, and self-actualized people” (p. 29). It is the principal supervisor (in this instance, the coach) who must provide the novice principal with these types of learning opportunities and with constructive feedback. Principal supervision requires the coach to analyze a novice principal’s abilities, identify strengths and weaknesses, and develop plans to maximize relationship building and positive campus impact. It is assumed that, like athletes, most individuals will put newly-acquired skills to use following proper coaching (Hanaway, 2021).

Woulfin (2018) conducted a study to consider the relationship between district policy and instructional coaching. She explained that instructional coaching has “a popular lever to catalyze instructional improvement efforts” (Woulfin, 2018, p. 1).

Woulfin’s research described the coupling theory as a lens for “analyzing the relationship between forces from the institutional environment and activities occurring in the technical core of organizations” (Woulfin, 2018, p. 3). The coupling theory lists interdependent elements in any given organizations in order to determine under what conditions are instructional practices, such as coaching, are coupled with district policies and/or organizational goals.

One of the unique benefits of coaching is that throughout the process the “coach” almost always also becomes a student. This occurs when coaches gain perspective on some of the struggles students may face on their journey to content mastery. The art of producing lifelong learning opportunities requires both the coach and the student to hone requisite skills for retention and future application. While challenges abound throughout the continuum of any learning process, learning for skill transference should always be the goal.

Charismatic leadership is paramount when coaching principals. As a result, principal supervisors must navigate between making stern recommendations vs. subtle observations in order to cultivate the types of relationships that will propel a novice principal to self-efficacy. All coaching should be delivered with the goal of transferring valuable practices that will impact the novice principal, their teachers, and their students. This is one way to promote high levels of engagement and optimal student learning opportunities that will potentially yield student achievement outcomes.

In 2018, Goldring et al., reported on a study from the Principal Supervisor Initiative (PSI). The program aimed to improve principal effectiveness by developing the principal supervisor. The six districts included in this study participated in five core components (pp. 3-4):

- (1) Revising the principal supervisor job description to focus on instructional leadership.
- (2) Reduce principal supervisor's span of control (the number of principals they oversee).
- (3) Train supervisors and develop their capacity to support principals
- (4) Develop systems to identify and train new supervisors.
- (5) Strengthen central office structures to support and sustain changes in the principal supervisor role.

The initial change required districts to revise the job description of the principal supervisor. The revision would require principal supervisors to spend most of their time on campuses participating in classroom observations, coaching principals, and providing feedback. In addition, competing priorities were reassigned to other district staff to allow the time to provide principal support and.

Principal supervision is a crucial component of developing novice principals, states Goldring et al. (2018). Prior to the PSI, Many of the principal supervisors in the study described their role as compliance driven. To eliminate the transference of antiquated leadership skills, the PSI provided principal supervisors external training on how to coach, mentor, and develop principals (Goldring et al., 2018). However, Goldring et al. (2018) added that some district principal supervisors had not held the principal role. As a result, the inability to understand the demands of the principalship and the necessary skills to create high-performing principals are absent in the developmental support of principals is consequential.

Vygotsky's zone of proximal development can readily be extended to the inexperienced administrator. It is essential that novice principals reflect on leadership practices and learn more about themselves and their interactions with teachers and

students. Taking this approach requires the novice principal to become aware of what they can do alone, what they can do with others, and what they cannot do. This level of self-awareness facilitates the dialogue with principal supervisors needed to positively impact teaching methodology and student performance.

Vygotsky (1996) suggested that learning can be categorized into three areas: what the learner can do alone, what the learner can do with others, and what the learner cannot do. What the learner can do alone is considered independent. When learners need the support of others, this requires guidance or collaboration. When learners cannot do something, they enter a level of frustration whenever attempting difficult situations. The zone of proximal development is where optimal learning takes place. “What the [learner] can do in cooperation today he can do alone tomorrow. Therefore, the only good kind of instruction is that which marches ahead of development and leads it” (Vygotsky, 1996, p. 188). The goal is for learners to be independent, and Vygotsky’s theory highlighted that what learners do through experience, conversation, and support, learners will be able to do independently in the future.

Vygotsky’s zone of proximal development is relevant to this study because the novice principal must be keenly aware of the difference between what they can do without help and what they can do with help. This awareness is what can propel the novice principal toward achieving agency. In order to develop principal agency, principal supervisors can use a novice principal’s zone of proximal development to create individualized feedback that provides the support needed for the novice principal.

Cognitive coaching is closely aligned with Vygotsky’s zone of proximal development as well. For example, cognitive coaching creates opportunities to explore the way we think in order to change behaviors. The goal of cognitive coaching is to encourage reflection and guide self-directed learning. According to Aguilar (2020), this

approach can lead to conversations that can change workplace practices. This coaching model is flexible enough to meet the needs of novice administrators at various levels, while focusing on building agency through reflective conversations. When this occurs, novice principal awareness, and ultimately agency, is a natural byproduct. Calvert (2016) explained that transforming professional development for novice principals is necessary by stating, “In addition to analyzing data, visiting classrooms, and reviewing school and system goals, leaders must cultivate an environment of continuous learning that engages teachers in their professional learning at every step of way. They must understand the intangible, but enormous value those in the educational profession place on being listened to and involved meaningfully, as well as the benefits the school community enjoys when teachers are intrinsically motivated to pursue their continued development” (Calvert, 2016, p. 3). Creating a continuous learning environment would create a mutually-beneficial situation for principal supervisors, novice principals, teachers, and students.

Elements of Principal Development

Research investigation to determine whether principal development programs (PDPs) improve multiple levels of school performance has become prevalent over the past few years. It is widely noted that at both the state and district level, more time is allocated on teacher development than on principal development. Davis et al. (2020) indicated that although PDPs can improve multiple levels of school performance, their development often ignores research-based recommendations. Davis et al. (2020) produced evidence that confirmed a need for enhanced PDPs, but also for detailed PDP developmental guidelines to assess whether district PDPs follow research-based recommendations. Additionally, the five themes presented for analysis of PDPs by Davis et al. (2020) in Chapter 1 of this document are noteworthy, because they emphasized the

need for research-based recommendations that could result in more transferable skills for novice principals.

Novice principals need an abundance of support and professional development to transition well into the principalship role (Lyons, 2019). In Lyon's (2019) study, he performed research to discover the supports and professional development needed to make a school leader effective. This researcher sought to answer the following research question: How do K-12 assistant principals and principals develop their leadership skills and practices in various school contexts? (Lyons, 2019). Lyons (2019) determined that principal development programs alone have not been sufficient in preparing novice principals for the role. One example was that principal turnover was higher on campuses with the most economically-challenged, minority, and low-performing students. This revelation supports the theory that PDPs should always include research-based recommendations.

High principal turnover, among other issues noted by novice principals, led many to assume that district accountability for PDPs was not a priority. Specifically, Davis et al. (2020) reiterated that the current approach to PDPs is counterintuitive, since it is imperative for school districts to align PDPs and principal evaluation criteria with clear, measurable standards that are evident in the principal evaluation rubric. This rubric is an essential tool to guide novice principals toward more effective leadership practices.

Brookhart (2017) defined rubrics as a performance tool that features specific criteria directly aligned to an assessment's purpose. When designed effectively, rubrics include "criteria across a continuum of performance levels" (Brookhart, 2017, p. 1). Utilizing criteria and other descriptive information is what differentiates rubrics from other types of evaluation tools.

Rubrics are utilized as performance tools globally. Unlike checklists and rating scales, rubrics have gotten popular because they provide performance-level descriptions to evaluate quality of work. Rubrics can be general or task-specific. General rubrics are used for a group of similar tasks. Brookhart (2017) explained that the more generality a rubric has, the more it can be shared for both learning and grading.

Task-specific rubrics, on the other hand, include specific facts, concepts, and/or procedures that responses to a task should contain. In schools, these types of rubrics are commonly used for writing assignments. An example is provided in Appendix D. Brookhart (2017) reminded us that one reason rubrics are more commonly utilized in formative assessment is that they are carefully developed for students to better understand the expectations of an assignment. Literature reviews on the topic of rubrics have emphasized that most rubrics improve learning by “increasing transparency, reducing anxiety, aiding the feedback process, improving learner self-efficacy, and supporting learning self-regulation” (Brookhart, 2017, p. 2).

As stated previously, T-PESS is the rubric created by the Texas Education Agency (TEA, 2022). A page of the T-PESS rubric is provided in Appendix E. This rubric was created as a guide for principal supervisors, but districts are not required to use it for their formal principal evaluations.

Donaldson et al. (2021) conducted research that questioned whether most PDPs are properly aligned to their evaluation tools. Donaldson et al. (2021) explained that the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) urged states to re-design principal evaluation to hold principals accountable for the performance of their schools and the development of quality principal leadership. Donaldson et al. (2021) reported, after extensive data collection and analysis, that the majority of principals did not understand the purpose of principal evaluation, did not find them useful, and felt that principal

evaluation had a minimal impact on their performance. This confirms the need for principal evaluations to be developed in ways that are anchored in measurable, actionable characteristics that would more naturally contribute to campus improvements and student performance (Hutton, 2019).

Many countries have begun to redefine principal competencies to successfully fulfill the role (Lambert & Bouchamma, 2019). The United States Department of Education adopted the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), which required districts to recruit effective campus leaders (Fuller et al., 2017). To facilitate this mandate, the federal government suggested that each state develop its own evaluation system (Fuller et al., 2017).

In Texas, the Texas Education Agency adopted the Texas Principal Standards to be used as the framework for principal evaluation (TEA, 2018). The State of Texas developed a principal evaluation system using these Texas Principal Standards. This system is known as the Texas Principal Evaluation and Support System (T-PESS).

PDPs are delivered through a variety of platforms. In the Southeast region of Texas, PDPs are primarily provided via online platforms or face-to-face interaction. For example, Aldine Independent School District offers a leadership development program called the Vision, Instruction, and Practices for Year One Principal's Cohort (VIP-One). Houston Independent School District, the largest district in Texas, provides its novice principals with New Leaders Institute. Cy-Fair Independent School District offers a New Principal Institute. Katy Independent School District principals attend the Region 4 New Administrator Academy. Fort Bend Independent School District has the Principal Ambassador Program.

Research regarding the framework for PDP design is limited (Darling-Hammond, et al., 2022; Davis et al., 2020; Darling-Hammond, et al., 2007). Leung-Gagné (2022)

conducted a national survey with over 800 participants on principal perceptions of their PDP. When the participants were asked about obstacles to professional development, 66% indicated lack of time was a factor. When participants were asked about training for school improvement and for student achievement, 36% described it as moderately helpful. Twenty percent shared that a district person served as a mentor. (pp. 20-26).

Leung-Gagné (2022) stated that when principals were asked what type of professional development they wanted, the top choices were: a) creating a school climate that uses restorative practices to develop students' personal and social needs; b) restructuring methodology for improved teacher and student learning; c) supporting the development of students' social and emotional needs; and d) improving capacity for administrative leadership. The least requested professional development mentioned by principals was managing school operations (p. 32).

Understanding the needs and wants of today's principals is essential to their comprehensive development. Anchoring their development to an aligned evaluation rubric provides the principal and the principal supervisor with a shared purpose for professional growth. Using the rubric to create action steps that improve principal efficacy may also improve student outcomes (Alkaabi & Almaamari, 2021).

Characteristics of High-Performing Principals

While there have been numerous studies conducted that focus on teacher quality, there has been little research centered on principal quality. In 2019, Grissom examined how multiple measures influence principal ratings, but defining the high-performing principal remains problematic. In 2017, Kempa et al. conducted a notable study to determine whether principal leadership is effective by examining criteria such as the principal's ability to manage educational resources in ways that achieve the expected school vision and mission while also producing college-ready and career-ready graduates.

School districts across the nation are experiencing a shortage of qualified candidates to assume the principal role. The decline of qualified candidates has forced school districts to create “internal succession plans” to recruit and retain aspiring leaders. According to Sabina and Colwell (2018), hiring external candidates comes with issues, such as resentment from internal candidates and lack of understanding regarding district culture and climate. Selecting the wrong candidate to fit within a new district can negatively impact a school’s performance. As a means to develop high-performing principals, school districts have begun creating their own principal development programs for internal candidates, to ensure they foster the leadership qualities they desire.

Hutton (2019) explained that since the 1940s researchers have attempted to unpack the characteristics of high-performance principals by examining state guidelines, evaluation tools, principal preparation programs, and principal supervisor perceptions. Over the last eight decades, Hutton added that unpacking the characteristic of a high-performing principal has gone through several phases. The first phase began in the 1940s and its research focused on trait leadership. Challenges to this research began to surface due to the difficulty of consistently articulating the variance in leaders and non-leaders solely based on traits. Later, trait characteristics were combined with leader actions to define leader impact.

The second phase of unpacking focused on leadership behaviors. Traits were categorized into three characteristics: personality, motivation, and skill. Numerous studies honed in on effective leadership actions, the level of efficacy, and the consistency of relationship building. Overall, a consensus of this research focus is that positive work relationships improved leadership performance (Hutton, 2019).

The third phase of research by Hutton (2019) concentrated on situational leadership. Most researchers have asserted that positions of leadership function in many

contexts. As a result, evaluation of leadership styles and behaviors should naturally be made by those who work directly with these leaders. However, in many instances, a principal supervisor evaluates new principals without staff input. The fallacy in this approach is that there is insufficient time and effort in the evaluation process to make a comprehensive assessment of performance (Hutton, 2019).

It is well known that the principalship is a complicated role with numerous expectations and challenges that result in competing priorities on a routine basis. As a result, Grissom et al. (2021) examined the associations between leadership behaviors and student achievement. The primary goal of this study was to synthesize data and provide a framework of effective leadership behaviors that correlate to high student achievement. Grissom et al. (2021) listed three skill categories that leaders needed to be effective: a) instructional support; b) managing and developing people; and c) organizational management (p. 54).

While teacher efficacy is considered the primary influence for improving student outcomes, leadership is the second most influential factor (Hermann et al., 2019). Grissom et al. (2021) stated that effective instructional leaders are proficient in observing and evaluating high-quality instruction. The principal's ability to provide actionable feedback directly impacts teaching and learning (Grissom et al., 2021). Effective principals are able to distinguish between low-impact teaching and high-quality teaching (Grissom & Loeb, 2017). Grissom et al. (2021) explained that the goal of effective feedback is to motivate teachers to improve instructional practices and provide relevant professional development opportunities that impact both teacher efficacy and student achievement.

Kempa et al. (2017) provided an extensive list of principal responsibilities to determine whether principal leadership is effective, using the following criteria: "(a)

establishing an academic vision for student success based on high standards; (b) creating an environment that is comfortable and promotes the implementation of education; (c) establishing harmonious conditions for interactive cooperation; (d) developing a leadership that promotes the responsibility teachers and students have on the school vision; and (e) improving the quality of the school by managing staff, data and processes” (Kempa, 2017, p. 306). This research also proposed that it is equally important that effective school leaders focus on management of staff and educational resources. In summary, the list of responsibilities for the principal role is expansive and varied.

The expectation of principals to serve as instructional leaders is anchored in the understanding of effective school leadership (Neumerski et al., 2018). The management of the daily operations of the school alone may be difficult for today’s principals. According to Neumerski et al. (2018), an effective leader is engaged with teaching and learning. However, most principals spend little to no time engaged in the learning process. Neumerski et al. (2018) stated that brief, infrequent classroom visits often resulted in teachers receiving an “unactionable” comment, meaning no substantive feedback was given to improve teaching practices.

The main purpose of the study conducted by Neumerski et al. (2018) was to determine whether the way principals used their time on instructional observations was effective. Neumerski et al. (2018) reported that having a rigorous teacher evaluation system leveraged the principal as an instructional leader in three ways. First, a main component of the recommended evaluation system would involve frequent observations using a rubric that measures and defines effective teaching practices. Second, principals would be required to provide feedback based on teacher observations. Third, the inclusion of teacher efficacy regarding student data was valuable. Neumerski et al. (2018) stressed that the structured use of an evaluation to measure teacher impact enabled the

principal to provide meaningful feedback, thereby improving teacher efficacy as well as student performance outcomes.

Novice Principal Expectations and Challenges

Accountability expectations in the 21st century have impacted the role of the principalship (Liljenberg & Andersson, 2020). Due to the broad span of competing priorities and demands of stakeholders, principals often feel high levels of stress (Liljenberg & Andersson, 2020). Liljenberg & Andersson (2020) commented that when entering the role, many novice principals are overwhelmed by the magnitude of their new responsibilities, time on administrative duties, and the unpredictability of tasks. Along with feelings of trepidation and anxiety, novice principals also feel a void from the solitude of their new role, leading to loneliness. There is minimal knowledge of the novice principals' understanding of the principal role, which impacts their perception of support in their new role (Liljenberg & Andersson, 2020).

Aas et al. (2020) added that PDPs often engage in job responsibilities rather than building the capacity of the school leader. It is imperative for novice principals to understand their impact on instructional outcomes. Including instructional actions and practices along with coaching in PDPs provides novice leaders clear expectations and clarity on their role as the principal (Aas et al., 2020).

In 2019, Hermann et al. completed a study that indicated a gap exists between PDPs and the performance of novice principals. One plausible explanation for this is a lack of alignment between the curriculum and training methods utilized in PDPs and the performance criteria embedded in the principal evaluation rubrics. Clearly this issue would impact the novice principal's ability to receive a high-performance rating on their principal evaluation rubric.

According to Mestry (2017), ineffective leaders are often unskilled and unprepared. As a result, many may have low-performing schools. Novice principals are faced with many demands while navigating this role, including making adjustments if they are overwhelmed in their new leadership role (Mestry, 2017). Feelings of inadequacy, coupled with the absence of the necessary leadership skills to lead and manage schools successfully, may result in low-performing schools (Mestry, 2017). Therefore, it becomes essential that alignment exists between principal PDPs and principal evaluation rubrics. This alignment would ensure that novice principals are adequately trained to not only deal with the inherent challenges of the position, but also to deliver the positive campus and student outcomes needed in today's schools.

In 2021, Alkaabi and Almaamari completed a study to better understand the novice principals' perception on the feedback from their supervisors in the evaluation process. Studies on principal leadership supervision are far less available when compared to teacher supervision. Minimal literature is available that documents how principal supervisors deliver feedback as well as the influence it has on the principals they supervise. This study by Alkaabi and Almaamari (2021) attempted to unveil practices regarding feedback to principals to discover how feedback was given and how to make feedback more actionable to improve leadership skills. The results of this study indicated four themes pertaining to the quality of feedback to principals as follows: "(a) feedback in absentia; (b) superficial or irrelevant feedback; (c) negative or judgmental feedback; and (d) constructive and individualized feedback" (Alkaabi & Almaamari, 2021, p. 1). In summary, Alkaabi and Almaamari (2021) concluded that in order for principal supervision to be impactful during the evaluation process, feedback needs to be specific and apply directly to a novice principal's practices.

Principal Isolation

As novice principals transition to their new administrator role, they struggle with increasing demands, responsibilities, and decision-making, because their new role is vastly different from their previous classroom responsibilities (Kilinc & Gumus, 2020). Kilinc and Gumus (2020) explained that this struggle is common due to the primary responsibility of a principal as a manager of the entire school along with other unpredictable expectations. In most cases, novice principals enter the role without a solid transitional induction process. Even with an optimal induction phase, added pressures of acceptance into the school and navigating the new role resulted in feelings of insecurity and professional isolation (Kilinc & Gumus, 2020).

Many principals become overwhelmed by the stress of competing priorities, which can result in feelings of inadequacy and isolation (Bauer et al., 2019). Extensive research regarding feelings about isolation among principals has been documented. Bauer et al. (2019) stressed that isolation has impacted the work experiences of educators for many years. The main research problem of this study conducted by Bauer et al. (2019) was to explore the role that isolation plays in impacting the quality of the work experience among novice principals. Specifically, Bauer et al. (2019) hoped to determine whether isolation serves as a mediator in factors known to affect the work experience of principals.

In 2019, Bauer et al. noted that minimal existing theory addressed the role of isolation as a variable that impacts work performance outcomes. As such, they considered the relationships among multiple variables related to persistence as opposed to work context. To address this gap in existing research, Bauer et al. (2019) hypothesized that isolation is a mediating factor in the relationship between role ambiguity, role overload,

social support, coaching, experience and intention to leave based on relevant theoretical literature on isolation.

Understanding the role of the principal has rapidly evolved from management to instruction methodology and assessment preparation. Principals are expected to foster professional growth of staff members by facilitating engagement, frequent interaction, collaborative opportunities, and effective task delegation. This operational approach is considered essential for campus effectiveness, but many novice principals become overwhelmed by the stress of competing priorities. In addition to many other factors, stress can also result in feelings of inadequacy and isolation. Results of the Bauer et al. (2019) study indicated that role overload and social support were strong predictors of performance difficulties, and that feelings of isolation were a meaningful predictor as well. These researchers concluded that many unanswered questions from novice principals implicate a need for additional research on this topic.

Liljenberg and Andersson (2020) highlighted major differences in the roles of teacher and principal. These differences require consideration when a teacher transitions to a campus leadership role, since novice principals often feel isolated when they assume this new role. Unlike a staff of teachers, the principal is one person. The principal role is challenging, and novice principals often lack the skills required to transition into such a demanding role.

The Texas Education Agency (TEA) adopted Texas Administrative Code (TAC) 241.25 (TEA, 2018). This code defined the requirements for novice principals in Texas. This code mandated that “(a) A principal or assistant principal employed for the first time as a campus administrator (including the first time in the state) shall participate in an induction period of at least one year. (b) The induction period should be semi-structured, systematic process for assisting the new principal or assistant principal in further

developing skills in guiding the everyday operation of a school, adjusting to the particular culture of a school district, and developing a personal awareness of self in the a campus administrator role. Mentoring support must be an integral component of the induction period” (TEA, 2018, p. 1).

According to Bertrand et al. (2018), the majority of states have laws that require novice principals to have mentors for their first two years as a principal. It was not made clear whether districts in these states actually adhere to this requirement. Bertrand et al. (2018) added that mentors provide a trusting relationship that gives novice principals support and guidance needed in those early years to help negate feelings of isolation.

Summary of Findings

For more than 80 years, attempts to define the characteristics of a high-performing principal have not been realized (Hutton, 2019). There are many influences on the principals' ratings, but defining a high-performing principal's specific attributes remains unclear (Grissom, 2019; Hutton, 2019). The principal is the second most influential factor impacting student achievement (Grissom et al., 2021; Khanyl & Naidoo, 2020; Hermann et al., 2019). Numerous studies have equated campus performance to the effectiveness of the principal (Pannel & McBrayer, 2022; Grissom et al., 2021; Khanyl & Naidoo, 2020, Oyugi & Gogo, 2019, Hutton, 2019). Therefore, it is imperative for PDPs to incorporate the development of instructional leadership practices that directly correlate to student achievement.

The role of the principal has transitioned from managerial to instructional leader (Alkaabi & Almaamari, 2021; Indra et al., 2020; Neumerski et al., 2018). The emerging role of the 21st-century leader is broad and in constant conflict with competing priorities (Liljenberg & Anderson, 2020; Kilinc & Gumus, 2020; Bauer et al., 2019). Numerous studies elucidate that PDPs improve multiple levels of principal performance; however,

research concerning the design framework is limited (Darling-Hammond, et al., 2022; Davis et al., 2020; Darling-Hammond, et al., 2007). Lyons (2019) added that PDPs alone are insufficient for the novice principal. Principal supervisors are also a direct channel for developing high-performing principals (Hutton, 2019). Throughout the developmental process, the principal supervisor is to serve as a mentor and coach for the novice principal (Aguilar, 2020; McKim et al., 2019; Woulfin, 2018). Lack of clarity on the role, feelings of isolation, inadequacy, and lack of skill have led to high principal turnover (Davis et al., 2020). Coaching and mentoring should lead to self-reflection, awareness, and skill development for the novice principal (Calvert, 2016). However, principal supervisors must be trained to provide that level of support (Goldring, 2018).

To retain and develop high-performing principals, district PDPs should align to the criteria of their evaluation rubric. Principal ratings should be anchored in an evaluation rubric that provides measurable and actionable feedback (DeMatthews et al., 2020; Hutton, 2019). Donaldson et al. reported that principals do not understand the purpose of evaluation because of its absence of feedback to improve leadership efficacy. Rubrics have the potential to demystify the expectations and provide clear next steps for the principal and the principal supervisor DeMatthews, 2020; (Brookhart, 2017). Ensuring alignment between PDPs and evaluation systems is imperative to mitigate ineffective principals who would likely produce low-performing schools (Davis et al., 2020; Mestry, 2017).

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical point of origination for this study is transformational leadership theory. According to Campos (2020), it is a leadership theory in which a leader works closely with a group of committed followers to identify changes needed, develop an inspirational vision, and implement change constructs. This theory of leadership is

utilized in hospitals, schools, and many other industries. Due to its focus on charismatic and affective leadership elements, transformational leadership is a paradigm that has become an extremely popular leadership model.

Transformational leadership emerged as a novel leadership design when James V. Downton first coined the term in 1973 (Ugochukwu, 2021). According to Ugochukwu (2021), James Burns expanded this theory in 1978 by proposing that visionary strength and personality were traits that team members would be encouraged to follow. Ugochukwu (2021) explained that many years later Bernard Bass, another researcher, amplified the concept of transformational leadership by adding ways to measure the success of transformational leaders. Bass presented ideas that leaders could be ranked based on their ability to project authentic and focused energy in ways that would inspire team leaders to work harder than they originally thought they were capable (Ugochukwu, 2021).

A likely reason for the popularity of the transformational leadership theory is that it is the direct opposite of toxic leadership. Everett (2022) explained that a toxic leadership environment exists when followers comply with their leader based on fear of reprimand or retaliation. Toxic leadership assumes that the followers are passive and conforming. According to Everett (2022), toxic leadership is dysfunctional because it does not create situations in which passive followers can become exemplary followers. This is important since one of the primary goals of organizational leadership is to foster a work environment that produces exemplary staff. It is widely believed that transformational leadership effectively provides distribution of power to all organization stakeholders (Uguchukwu, 2021).

The premise of transformational leadership is that it relies heavily on intrinsic motivation. Northouse (2022) explained that inspiration and empowerment are important

for followers to perform optimally in the workforce. Transformational leaders are usually full of energy and passion, which contributes to their performance as well as the performance of their team members. As such, transformational leadership can create a dynamic and powerful group of solid performers in any workforce, including schools.

A common misconception is that leadership is synonymous with management. Northouse (2022) addressed this misconception by describing managers as those who only seek to provide authority and order and leaders as those who seek positive change by solving challenges and cultivating relationships with team members. The notion that leaders are only as effective as their team members emphasizes that leadership is a fluid concept in constant evolution. Transformational leaders are able to adapt and utilize a variety of methods to create opportunities for organizational success.

Campos (2020) stated that transformational leaders are those who typically have strong internal values and ideals. These traits foster an environment that builds on the foundational success of an organization rather than an individual. Transformational leaders effectively lead by creating an environment in which the leaders and the followers are held accountable in the realization of organizational success.

All transformational leaders possess unique skills and traits to facilitate optimal performance. People who have transformational leadership skills offer a combination of four attributes to varying degrees to their organization. According to Ugochukwu (2021), transformational leaders are: “1) charismatic (highly-liked role models); 2) inspirational (optimistic about goal attainment); 3) intellectually stimulating (encourage critical thinking and problem solving); and 4) considerate” (p. 2). These ideals were likely derived from Bernard Bass’s model related to transformational leadership theory.

The transformational leadership model inspires positive changes in those being led. It requires a level of investment in the success of every single member involved in

the process. Many leaders may not realize the time and effort required to fully understand and apply any leadership style, particularly one as dynamic and powerful as transformational leadership.

In schools, application of the transformational leadership model would be beneficial for administrators, teachers and students. It is a model designed to promote optimal performance through four primary elements: “1) idealized influence; 2) inspirational motivation; 3) intellectual stimulation; and 4) individual considerations” (Ugochukwu, 2021, p. 2), as originally introduced by Bernard Bass in 1990. Each of these elements is significant to the transformational leadership model because each can help transform its followers into productive and capable members of an organization.

As stated earlier, transformational leadership theory may have been introduced as a leadership model as early as the 1970, but Bass’s model most resembles transformational leadership today. Although the foundation of transformational leadership style does not change, it evolves based on the environment in which it must be applied. It can apply in every industry, including in school environments.

Jiang (2017) asserted that the theory of transformational leadership played a vital role to his study. Transformational leadership focuses on both employee performance and the organizations ability to transform. According to Jiang (2017), when applied to instructional leadership, certain aspects of transformational leadership theory have the ability to improve the structure and the performance of an organization.

Conclusion

In conclusion, principal evaluations have the potential to be essential tools for enhancing leadership practices (DeMatthews et al., 2020). Effective leaders require professional development curriculum and delivery aligned to the overall expectations and evaluation of the principal role. Developing high-performing principals is critical to

student achievement. The research in this chapter highlights the likelihood of a lack of alignment between PDPs and principal evaluation rubrics.

CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study was to explore whether novice principals believed their principal development program has adequately prepared them for a high-performance rating on their principal evaluation rubric. A purposeful sample of novice principals, in a Southeast Region of Texas, were solicited for this study. This chapter will provide the following: (a) an overview of the research problem; (b) research purpose and questions; (c) procedures; (d) data analysis; (e) qualitative validity; (f) privacy and ethical considerations; (g) research design limitations; and (h) conclusion.

Overview of the Research Problem

The research problem for this study was that it is unknown whether PDPs within a Southeast region in Texas are sufficiently aligned to the evaluation criteria in their principal evaluation rubrics. Kempa et al. (2017) have emphasized that effective leaders are needed to create success in schools. Aligned evaluation rubrics can demystify principal supervisor expectations and guide novice principals toward enhanced leadership practices (DeMatthews et al., 2020).

Many of the evaluation tools currently utilized are described as unmethodical, due to their lack of actionable feedback (DeMatthews et al., 2020). In 2019, Hermann et al. completed a study that indicated a gap exists between PDP and the performance of novice principals. One plausible explanation for this is a lack of alignment in the curriculum and training methods utilized in PDP and the principal evaluation rubric. Research conducted by DeMatthews et al. (2020) indicated that PDPs can improve multiple levels of school performance. Unfortunately, when PDPs are offered, they fail to meet research-based recommendations (Davis et al., 2000). According to Mestry (2017), ineffective leaders

are often unskilled and unprepared, and as a result, may become creators of low-performing schools.

While teacher efficacy is considered the primary factor for improving student performance outcomes, leadership is the second most influential factor (Pannell & McBrayer, 2022). Principals are faced with many difficult challenges navigating this role. It is an evolving role with competing priorities, and many novice administrators are inadequately equipped for a leadership role, because they lack the preparation needed to lead and manage schools successfully and efficiently (Mestry, 2017). Therefore, it becomes imperative that there is alignment between PDPs and principal evaluation rubrics. This alignment may ensure that principals are poised and prepared to facilitate the positive campus and student outcomes currently lacking in schools. Discovery of novice principals' perceptions is one way principal supervisors can evaluate their developmental impact in ways that are clearly outlined in the principal evaluation rubric.

Research Purpose and Questions

The purpose of this study was to explore whether novice principals believed their PDP has adequately prepared them for high-performance ratings on their principal evaluation rubric. The following questions were used to guide this study.

1. How do novice principals perceive the alignment between their principal evaluation rubric and characteristics of high performing principals?
2. What are novice principal perceptions on the developmental supports and training offered by their school district?
3. How do novice principals perceive their supervisors and the use of the principal evaluation rubric for their leadership development?
4. In what ways do novice principals believe their districts provide improved and sustained support for novice principals through PDPs?

Research Design

The purpose of this study was to advance the current body of research from the perspective of the novice principal. A qualitative narrative approach was chosen because it is considered most appropriate to solicit responses from the research questions of a "human experience" (Nowell, 2017; Creswell, 2012). The methodological framework for the study comes from a variety of pedagogical points of view.

Clandinin (2018) defined narrative inquiry as the study of experience. This methodological approach is one way to understand an experience through someone else's perspective and their experiential knowledge (p. 2). Clandinin (2018) explained that experiences generate continuous discoveries over time. Narrative inquiry considers the personal and social impact of an experience by taking a more detailed approach into one's perceptions (Clandinin, 2018).

Clandinin (2018) described narrative inquiry design as:

You have to inquire into those stories. They're not little nuggets that you can take away and analyze. You always have to understand them as something composed, they're told in particular ways in particular times. Narrative inquiry involves inquiry into stories. Stories are always on their way, in the midst, in the making, because experience is always on the way (p. 3).

The goal of this qualitative narrative research was to describe human experiences and inform our understanding of novice principal perception on the alignment of their PDPs and their principal evaluation rubrics. The research offered insight as to whether principal supervisors need to modify PDPs in ways that will create more high-performing principals. Understanding the essence of the human experience while conducting interviews will be the focus of the qualitative narrative approach (Nowell, 2017; Creswell

2012). Nowell (2017) added that capturing participants' voices during the interview process enhances meaning.

Population and Sample

The population of this study consisted of novice principals from public school districts within the Southeast Texas region. The population for this study included 1,294 principals from public school districts within a Southeast Texas region. The proposed participation selection serves over 1.2 million students, 79,463 teachers, and has 48 public school districts, 1,170 campuses (750 elementary schools, 203 middle schools, 49 junior high schools, 143 high schools, and 25 K-12 schools). The selected region is one of the largest in the state of Texas. Table 3.1 indicates that nearly 10% of campuses are led by a novice principal. Table 3.2 indicates that nearly 66% of novice principals are females and the largest ethnicity group of novice principals is Black/African American, comprising nearly 40%.

Table 3.1

Southeast Texas Principal Demographic Data

All Principals	%	<i>N</i>
Female	71.87	1086
Male	28.13	425
Black/African American	26.87	406
Hispanic	19.13	289
White	51.22	774
Asian	0.02	26
American Indian/Alaska Native	0.00	2
Pacific Islander	0.00	0
Two or More Races	0.01	14
1-3 Years of Experience	9.73	147
4-10 Years of Experience	26.53	401
11-19 Years of Experience	36.06	545
20 or more Years of Experience	27.66	418

Table 3.2

Novice Principal Demographics from a Southeast Region in Texas

Novice Principals	%	<i>N</i>
Female	65.99	97
Male	34.01	50
Black/African American	39.46	58
Hispanic	20.41	30
White	36.73	54
Asian	2.04	3
American Indian/Alaska Native	0.00	0
Pacific Islander	0.00	0
Two or More Races	1.36	2

Participant Selection

For this qualitative narrative study, the researcher solicited a purposeful sample of at least 15 participants who are novice principals. Principal selection criteria provided a diverse set of responses based on gender, race, years of experience, and campus level (primary or secondary). Prior to the interviews, the researcher contacted principals via email to ask for their voluntary participation in this study. The email included the purpose of the study, the interview process, and efforts to ensure confidentiality. Novice principals who agreed to participate in this study provided insight regarding whether they believed their PDPs adequately prepared them for high-performance ratings on their principal evaluation rubrics.

Data Collection Procedures

Data collection was captured by conducting semi-structured interviews. Most often, interviews are used in qualitative research to gather detailed narrative accounts of the participants' perception (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2019). The interview process allows

the researcher to ask open-ended questions as well as follow-up questions for clarification (Creswell & Poth, 2018). One strategy to ensure accuracy of responses for analysis included recording the interviews from start to finish.

A purposeful sample of novice principals was selected in order to gather a variety of leveled responses. The diversity of our participants should mirror our culture (Palmer & Burchard, 2022). In addition, Palmer and Burchard (2022) indicated that lack of diversity hinders the researcher's capacity to generalize results. The purposeful sample provided diverse responses based on the following criteria: (a) principal gender; (b) principal ethnicity; and (c) principal level (elementary or secondary).

Participants were emailed a letter of informed consent explaining the purpose of the interview, the interview protocol, the length of the interview (30-45 minutes), ethical considerations, and confidentiality measures (see Appendix B). In 2018, Gill et al. recognized the importance of the researcher collecting consent forms from all participants. Once informed consent was granted by electronic signature, the researcher began to schedule virtual interviews via Calendly, an electronic calendar platform. Interview questions were open-ended to allow the participants an opportunity to thoroughly explain their experiences and perceptions (see Appendix C).

Zoom, a videoconferencing platform, was utilized to conduct interviews and record responses. Zoom provided the option to record interviews and create interview transcripts. Archibald et al. (2019) shared findings that participants were highly-satisfied with their interview experience using the Zoom platform. Participant's also preferred Zoom over face-to-face, telephone, and other videoconferencing platforms (Archibald et al., 2017).

This qualitative study collected interview data. Selected principals were invited to participate in semi-structured interviews. Interview transcripts were analyzed using a

process of inductive thematic coding. Interview questions were peer reviewed by experienced educators, including district level administrators. Interview questions were delivered in a manner that told a story about the participant's perception of the alignment of their PDP to their evaluation rubric. Participants were allowed to review their responses as well as the research findings to ensure member checking. The interview transcripts provided data to substantiate the data collected during interviews. The interview data was organized into themes that emerged. Peer review was performed by having a content area expert from UHCL Educational Leadership Department to review the findings.

Research data is secured in a password-protected folder on the researcher's computer and in the researcher's office within a locked cabinet at all times. At the culmination of the study, the data will be maintained by the researcher for five years, which is the time required by CPHS and participating district guidelines. The researcher will destroy the contents of the file once the deadline expires.

Data Analysis

Data analysis involves reviewing audio, video, and text data to confirm or explore study participant responses (Mihas, 2019). Qualitative data was analyzed using In Vivo Coding. Saldan a and Omeasta (2016) described In Vivo Coding as processing the participants' language by analyzing and coding interview transcripts for common themes. In Vivo Coding is sometimes called Verbatim Coding.

In Vivo Coding provides efficiency in data analysis by identifying frequencies in the use of language and word meaning over multiple transcripts (Delve, 2022). Thematic codes were derived by the emerging themes from the data collection. This process analyzed transcripts line by line and coded participant's responses by frequency of words or phrases used to describe an experience, i.e., emotions, actions, and feelings.

The researcher reviewed all transcripts, prior to utilizing Dedoose Coding Software, to create a list of common themes for coding analysis. Common themes in participants' responses was determined by reading each interview transcript and noting similar perceptions and experiences. Interview data and themes were uploaded into Dedoose Coding Software. Commonality of emerging themes determined whether novice principals believed their PDPs adequately prepared them for high-performance ratings on their evaluation rubrics.

Qualitative Validity

Korstjens and Moser (2018) stated that all qualitative research must include trustworthiness, which includes credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability to ensure its validity. According to Korstjens and Moser (2018), credibility in qualitative research is the equivalent of validity in quantitative research. The researcher promoted credibility through narrative truth. Researchers make every effort to foster a sense of rapport while conducting their research (Korstjens & Moser, 2018). Full disclosure regarding the purpose of this research was outlined in the Informed Consent (see Appendix B), since this research was designed to gather information that will potentially benefit the educational community. Bias was eliminated when research participants provided honest and detailed answers to research questions, thus improving research credibility.

Research transferability relates to outlining experiences in context so they become meaningful to an outsider, according to Korstjens and Moser (2018). The researcher created an opportunity to determine common themes through open-ended research questions. Since common themes were determined, the findings of this qualitative research became relevant to the scientific community.

All research should also have dependability, since dependability is a significant factor in establishing trustworthiness. Korstjens and Moser (2018) pointed out that in qualitative research, dependability is related to the stability of the research findings over a period of time. The study participants responded to the open-ended research questions in vivid detail, which made the study naturally becomes more dependable. Participants were emailed their interview transcript for elaboration and clarification and the study findings to ensure member checking. In addition, peer debriefing was performed by a content expert from the UHCL Educational Leadership Department that examined the findings.

In qualitative research, confirmability refers to the degree in which research findings are derived from data analysis and can be confirmed by other researchers. Korstjens and Moser (2018) highlighted the difference between dependability and confirmability by stating that dependability includes aspects of consistency while confirmability involves aspects of neutrality. To ensure confirmability, the researcher maintained reflexivity throughout the research study to determine whether responses fit into emerging patterns (or common themes). According to Korstjens and Moser (2018), the scientific community looks for consistency in observations and perceptions of study participants as a means to confirm research results.

Privacy and Ethical Considerations

Prior to the collection of any data, the researcher gained approval from the UHCL's CPHS and the participating school district's Institutional Review Board (IRB). Informed consent was provided to all targeted participants with detailed information related to the purpose of the study, the interview process, and efforts to ensure confidentiality. Signed informed consent documents was collected prior to study participation, including the semi-structured interview. Participants received an email prior to the interviews detailing the timeline for the study. Once consent was granted, and

interviews had been scheduled, participants were sent a Zoom link with a cover letter via email.

At all times, collected data will remain securely locked in a cabinet in the researcher's office. The researcher will maintain the data for five years, as required by the CPHS and district guidelines. After the deadline has passed, the researcher will destroy all data files associated with the study.

Research Design Limitations

The research design consisted of several limitations. First, lack of information regarding previous professional roles that may have impacted leadership ability prior to the principalship is a limitation. These experiences have the potential to limit or expand the baseline skillset of a novice principal, which may skew data regarding alignment. Another limitation is that the role of assistant principal typically precedes the principalship, yet the roles and responsibilities of the assistant principal vary among campuses and districts. Third, the validity of principal evaluations is an inherent limitation due to the subjective nature of many of these evaluations. A final limitation relates to differences in the novice principals' exposure to consistent observations, ongoing feedback, available resources, campus supports, and other collaborative efforts, i.e., coaching/mentoring.

Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to explore whether novice principals believed their PDPs have adequately prepared them for high-performance ratings on their principal evaluation rubrics. It was the researcher's goal to elucidate the factors that build novice principal agency from the perspective of the novice principal. Semi-structured interview responses provided the narrative to determine common themes from novice principals'

experiences and perceptions. Chapter IV will provide a detailed presentation of data collection and data analysis from this research study.

CHAPTER IV:

FINDINGS

The purpose of this study was to explore whether novice principals believed their principal development programs (PDPs) have adequately prepared them for high-performance ratings on their principal evaluation rubric. The present study will advance the current body of research by providing novice principal perceptions on whether their PDPs are aligned to the evaluation criteria in their evaluation rubrics within a Southeast Region of Texas. The interview questions were used to solicit comprehensive responses from the novice principals' perspective (see Appendix C). A qualitative approach was used for this study. This chapter presents the findings for each of the research questions:

1. How do novice principals perceive the alignment between their principal evaluation rubric and characteristics of high-performing principals?
2. What are novice principal perceptions on the developmental supports and training offered by their school district?
3. How do novice principals perceive their supervisors and the use of the principal evaluation rubric for their leadership development?
4. In what ways do novice principals believe their districts can provide improved and sustained support for novice principals through PDPs?

The aim of this study was to capture the human experiences and inform our understanding of novice principal perception regarding whether their PDP prepared them for high-performance ratings on their evaluation rubric. An inductive coding process was used to identify common themes and patterns to analyze the interview data. This chapter presents the findings of the qualitative analysis and addresses each of the qualitative research questions that guided this study.

Description of the Participants

The participants who met the selection criteria were chosen to participate in this study. The selected participants had to be in their 2nd, 3rd, or 4th year as principal. First year novice principals were excluded from this study because they have not yet had the opportunity to be evaluated. The researcher was able to obtain the Texas Principal Database from the Texas Education Agency. The database provided principal contact information, along with the number of years as principal. The first 15 novice principals who responded to the email were invited to participate in one-on-one interviews. The pseudonyms used for this study were: Addison, Beth, Christine, Danielle, Elise, Faith, Gina, Harold, Isabel, Jessica, Kathy, Lindsey, Michael, Nicole, and Oscar. Selected participants represent 10 public school districts within the Southeast Region of Texas. Table 4.1 provides the profile of the participants.

Table 4.1

Profile of the Participants

Novice Principals	%	<i>N</i>
Female	73.33	11
Male	26.67	4
Black/African American	46.67	7
Hispanic	13.33	2
White	33.33	5
Asian	0.00	0
American Indian/Alaska Native	0.00	0
Pacific Islander	0.00	0
Two or More Races	6.67	1
2 nd Year	53.33	8
3 rd Year	26.67	4
4 th Year	20.00	3
Elementary	80.00	12
Secondary	20.00	3

The participants in this study represented a diverse set of perspectives. Nearly half of the participants are currently second year principals. This allowed for a more present day narrative. Details of the participants are below, including the roles they served prior to becoming a principal.

Addison is in her second year as a principal and is currently at a high school campus. Prior to becoming a principal, she served as a teacher, instructional coach, counselor, academic dean, and assistant principal.

Beth is in her second year as a principal and is currently at an elementary campus. Prior to becoming a principal, she served as a special education teacher, instructional specialist, and assistant principal.

Christine is in her fourth year as principal and is currently at an elementary campus. Prior to becoming a principal, she served as a teacher, instructional specialist, interventionist, testing coordinator, and assistant principal.

Danielle is in her second year as principal and is currently at an elementary campus. Prior to becoming a principal, she served as a teacher, instructional coach, assistant principal, and curriculum coordinator.

Elise is in her third year as principal and is currently at an elementary campus. Prior to becoming a principal, she served as a teacher and assistant principal.

Faith is in her fourth year as principal and is currently at an elementary campus. Prior to becoming a principal, she served as a bilingual teacher, instructional coach, assistant principal, and coordinator for dyslexia.

Gina is in her third year as principal and is currently at an elementary campus. Prior to becoming a principal, she served as a bilingual teacher, reading interventionist, literacy coach, district bilingual specialist, and assistant principal.

Harold is in his second year as principal and is currently at a middle school campus. Prior to becoming a principal, he served as a teacher, instructional coach, and assistant principal.

Isabel is in her third year as principal and is currently at an elementary campus. Prior to becoming a principal, she served as a teacher, instructional coach, and assistant principal.

Jessica is in her third year as principal and is currently at an elementary campus. Prior to becoming a principal, she served as a teacher and assistant principal.

Kathy is in her second year as principal and is currently an elementary campus. Prior to becoming a principal, she served as a bilingual teacher, special education teacher, math specialist, and assistant principal.

Lindsey is in her second year as principal and is currently at a high school campus. Prior to becoming a principal, she served as a teacher, human resource recruiter, district administrator, magnet coordinator, gifted and talented coordinator, and climate and culture specialist.

Michael is in his third year as principal and is currently at an elementary campus. Prior to becoming a principal, he served as a special education teacher, behavior interventionist, response to intervention (RtI) specialist, testing coordinator, and assistant principal.

Nicole is in her second year as principal and is currently at an elementary campus. Prior to becoming a principal, she served as a teacher, Licensed Specialist in School Psychology (LSSP), RtI coordinator, positive behavior intervention and supports (PBIS) coordinator, and assistant principal.

Oscar is in his second year as principal and is currently at an elementary campus. Prior to becoming a principal, he served as a teacher, teacher specialist, and assistant principal.

Data Analysis

This study explored whether novice principals believed their PDP adequately prepared them for high-performance ratings on their principal evaluation rubric. The data analysis was collected through one-on-one interviews. To ensure validity and trustworthiness, interviews were recorded and transcribed. Member checking ensured credibility of the study. Data collected from the interview responses were peer reviewed to ensure alignment to the research questions. Interview transcripts were provided to the

participants for opportunities to make clarifications or additions to their responses. Although there are numerous studies on principal development and principal evaluation, this study was designed to offer insight as to whether principal supervisors need to modify PDPs in ways that will produce high-performing principals through principal evaluation.

Emerging Themes

The design of this study highlighted the novice principal perceptions of their principal supervisors' support throughout their PDPs and their principal evaluations. Each participant shared their lived experiences on the relationship, support, development, and training provided by the principal supervisor during their novice years as principal through their PDP and evaluation. Each participant had one interview and was asked 21 open-ended interview questions.

The first research question focused on novice principal perceptions of the characteristics of a high-performing principal and how they are evidenced in their evaluation rubric. The second research question focused on novice principal perceptions of district support through their PDP and the training provided for their development. The third research question focused on the role of their principal supervisor in their development and how this individual utilized the evaluation rubric to align development and support. The fourth research question focused on how districts can provide improved support for novice principal development through their PDPs.

The data collected from the 15 semi-structured interviews were categorized into themes. The consistent themes that emerged from the study were: (a) most identified characteristics of a high-performing principal, (b) misalignment between the perceived characteristics of a high-performing principal and evaluation, (c) variation of novice principal PDP experiences, (d) PDPs did not prepare novice principals for the

principalship, (e) misalignment of PDPs to their rubrics, (f) impact of coaching on novice principal development, (g) cultivating relationships with other principals, and (h) designing PDPs that produce high-performing principals. Different themes emerged from each research question. The following sections provide the narrative for each research question along with a summary of participants' responses.

Research Question One

Research question one: *How do novice principals perceive the alignment between their principal evaluation rubric and characteristics of a high-performing principals?*

Participants were asked two interview questions: (1) What is your perception of the characteristics of a high-performing principal?, and (2) In what way do the characteristics of a high-performing principal surface in your principal evaluation rubric? Participants responded to the interview questions designed to highlight novice principals' perceptions of the characteristics of a high-performing principal and how they are identified and measured in their principal evaluation rubric. The interview questions were answered using a qualitative inductive coding process from interview responses. The data collection was analyzed to identify emerging themes, patterns, and other related details. The inductive coding analysis revealed two distinct themes: (a) most identified characteristics of a high-performing principal, and (b) misalignment between the perceived characteristics of a high-performing principal and evaluation.

Most Identified Characteristics of a High-Performing Principal

Communicator. Participants provided numerous perceived characteristics of a high-performing principal. Of these, communication skills were mentioned by more than half of the participants. Some participants provided specific examples of their perceptions of the characteristics of a high-performing principal by also explaining their behaviors.

When Kathy was asked about her perception of the characteristics of a high-

performing principal, she described herself by saying:

I think one of the most important characteristics that we have is just a good communication. It's not just about academic learning, we're here for their social/emotional learning, but reminding and communicating our expectations and our goals is my priority. We're always, always thinking about student success, like in the back of our minds. And I think that's how you become high-performing is making sure that we stick to our vision and our goals of student success with any decision that we make.

This statement supports the notion that communicating the expectation of student achievement is the primary focus for high-performing principals.

Other participants' perceptions were similar. Several were willing to explain why communication is essential. Unlike Kathy, participants described other people they believed were high-performing principals. For example, Addison described a high-performing principal as:

They are someone who consistently works to improve communication with all stakeholders and stays current on trends. The world of education is in constant evolution and so is the role of the principal. The ability to communicate change is important to all members of the organization.

Like Addison, Harold also cited communication by sharing, "They are clear in their communication. They have a clear vision for the campus and they're able to communicate it to different stakeholders. Principals are a vital part of the community." Each of these comments confirms that the ability to clearly communicate the vision and expectations feeds the perception for these novice principals.

Michael shared a similar response to the same question, stating, "I think a high-performing principal has to be a phenomenal communicator. You've got to communicate

with your staff, you got to communicate with your stakeholders. You are constantly selling, what you're doing. I think communication is really critical.” For novice principals, high-performing principals communicate expectations that align with the organization's mission and vision.

Campus management. The novice principals’ perception of a high-performing principal is one who also has efficient campus management skills. Gina said:

Someone who can create other leaders, right. So I will say the biggest thing for me is the most difficult thing for me, is learning how to delegate and grow other people so I'm not doing everything. And so, once you train your people, as a high-performing principal, you can focus on the instruction or be that true instructional leader, once you have people in place to handle all the other little things.

Effective campus leadership entails the delegation of tasks for shared responsibilities and improved campus performance.

Lindsey stated, “Having ways to monitor, you know, how we're doing in those areas. I also think of them as being versatile. And so that notion of like being at the balcony, but also being on the dance floor.” Isabel shared, “They are focused and intentional with everything they do. And I feel like they are able to delegate and able to select leaders that will help them be successful in their role.” Delegation of tasks is an efficient way to improve organizational performance. High-performing principals should assess the campus from multiple perspectives, since they are responsible for the overall function of the organization and its success.

High-performing principals inspire others to want to improve to ensure students are successful. Michael shared:

I've always felt, if I'm a leader and I'm asking people to follow me and I turn around and nobody's following me, I just really went on a walk. They also have

enough common sense to know when something's not right and when we need to adjust.

High-performing principals bring stability to an organization by monitoring the culture of the organization.

Gina added, “They have high retention rates for teachers. They want to stay because of the structures we have in place and they feel supported with their instruction.” Kathy stated, “High-performing principals have a way of knowing our staff, knowing our students, and what our school needs in order to become a more successful campus.”

These responses substantiate the perception that high-performing principals proactively manage their campuses by consistently engaging with the people they lead.

Misalignment Between the Perceived Characteristics of a High-Performing Principal and Evaluation

No alignment. Approximately 67% of the participants struggled to make a connection between the characteristics of a high-performing principal to their rubric.

Christine shared her perception of the way the rubric is written:

It's not written to help you get through the multiple times of day of having crucial conversations. How do I deal with the difficult teacher? How do I react? Because if you look at the rubric and try and put yourself on a point on the rubric, to get this far in what you're doing and to keep everybody alive, everything would be accomplished, right?

Participants believed that their evaluation rubrics do not adequately address the challenge of enduring and overcoming the daily frustrations that arise from dealing with people.

When Lindsey was asked the same question, she explained:

Yes and no. There are some pieces that are missing from my evaluation. There's a lot of soft skills that have to be in play. My evaluation rubric does not measure the

relationships with students, and teachers. It doesn't measure our school culture in terms of what are we doing in order to have to build a positive culture. It doesn't measure the non-academic needs that we have. It doesn't matter how many community partners we've established or the gains that they've seen.

Lindsey believed that her evaluation rubric did not capture anything related to creating and sustaining a positive school culture that fosters community relationships.

Several participants indicated they did not find any alignment. For example, Nicole said, "It doesn't align to the checklist of things principals are responsible for doing on their campuses. Those responsibilities are not in the rubric." Harold stated, "Honestly, I don't know. Is that bad?" The inability of participants to align the characteristics of a high-performing principal to their evaluation rubric explains their perceived disconnection.

Minimal alignment. On the other hand, several participants did identify alignment between their perception of a high-performing principal and their evaluation rubrics. Danielle shared that the characteristics of a high-performing principal appeared during her goal-setting conference. Elise and Isabel both indicated they saw the characteristics in Domain One of their evaluation rubrics. Oscar stated, "I believe they do. If I'm going to look at the first one, like visionary. They break it down into a lot of different components inside of our rubric." Participants who were familiar with the contents of their evaluation rubrics were able to identify the characteristics of a high-performing principal as part of their evaluation process or within Domain One of their evaluation rubrics.

Based on participant responses, only five of the 15 participants were able to identify the characteristics of a high-performing principal in their rubrics. There were three out of 15 participants who said the characteristics were not evident in their rubrics.

The remaining seven of the fifteen participants could not answer the question definitively, due to uncertainty. It is important to note that these participants were not evaluated using the same rubric; yet, only 33% were able to identify any alignment between the characteristics of a high-performing principal and their evaluation rubric.

Research Question Two

Research question two: *What are novice principal perceptions on the developmental supports and training offered by their school district?* Participants were asked five interview questions: (1) Did your district offer a PDP? If yes, explain. If no, what did you do independently to prepare you for the role?, (2) Do you believe that your PDP prepared you for the principal role?, (3) Describe their perception of the training or relevant information received on how your performance would be evaluated?, (4) Describe the quality and effectiveness of their training and its effectiveness?, and (5) How has your evaluation impacted your leadership growth?

Several participants responded to the interview questions that were designed to offer insight on the training and support offered by their PDPs to prepare them for the principal role and whether their participation impacted their growth as a leader. The interview questions were answered using a qualitative inductive coding process from interview responses. The data collection was analyzed to identify emerging themes, patterns, and other related details. The inductive coding analysis developed three distinct themes: (a) variations of novice principal PDP experiences, (b) PDPs did not prepare novice principals for the principalship, and (c) misalignment of novice principal development to their rubrics. Table 4.2 provides data of novice principal PDP participation. More than half of the novice principals in this study participated in a PDP.

Table 4.2

Novice Principal PDP Participation

All Principals	%	<i>N</i>
Yes	60.00	9
No	40.00	6

Variations of Novice Principal PDP Experiences

PDP experience. Nine of the participants attended a PDP during their first year as principal. Each expressed a different PDP experience. Kathy shared:

My district had a new principal development program where we are assigned not only a current principal mentor, but we also have a former district employee, kind of a mentor as well as a coach. They call them coaches. So I have a coach for the first two years. The coaches are retired assistant superintendents, deputy superintendents, or superintendents. They come in and they coach based off of like, a bigger picture. So they're really mentoring and coaching us, but then they're also trying to grow us in case we do want those district leadership positions in the future. So I have a mentor for the first two years as well as a coach.

In this case, Kathy's PDP lasted more than one year. Part of her PDP was the inclusion of a coach who worked with her principal supervisor and mentor.

Nicole also had a positive response to her PDP experience. Nicole described her PDP as "Amazing!" She explained:

We would discuss things, such as HR and the instructional components of building culture at the campus. So each meeting took on a different topic and ways to move through the things that we may see as principals. Those monthly topics were timely and relevant to what was happening during that time of the

school year and were extremely helpful.

Receiving information from the different departments provided information to help novice principals with campus management. Isabel was from the same district as Nicole and had the same positive response about her PDP. She added an additional component, sharing:

We had meetings with different key district personnel like, the accounting budget people, the human resources department, and different people every month. They would come in and just talk about what to do, what not to do, and how to start. And in addition we had a mentor that we had to meet with monthly. We had to go see their campus, they had to come visit us. And that mentor was supposed to be our first contact if we had any questions about the role.

It is common for PDPs to differ among districts, but they also may differ within the same district.

Oscar's district offered a PDP and a mentor. He shared what he thought was valuable:

I really liked it and I think one of the things that I held near and dear to my heart was there were other people in the room that were as new as I was. They had different levels of experience, you know, 20 years in the classroom, maybe 10 years as an assistant principal, but what we did know for certain was that this was everybody's first year as principal, and it was terrifying, I felt comfortable speaking and sharing knowing I wasn't the only one scared in the room. I treated my PDP as an emotional support group.

Due to limited support in that department, I thought the content was more surface level and watered down. It was compliance-ish. Real learning didn't happen in those trainings.

Oscar's PDP served a dual role of providing emotional support and skill building during that first year. However, Michael is from the same district as Oscar, yet he was not offered a mentor. He agreed that the PDP was helpful and it "sort of shepherded you through the first year as principal." Oscar and Michael provided another example of novice principals within the same district having different PDPs with and without a mentor.

Elise also shared her experience:

We had a program for the novice principals that came in at the same time as yourself and we would meet periodically, I would probably say once a month, if not every other month as a cohort group. During that time, the assistant superintendent, who supported our group would have different district groups or leaders come and speak to us and provide us information that they felt would be pertinent to the principal seat.

The monthly meetings provided opportunities for novice principals to learn together and receive important, timely, and relevant information.

No PDP experience. Lindsey's district offered a PDP, which she opted not to attend. She explained:

I could not attend any of the leadership development because I was the only administrator on my campus. Due to issues on my campus, I was trying to maintain a sense of calm and stability on my campus. So, at the time when they had the meetings, my supervisor was like, you need to be on campus if that's what bring you what brings you peace. I had to find other ways to develop myself. I read books, found external mentors, and attended professional development sessions outside of the district.

In this case, the novice principal was able to opt out of attending her PDP, and her

decision was supported by her principal supervisor.

Although Danielle's district did not offer a PDP, they did provide her a mentor. She shared, "My mentor was someone that previously served in the principal role. We met every Friday." Christine was from the same district as Danielle. But she stated, "No, I didn't get anything from the district." Christine did not attend a PDP and she was not provided a mentor. Christine entered the role of principal two years prior to Danielle in the same district.

Addison, Faith, Gina and Harold's districts was also not offered a PDP or mentor from their districts. Several of these novice principals shared their reflections. Faith said, "There were no new principal supports or anything like that." Harold paused and said, "Um, they did not have one. There was no, like, training program. They had a Leadership Academy for aspiring principals. But it was prior to stepping into the role of a campus principal." Gina firmly stated, "Nada!" These novice principals received training prior to entering the role but were not given any additional training once they became a principal.

PDPs Did Not Prepare Novice Principals for the Principalship

Preparation for the principalship. Next, participants were asked: Do you believe that your PDP prepared you for the principal role? None of the participants believed their PDP adequately prepared them for the principal role, but some found it helpful. Specifically, Harold said, "Maybe, yes. I mean, they covered the big things. My PDP covered human resources, financial budgeting, and instruction, but nothing prepares you for the role!" Isabel stated, "That's not a no and it's not a yes, but it's somewhat. All the topics from my PDP helped, but not fully."

Oscar shared:

So I think it did help. I don't think I wouldn't go as far as to say that it prepared me. Once a month isn't enough for a new principal. It's a lot happening on those

campuses. And once a month is a long time, you know, for me to get back to my support group and ask some of these questions.

Participants valued the learning from their PDP, but they did not believe that it adequately prepared them for the principal role. For example, receiving monthly support was insufficient, weekly check-ins would provide supplemental support between the monthly meetings.

Jessica and Michael attempted to quantify how much they perceived their PDP prepared them for the principal role. Jessica stated, “I’m going to say I think that it did in isolation. I think that it definitely provided the answers to black and white questions, which is about 5% of the job, but the other 95% of the job that’s not black and white, not so much.” Michael added, “Somewhat. I think it’s 60/40. I think probably my experience and education prepared me for probably I would say 60% of the experiences and then principal development definitely the other 40%.” These statements substantiate that PDPs only cover a small percentage of what novice principals need to know in order to be effective on their campuses.

There were participants who clearly stated that their PDP did not adequately prepare them for their role as principal. Addison stated, “I would say no.” Nicole said, “Hmm, no, I do not. I do not believe that it prepared us for the principal role. I think it prepared us for certain components of the role, but not fully embracing the principalship.” Lindsey stated, “No! It’s like survival of the fittest. You get in there and just get the job done, unfortunately.” These statements represent a need for comprehensive PDP development that will facilitate the transition into the principal role.

Evaluation training. Participants shared their various experiences of the training they received on how their performance was going to be evaluated. They also shared their perception of the quality of the training. Some participants elaborated on their training

experiences. Beth shared, “In addition to being trained using T-PESS, during monthly principal meetings, my principal supervisor would review my evaluation rubric. He would review parts of the rubric and discuss actions I could take to grow in a selected area.” The frequent discussions of development that were anchored in the evaluation rubric allowed novice principals to actively engage in their professional develop and prepare for their evaluation.

Harold explained:

It wasn’t really a training. You walk in and, you know, I was basically told, we all have faith that you’re going to be fantastic. We’re going to provide you with support. About once every week, I would get a phone call asking how was I doing and if I needed anything. As far as how I’m evaluated, I was told we’re going to go through the T PESS rubric. Aside from the minutia of having to actually do the stuff and put it in, it’s really not that much talk about it.

When evaluation is perceived by novice principals as a task, it diminishes opportunities for learning throughout the evaluation process.

Isabel shared:

I received training through Region 4 and it was a lot to learn as a new principal. I decided to just go back and read it to understand it better. I attended another Region 4 training that helped her deeper dive into the rubric. In that training, the Principal Handbook that accompanied the rubric was most helpful because the descriptors are there to tell me what I’m supposed to be doing.

Having a list of actionable improvement recommendations empowers novice principals to develop habits that impact their leadership.

Kathy experienced a multi-level of approach to evaluation training. She explained:

My mentor, coach, and assistant superintendent, who was my appraiser, all went over T-PESS and the expectations. It is important having one document that measures success, no matter the level, or school type. It should be fluid like schools. My training really honed in on staff development, and not like training staff... like how are you making your staff better, so that they can be better for the kids.

The training and support of the evaluation process must be ongoing and connected to the daily responsibilities of the principal.

There were some participants who felt their training was lacking. Michael shared: I was disappointed with the training that the district provided on T-PESS. It was about a year long process getting ready for the transition. I thought that was really good. I had heard really good things about T-TESS and T-PESS, and I think they're wonderful instruments. I just think the district did a very rushed job across the board of getting everybody ready not only to use the instrument, but how the instrument can be used in order to help you grow in your position as well. I think, now I'm a little better at using it and understanding it. But that's not because of training. That's because of getting together outside of the district and doing some additional work to fill in the gaps that I think were missing.

Novice principals want to be successful. Understanding their evaluation rubric provides clarity on the expectations and sheds light on their opportunities for growth.

Oscar said, he valued his one-on-one evaluation training with his principal supervisor. He shared:

The biggest thing about the evaluation pieces that I remember to this day is when she told me, I can sit here and inundate you with questions all day long, but I need you to go home and I need you to take a look at the rubric. Because if you're

going to play a sport, if you're going to play any game, you need to know the rules. And I remember that. I dissected the rubric with a fine tooth comb to determine what each of the indicators meant. I performed a self-assessment and scored myself to target an area that I needed the most improvement. My principal supervisor put the training back on him and charged him with scheduling a follow up meeting to discuss his areas of refinement and reinforcement. I was lost at first and I didn't want to say I was lost because I felt like as a principal, you're not supposed to say you don't know.

Taking the time to learn your evaluation rubric creates a level of self-awareness by identifying where you are as a leader.

Faith is in a new district with a new principal supervisor, Faith exclaimed: This year, I've gotten nothing from my principal supervisor. I don't even know if he's trained in T-PESS yet. But we're on a timeline. I'm like, I'm just doing it myself. I haven't even been asked to write my goals. I did it because I know I have to and I haven't been asked to do it.

Although Faith was evaluated and trained in her previous district, going to a new district usually requires different expectations. Lack of communication in the evaluation process impedes the development process for novice principals.

Participants who clearly understood their evaluation rubric were able to identify their areas for growth and align professional development and training to grow in the identified areas. Isabel, Oscar, and Michael took initiative to extensively review their evaluation rubric. This in-depth understanding of their principal evaluation rubric allowed them to collaboratively create a plan of action around developmental supports and training during goal setting in a meaningful way.

Misalignment of Novice Principal Development to their Rubrics

Evaluation alignment to leadership growth. After participants described their PDP and their experiences from their training regarding their evaluation, they were asked: How has your evaluation impacted your leadership growth? This question was designed to understand the perceived impact of the alignment between their evaluation and their development. Elise provided an example from when she had her goal setting conference, sharing:

I would set my goals at the beginning of the year and my principal supervisor would require me to locate my goal on the evaluation rubric. We would discuss where I was on the rubric and create action steps to take that goal to the next performance level. I was fortunate to have someone that would pinpoint where I was, where I wanted to be, and to be very clear on how you're going to get there. Anchoring current performance in the rubric helps novice principals identify gaps and provides opportunities for collaboration between both the principal and the principal supervisor for actionable development.

Danielle shared, “The most significant thing I realized is that I do some things extremely well. While there are other areas that are opportunities for growth. Using the evaluation rubric has helped me strategize those areas of improvement.” Using the rubric can help novice principal’s self-assess current skillset and plan for growth opportunities.

Lindsey said:

They are two separate things. The evaluation process was a checked box. The development process is where you get to the nitty gritty. Both the formal and informal progress checks provided me with lots of feedback for conversations from observations, but I did not gain anything from my evaluation. When presented separately, evaluation and development are perceived as misaligned.

Nicole tried to explain the alignment between her growth and her evaluation. She said, “I don't know that it truly impacted my leadership growth. I know that it was a checklist of the things that I know I'm going to have to address.” Nicole believed her evaluation served as a list of things to do, but not a guide on how to do them.

When evaluation training was delivered in a way for novice principals to identify their current performance, they were able to see how their growth would impact their leadership effectiveness. When done in isolation, it was described as a list of things to do. Novice principals could recognize growth and evaluation, but more than half did not recognize the alignment.

PDP alignment to evaluation. Participants who were able to identify the alignment of their PDP to the evaluation rubric had a positive experience of recognizing their developmental needs when being evaluated. They were able to take initiative and fill the gaps in their leadership by asking questions, seeking training, intentionally adjusting their daily behaviors. There were instances when participants were able to attribute their growth to their evaluation and there were some that were not able to make a connection. Elise said, “I think my district was trying to provide insight into the day-to-day operations of a principal. But, the alignment to the actual goals and needs, with actionable steps that are aligned to T-PESS, it was not. Michael shared, “There is room for improvement.” Jeanine and Nicole felt that “It was aligned in some areas.” Christine offered a different perspective. She said, “It’s complicated when you have multiple evaluators with differing perceptions.”

Oscar shared:

My PDP was aligned to the rubric and the district was intentional about doing that. Every time we met, our learning was hinged on evaluation. We knew that what we were working on, was what we were working up against. So I do believe

that it was aligned to our rubric. Consistent use of the rubric throughout the year may impact the alignment of novice principal development.

Danielle and Faith both responded, “No.” The six participants who did not have a PDP experience could not provide a response. Those that did not have a PDP, lacked trust in the evaluation process because of the perceived absence of support. When PDP and evaluation were done in isolation, the evaluation and development consistently felt disjointed and out of compliance.

In summation, none of the participants believed that their PDP adequately prepared them for the principal role. More than half of the participants perceived that the training and support they received from their district was misaligned to how their performance was going to be evaluated. Participants who were not trained on how their performance would be evaluated expressed a profound disconnection between their development and evaluation because they did not understand the relevance. Participants who were trained and knowledgeable of their evaluation rubrics used it to determine a baseline for growth opportunities and were able to engage in their development process by seeking learning opportunities to improve their leadership skills beyond their PDPs.

Research Question Three

Research question three: *How do novice principal perceive their supervisors and the use of the principal evaluation rubric for their leadership development?* Participants were asked two interview questions: (1) How has your supervisor utilized the principal evaluation rubric for your leadership development?, and (2) Describe the impact of your supervisor during the principal development process?

Several participants responded to the interview questions that were designed for novice principals to reflect on how their principal supervisor aligned their growth while

using their evaluation rubric as well as to determine the impact of their principal supervisor when their evaluation rubric was used as a tool for growth. The interview questions were answered using a qualitative inductive coding process from interview responses. The data collection was analyzed to identify emerging themes, patterns, and other related details. The inductive coding analysis developed two distinct themes: (a) impact of coaching on novice principal development, and (b) disconnection between development and evaluation.

Impact of Coaching on Novice Principal Development

Principal supervisor's use of the rubric for development. Participant's shared different perspectives about their principal supervisor's use of aligning novice principal development to the evaluation rubric. Elise shared:

I was thankful that I had a principal supervisor that carried the evaluation process out with fidelity. I had a goal setting meeting and felt it was a really meaningful conversation. The evaluation process made me reflect on where I want to be as a leader.

Allowing the novice principal to decide where they want to be as a leader and set goals to get there creates ownership in the learning process. Danielle shared:

Starting the year with the self-assessment allows you to reflect on where you are on the rubric. My self-assessment goal was to grow in providing others with feedback. My principal supervisor would coach me on writing samples of feedback. We would perform classroom walk-throughs and focus on my goals at least once a month. We're a small district. I honestly don't even know if someone would have time to do that everywhere or if all the principals got it. I think it may have been because I was a first-year principal. That really helped me.

When principal supervisors modeled how to improve practices, novice principals

appreciated opportunities to ask questions through this level of support. Specifically, principal supervisors used the evaluation rubric to guide the coaching process. Kathy shared her experience with her principal supervisor:

So we went over the rubric. And then from the rubric, we created goals last year. And then at the end of last year, we went through the rubric again and kind of thought about what we needed or what I should work on over the summer. My district sends us to leadership conferences over the summer. And so she identified particular areas that she thought that would be really great for my school and myself next year. So, we identified staff morale and school culture as something that I could really grow in for my campus. I had 39 new teachers this year. And over the summer, what I focused on was, how do I retain those teachers? How do I make them feel part of the building and part of the family? Because hopefully, they'll want to stay. So I think her going over the rubric and helping me identify those areas that I needed to grow in was awesome! If it were up to me, I'd be like, I need to be better on everything. And she really honed in on one goal.

Principal supervisors can help narrow the focus for growth in an effort to avoid novice principals from feeling overwhelmed.

Principal supervisor's impact on growth. Participants were asked: Describe the impact of your principal supervisor during the principal development process? This question was asked to determine the impact of the principal supervisor on the development process aside from the evaluation process.

Beth shared:

My principal supervisor has such a nice personality. He's supportive and he talks you through situations. He won't let you fail. He assures me that it's okay to make mistakes because I'll learn. Because of that support I can go to him for whatever I

need. My principal supervisor comes to campus, calls, and responds to my emails to let me know that he's there for me.

Principal supervisors are there to provide support and guidance when you need them.

Absence of the aligned support impacts novice principal's perceptions of their principal supervisor's impact. Danielle shared:

I honestly don't know that I've ever had a supervisor help me grow as much as she would like. I can't recall if anyone has ever sat me down and said, here is what you need to work on. Now that I am in my third year I finally has a handle on things.

Principal supervisors that understand the significance of their role on novice principal development increases their impact on novice principal development.

Gina stated, "My principal supervisor visited my campus one time because I had an issue." Gina's district offered professional learning options that was open to anyone. But, there was no one that guided her or developed her in the role.

Harold stated, his district has helped his development by putting "the right people in front of me." Those people have provided him "the right motivation." He believed that if those opportunities did not exist, "I would probably bury myself into a hole to figure a lot of things out and I wouldn't even know what I was doing. I've been lucky." He credits having a team of people to support and develop him as a leader has been essential.

Kathy shared:

So, my assistant superintendent would come by at least every other week and meet with me about anything that she felt like I should know. As a baby principal, I didn't know what I didn't know. Right? And so she would come around in like October. When she came, she's like, Hey, how are you doing? Are you checking in with the staff? And I'd be like no, why? She's like, well, this is a stressful

month. We need to start working on morale. And so then just learning about her perception of what a good principal should be doing to support their staff really, really helped me understand where my priorities should shift throughout the year. So at the beginning of the year, it's more about engaging and getting the teachers excited about their classrooms and excited about learning. But then, now in October, it's more about self-care and, making sure that we're okay because you can't be okay for the students if you're not okay for yourself. And so having her come every other week, and sometimes just walk in the halls with me because I was looking at my campus through her eyes. I was drowning last year as a frustrated principal.

Principal supervisors foster an environment that helps novice principals prioritize the many responsibilities of the principalship and create awareness for unexpected situations. Interestingly, Isabel had similar feelings about her experience with her principal supervisor's impact on her development. She shared:

She had a high impact on my growth. The reason is because she was visible. She met with me once a week. She came to my campus, came on campus walks with me, and she challenged me. She asked me hard questions that really impacted me on how to stay focused. Like when I go back to thinking about those characteristics of a high-performing principal, I think they are intentional about instruction and not getting caught up in the managerial side. I appreciate it because every time she left, honestly, I felt like she left me a nugget. She left me with work. But she left me with something that helped me to become a more effective principal. She did it because she was visible every week. I'm a second year principal. You don't get as much support. I don't have that space anymore. You go from a first year to veteran. There's no in between. You're now in the ship

with everybody. Keep up! That's where I feel like I am right now.

Novice principals appreciated the coaching and feedback provided by the principal supervisor.

Faith expressed:

I enjoyed my development in my previous district. I wouldn't describe my development as training. I really think that it's the modeling. Having somebody that knows the job, has been a highly effective principal, understands all parts of the principalship, and how to run a campus effectively is the most effective way to grow a principal. It's not about going to sit somewhere in a training. It is actually doing the work with someone by showing and developing you like a coach. I just know that she taught me very well.

Faith attributed her growth to her principal supervisor's coaching and knowledge of the principal role.

Disconnection Between Development and Evaluation

Development and evaluation. Christine expressed her concerns regarding how her principal supervisor utilized the rubric for her development, saying:

If my principal supervisor scored me as proficient instead of accomplished on my evaluation, I won't know why. I'm not included in the discussion. My evaluation scores are made amongst my supervisors. At my end of the year meeting with my superintendent, we do not discuss my evaluation. It was is overall discussion about what has happened throughout the year. My superintendent would talk about data and some of the good things that he saw on the campus. He would say, you guys made great strides in this, tell me a little bit how you did it. You guys have a lot of parent engagement. It was real tough to get people to come. It's very general and it's not specific to the Domains in my evaluation. I walk out of the

meeting with an overview for the next year and what he'll be looking for. Usually it's, I want you guys to focus on instruction, focus on parent relationships, and keep the main thing the main thing. When evaluation is not discussed among the principal and the principal supervisors, there will be a disconnection in the development process and the expectations.

A disconnection is evident when evaluation is not discussed between the novice principal and the principal supervisor, adversely impacting the development process. This resulted in feelings of disconnection throughout the process.

When Harold was asked the same question, he expressed his perception of how his principal supervisor used his evaluation to impact his growth. He said:

Honestly, I don't know. I mean, we get evaluated by T-PESS and I've set my goals and I have my conversation with my executive director and we talk. He'll say, hey, you're doing a fantastic job. I see you doing great things. I see you're on the right path. I see your staff as listening to you. I'm hearing these great things in the hallways and I'm hearing great things from your teachers. It's all really positive feedback. Keep it up. There hasn't been many, like coaching moments, so to speak. But the rubric, it's okay. Is it wrong for me to say it doesn't matter me?

When evaluation and growth are aligned, the principal supervisor's impact was most impactful for the novice principal; if not, it feels misaligned. For example, Isabel said, "I can't say if it impacted my growth because my evaluation wasn't clear. She recalled her end of year conference last May, she said:

I felt like it was something my principal supervisor just picked because she needed to give me something so I will look proficient. So, no. It didn't impact my growth. It was a huge disconnect. I was fine with a rating of Developing on my evaluation, but I want my rating to reflect the correct domain and I want an

explanation for the rating. Without an explanation, I felt like she had to pick something and didn't really know she you picked it. The rubric is designed to grow you. When I asked her principal supervisor what do I need to do to improve? She said, just continue doing what you're doing. It's going to come with time. I don't think she knows. I don't think anybody really knows. I think it's really checking boxes. I know she wants the best for me. I don't doubt that. But during my evaluation, she wasn't able to explain it to me and I don't think it was because she didn't want to, I just think she didn't know how.

The principal supervisor's knowledge of the evaluation rubric should directly connect to how it will be used to develop novice principals.

Lindsey talked about her experience:

I sat down with my supervisor. She's awesome! But um, she said, listen, you're going to be developing all the way down because you're a first year principal. So I'm looking at my evaluation like, why am I even looking at any of these indicators if you've already determined that from the jump. Regardless of what I have done and the energy that I've poured in that I'm developing. And so I feel like our district could do a better job of going through the evaluation process. It should be a sit down overview of the different competencies, what they mean and what it looks like for each of the indicators. Because it seems like a very rushed process, and like just another check, and so, if you treat it that way, I'm going to treat it that way too.

When the rubric was used as an instrument to grow and develop novice principals, participant's views were vastly different. When the principal supervisor models the disconnection of the rubric from development, the novice principal will replicate the same behavior.

There were few participants who had their principal supervisor use the rubric to create an action plan for leadership growth. Most often, principal supervisors used principal evaluation separately from their leadership development of novice principals. In those instances, the principal supervisor had minimal knowledge of the principal evaluation rubric nor did they execute the evaluation cycle with fidelity. Thereby, fed the perception of the disconnection.

Based on their participant responses, participants consistently expressed that the feedback and coaching from principal supervisors was highly beneficial. Training was appreciated, but the consistent coaching from the principal supervisor added the most value to their development and the evaluation process, as Faith, Kathy, Isabel, and Michael previously said. Sadly, coaching by the principal supervisor was only sometimes present. Surprisingly, participants within the same district had different PDP experiences depending on their principal supervisor. Both Faith and Isabel, knew more about the evaluation process than their principal supervisor. The principal supervisors that had prior principal experience had a refined skillset to coach and develop principals. Participants generally felt their principal supervisors were nice. Beth and Gina's shoulders slumped when they thought it was necessary to say things like, "they're always there to help me out when I need them." Or, "I know they are just a phone call away." In most cases, the participants felt evaluation was compliance whereas development was perceived as growth.

Research Question Four

Research question four: *In what ways do novice principal believe their districts can provide improved and sustained support for novice principals through PDPs?*

Participants were asked one interview question: How can districts provide better and sustained support for novice principals through principal development programs? The

interview question was designed to explicitly offer insight on how districts can provide training and support through their PDPs. This question was answered using a qualitative inductive coding process. The data collection was analyzed to identify emerging themes, patterns, and other related details that will offer insight to recommendations on PDPs to develop high-performing principals. The inductive coding analysis developed three distinct themes: (a) impact of coaching on novice principal development, (b) cultivating relationships with other principals, and (c) designing PDPs that produce high-performing principals.

Impact of Coaching on Novice Principal Development

Coaching. Participants reflected and provided responses based on the experiences they found beneficial throughout their PDPs. Oscar stated, “Teachers have a mentor their first year, but you don't have anybody when you're a first year principal. You just have to develop your own relationships to get the feedback and the assistance that you need.” Having a safe place to unpack their thinking, share ideas, and get feedback was valued by novice principals.

Faith shared:

Coaching is the way to grow and develop principals. Last year, in my previous district, I had the best mentor supervisor ever! Although her expectations were very high and she made me work hard, I appreciated it. My principal supervisor never gave me answers. She would ask guided questions and allow me to figure it out. But she was there to do all the dirty work with you. I appreciated the level of support she gave me in developing my skillset to problem solve.

Jessica added:

I think the mentorship. All of us who were first year principals last year loved our mentors. They are truly there in that capacity. They can dedicate that time to us.

That, I think, is just amazing. Because that's what we need. A lot of times, it's just time to reflect, to work through things, to hit on things, share ideas. This is where we are. This is where we're going. Really, you know, going through that coaching cycle with us to grow us as principals.

Novice principals expressed that having a mentor who is not their principal supervisor provided a safe space for them to be vulnerable and transparent. They also said it was most beneficial when they had a mentor who was specifically assigned based on their individual needs. Kathy explained:

My principal supervisor tried to align my mentor principal based on similar types of schools. My mentor principal comes from a title one bilingual campus. But her strengths were not necessarily my weaknesses. So, I feel like I would have been a better paired with a principal that addressed my personal weaknesses so I could grow from them. Not necessarily because our campuses are the same.

Nicole, like Kathy, had a mentor principal from a different type of campus. Nicole shared:

My mentor was a good principal and she had knowledge, but there were a lot of things she could not help me with. She had never worked at a title one campus. I had to reach out to another person who worked at a title one campus. Me and my mentor could have been more aligned.

To maximize support for novice principals, aligning and effectively matching mentors support should be considered whenever possible.

Christine suggested:

Have a person in the middle of the principal and the principal supervisor. This will allow opportunities to collect and give me specific feedback. Not someone telling me, we're all doing good. That doesn't help. And I don't know, honestly, if

the rubric can change or if the development for principals has to change because most rubrics aren't written that way.

Novice principals need specific feedback and authentic professional development that will train them for their roles.

Michael expressed:

I realize my principal supervisor is busy but in my three years you've been on my campus one time and in the one time you come, I get it with a very critical lens. My idea is to come with a more supportive lens. Then provide those recommendations and suggestions. Come back and check on them to see how they are implemented. Again, I appreciate that you have all the faith in me and the buildings running well. But sometimes I do want you want to see my face.

Principal supervisor support should involve numerous campus visits as well as offering coaching and feedback that does not feel like criticism.

Oscar added:

There needs to be a team of people if you want principals to be successful. Principals have to have lifelines. They must have a support group that can help monitor our progress. A new principal needs somebody to talk to. There are situations when they need to talk to a principal. Another principal understands the struggle and stress that he's going through. I was fortunate to have someone who was almost like a friend.

Supporting principals is a team approach and a mentor/coach helps the novice principal navigate the many responsibilities of the principal.

Cultivating Relationships with Other Principals

Regular meetings. Addison said:

I appreciated the regular meetings with secondary schools. It allowed time for

collaboration and camaraderie because of the relationships that are built. In my previous district, area superintendents would visit my campus to strategize by looking ahead at what I could do to make sure that whatever I was planning was going to be successful. That level of support and communication was invaluable because it created a mental shift that I didn't even know was going to be such an asset to me.

Time to collaborate with peers helps build and sustain relationships with people that understand the role.

Kathy believed her best support came from meeting with different departments every month during her first year. She shared, “I didn't know what I didn't know. It was very eye opening. It was also a time to build relationships with other principals.” She said that in year two, she better understands her role as a principal.

Designing PDPs that Produce High-Performing Principals

Relevant training. Christine shared, “I do believe that having professional development that goes into what this actually looks like for principals.”

Danielle said:

Make sure you have quality programs that train people on how to train principals.” We need training on things that look at the principal evaluation and how to develop us in those specific areas. Bring in other people who are more experienced in those areas like from Region 4, Lead4Ward or wherever and help develop us from the outside. Get people who are experts in the area.

Having high quality trainers and programs can yield better performance results for novice principals who mitigate the transference of antiquated leadership skills.

Harold added:

I would say prepare principals for the emotional aspect of being a campus leader and dealing with the stress and the strain. The anxiety that comes from that constant thought that this is all on my shoulders you know, nobody, and nothing prepares you. From the moment when your name gets put on the marquee or on the website, you know. Once your name and your face gets out there and anything that happens to your campus, it's immediately and without question directly tied to you. And I know teachers are very protective of their classrooms, their teaching, and their practice. So anything that you question about their classrooms, they immediately see it as attack on them, because they're protective of that. Well, we're all teachers. So principals do the same thing. And I think that first year, I took so many things personally that I almost lost it. And I think giving principals that preparation for those kinds of moments, because nobody gives somebody campus who isn't capable of doing all of the other things. You know, you don't give somebody a campus who can't lead instruction. You're not going to give somebody a campus who can't manage school discipline. You're not going to give somebody a campus who can't keep a school within budget. They're not going to give anybody a campus that is going to hire bad teachers or is not going to document things properly. They understand that you are capable of doing all of those things. But I don't know if they ever checked to see, hey is this person capable of handling this kind of stress? How do they act when it is all on them? How will they respond in those moments of high stress when everybody's jumping down their throat? It may be just a team or three or four teachers, but it happens to a novice principal who is unprepared for that moment. It could ruin a career.

The principal role comes with a lot of scrutiny. Novice principals are unaware of the emotional burdens that may impact their success.

Isabel proposed:

Have the same trainings from when she was an AP, but approaching the content from the principal's perspective. I honestly think it should be more than just one year. I think it should be a three year program. That's me personally. Your first year, you just survive it. You just try to stay afloat. Second year you're like okay, I can be reflective. I'm reflective this year. What can I do different now than what I did last year? That third year you finally feel like I got it. I've arrived. But, it's more like, my feet are now planted in this role. Now I can really see how to move my campus to a higher level, you know.

The implementation of multi-year PDPs may allow enhanced skill development at a higher level of implementation.

Lindsey recommended:

Focusing on one area that will be most impactful with opportunities to learn and do that one thing really well. This way the district will be able to provide support through coaching, professional development, and observations. I didn't come from the AP role. I came completely fresh. So, my eyes were new, and everything felt like it was in silos and disconnected,

Every principal had a different career path. The assistant principal role most commonly precedes the principal role, but not in Lindsey's case. Therefore, her needs are different than most novice principals.

Beth stated:

It seems like the higher you go, the less training you receive. There should be a principal supervisor certification, just like principal certification. The thing is,

they don't even know what to do or how to develop principals. You have to take the initiative to seek out support. If not, you'll get lost in the shuffle. Nobody sits you down and tells you, but if you ask, they will tell you.

Elise shared, "When you truly think about evaluation and growing a leader, there needs to be more intention of looking at the rubric and then tailoring those development opportunities."

In summary, participants expressed that having a coach/mentor was highly beneficial. That person is sometimes the principal supervisor. When it is not the principal supervisor a mentor must work in tandem with the principal supervisor to support the novice principal. Developing high-performing principal requires high-quality programs. Participants believed that program content should be highly relevant and aligned to the role of the principal and evaluation rubric. Principal supervisors have a significant influence on novice principal growth. Therefore, principal supervisors should be highly qualified to support the growth and development of novice principals in becoming high-performing principals.

Summary of Findings

The findings in this study are based on the perceptions of whether novice principals believed their PDP had prepared them for a high-performance rating in their principal evaluation rubric. Ten school districts in a Southeast Region of Texas were represented in this study. All participants agreed that their PDP did not prepare them for the principal role. However, novice principals agreed, in general, that their PDPs were helpful.

Thirty-three percent of the participants perceived that the characteristics of a high-performing principal surfaced in their rubrics. Participants who were able to anchor their development needs and growth in their evaluation rubric were able to identify actionable

steps to improve their effectiveness. Nevertheless, the participants who could not make the connection between their development and evaluation likely had insufficient understanding of their evaluation rubric. The principal supervisor's use of the rubric during goal setting, observations, and feedback consistently influenced novice principal's perception of the alignment between the two. Nonetheless, many perceived evaluation as a compliance process.

However, the most significant factor shared by participants was their principal supervisor's impact on their growth through coaching. Those with mentors who were not their principal supervisors sometimes stated this experience was more beneficial, especially when it was someone that had been a former principal. The terms mentor and coach were often used synonymously. Mentors provided emotional safety through support and dedicated time to focus on their developmental needs.

None of the participants had the same experiences through their PDP, including those within the same district. Participants believed that districts could improve support by ensuring principal supervisors know how to grow and develop principals. Utilizing the evaluation rubric allows novice principals to see where they are and how to move to the next level on their rubric. Evaluation and development were aligned when principal supervisors understood their role and impact on novice principal development.

It was important for the researcher to determine if novice principals could identify what impacted their growth in becoming high-performing principals. Typically, principal supervisors are responsible for the novice principals' evaluation and growth. Interview responses indicated that most principal supervisors performed these tasks in isolation. Novice principals with isolated experiences were sometimes left confused and disconnected from the entire evaluation process, resulting in a counterintuitive approach to develop high-performing principals. The alignment of both development and

evaluation should exist within the design of their PDPs.

Conclusion

This chapter presented a qualitative analysis of whether novice principals believed their PDP has prepared them for high-performance ratings of their principal evaluation rubric. Overall, the participants who had a PDP thought their program was somewhat helpful but expressed that it did not adequately prepare them for the principal role. Chapter V will include a discussion of the findings detailed in this chapter in conjunction to the findings listed in Chapter II, along with implications of the findings determined from this study, and recommendations for future research studies.

CHAPTER V: SUMMARY, IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This qualitative study explored the novice principals' perceptions of whether their principal development programs (PDPs) prepared them for high-performance ratings on their principal evaluation rubric. This chapter discusses the findings presented in Chapter IV. Additionally, this chapter presents the relation to the theoretical framework, connection to the literature, implications, and recommendations for future research.

Discussion of Findings

Principal performance impacts school performance (Pannel & McBrayer, 2022; Grissom et al., 2021; Khanyl & Naidoo, 2020, Oyugi & Gogo, 2019, Hutton, 2019). In addition, researchers report that the school principal is the second most influential factor in student achievement, next to the teacher (Grissom et al., 2021; Khanyl & Naidoo, 2020; Hermann et al., 2019). The research above highlights studies on the impact of the principal on student achievement, but there is limited research on whether novice principals believe their PDPs has adequately prepared them to become high-performing principals who create high-performing schools. I designed my study to offer insight into whether principal supervisors need to modify PDPs in ways that produce high-performing principals. Based on participants' responses, the themes that emerged from the study were: (a) most identified characteristics of a high-performing principal, (b) misalignment between the perceived characteristic of a high-performing principal and evaluation, (c) variation of novice principal PDP experiences, (d) PDPs did not prepare novice principals for the principalship, (e) misalignment of PDPs to their rubrics, (f) impact of coaching on novice principal development, (g) cultivating relationships with other principals, and (h) designing PDPs that produce high-performing principals.

As a result of the findings, I have determined that school districts must acknowledge the role and impact of the principal supervisor on developing high-performing principals. Lyons (2019) added that novice principals need more than PDPs. Principal supervisors are charged with the task of principal development and evaluation. They are influential in developing high-performing principals (Hutton, 2019). Numerous researchers report that throughout the developmental process for novice principals, the principal supervisor serves as a mentor and coach (Aguilar, 2020; McKim et al., 2019; Woulfin, 2018). Therefore, school districts must develop principal supervisors who are knowledgeable about the principal role and capable of creating and modifying PDPs in ways that will produce high-performing principals.

Relation to Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework used in this study was Transformational Leadership. This study was analyzed by examining Bernard Bass' (1985) version of the modified transformation leadership framework. James Burns recognized the character traits of transformational leaders in 1978. In contrast, Bass added measures of those character traits. This theory proposes that transformational leaders focus on employee performance and the ability to transform an organization. In this study, transformational leaders are high-performing principals who create high-performing schools.

Transformational leaders are: “(1) charismatic (highly-liked role models); (2) inspirational (optimistic about goal attainment); (3) intellectually stimulating (encourage critical thinking and problem solving); and (4) considerate” (Ugochukwu, 2021, p. 2). Each of these elements inspires optimal performance through idealized possibilities by creating opportunities for success. In schools, high-performing principals are transformational leaders. Therefore, it is imperative that PDPs include the framework necessary to develop high-performing principals who will produce high-performing

schools. Participants shared that while their PDPs were helpful, they did not adequately prepare them for their role as principals.

Northouse (2022) added that transformational leaders are intrinsically motivated. That is evident when participants took the initiative to understand their evaluation rubric without seeking clarification from their principal supervisor. Those participants who were able to assess their current level of proficiency on their evaluation rubric were also able to create an action plan for guiding their leadership capacity. This connection made a positive impact on their performance and their campus. Principal supervisors who engaged with their principals throughout the goal-setting process were able to maximize their impact through coaching and feedback. This consistent engagement elevated principal performance through improved leadership skill development thereby providing opportunities to transform their campuses.

The data were analyzed through the lens of the transformational leadership framework as a means to develop high-performing principals who produce high-performing schools. Transformational leadership theory improves the structures that enhance organizational performance (Jiang, 2017). Designing a PDP framework for novice principals aligned with their evaluation criteria invites actionable and measurable feedback to the development process.

Participants believed that mentoring and coaching had the most significant influence on their development. In addition, principal supervisors who understood how to perform their roles were equipped to align support and training opportunities geared to enhance principal performance. These findings directly correlate to this study's theoretical framework of Transformational Leadership.

Summary

Novice principals did not perceive that their PDPs prepared them for a high-performance rating on their principal evaluation rubric. The participants' responses indicated their PDPs had limited overall value due to lack of comprehensive content to adequately prepare them for the principal role. The results from interview responses concluded that the role of the principal supervisor on the novice principal was more impactful on their development. A consensus surfaced in the interview responses when participants attributed their success to the support they received from their principal supervisor.

Participants valued their training when their PDP and evaluation were aligned. When their principal supervisor anchored their development goal(s) into their evaluation rubric, this was especially beneficial. During goal-setting, these reflective conversations created awareness for novice principals regarding where they were on their evaluation rubric and how to move to the next performance level. Conversely, the principal supervisors who did not use the principal evaluation rubric as a tool for growth led novice principals to believe that principal development and principal evaluation were aligned.

Connection to the Literature

The literature review mentioned that novice principals were overwhelmed by the lack of clarity on their role, competing demands, setting priorities, and loneliness. Similarly, Liljenberg & Andersson (2020) reported that novice principals are overwhelmed by the magnitude of their new responsibilities when they entered the role. For example, the majority of the participants stated that their PDPs did not adequately prepare them for the principal role.

In combination with expressed feelings of concern and anxiety, novice principals felt isolated and welcomed opportunities to collaborate with others in the same role.

These opportunities surfaced during monthly meetings that allowed them to cultivate relationships with other principals. Mestry (2017) said that feelings of inadequacy and the absence of the necessary leadership skills to lead and manage schools successfully could be a contributing factor in the prevalence of low-performing schools. Participants described having a mentor to having a lifeline, expressing it was indispensable having someone to talk to who understood the job's stress and strain.

In most cases, a traditional induction process is lacking (Kilinc & Gumus, 2020). This is evident when participants shared that their PDP did not prepare them for the role, nor was it aligned with their evaluation rubric. In addition, there is minimal research on the novice principals' perception of the principal role, which influences their perception of the complexity of their new role (Liljenberg & Andersson, 2020). Many participants felt that during monthly meetings with district personnel the focus was on information dissemination as opposed to leadership development. Several described their first year as survival of the fittest.

Hutton (2019) further explained that attempts to unpack the characteristics of a high-performing principal had been made since the 1940s. This research study attempted to do the same, resulting in almost 40 different responses. Participants identified numerous perceived characteristics of a high-performing principal and each response was different. Perceived characteristics of a high-performing principal varied from "efficient" to "structured" to "empathetic." More than half of the participants did not believe that the characteristics of a high-performing principal were evident in their rubric. The most common characteristics were communicator and campus management, named by eight of the 15 participants. The gamut of skills needed to successfully perform in a principal capacity explains why the characteristics of a high-performing principal remain undefined.

The Texas Education Agency (TEA) stated that the indicators in the Texas Principal Standards shall align with principals' training, appraisal, and professional development (TEA, 2014). These standards provide a framework for training, appraisal, and professional development but vary from district to district. Therefore, it is imperative to align PDPs and evaluation systems to eliminate the development of low-performing principals who create low-performing schools (Davis et al., 2020; Mestry, 2017).

Although evaluation instruments and PDPs differ from district to district, a commonality in both instances is the role of the principal supervisor. In a study by Goldring et al. (2018), principal supervisors defined their role as compliance driven. Therefore, principal supervisors who are knowledgeable regarding how to perform their role are more likely to create an environment conducive to developing high-performing principals. Furthermore, the execution of support was noted as the most significant difference between principals and superintendents (McKim, 2019).

In addition, a Goldring et al. (2018) study revealed that some principal supervisors have never been a principal. Many principal supervisors who had not served as principals did not appear to understand the complexities and necessary skills needed to support novice principals (Goldring et al., 2018). This was consistently evident in the interview responses throughout my study. Several times throughout the interviews, participants expressed that they did not believe their principal supervisor was knowledgeable enough to provide the support they needed. Although PDPs vary from district to district, the lack of clearly-defined roles and expectations of the principal supervisor resulted in a variety of experiences for novice principals within the same district as well.

Implications

The findings of this study produced several implications for additional research based on the lack of alignment between PDPs and evaluation rubrics. The study also suggests that school districts must equip principal supervisors with the necessary skills to coach and mentor novice principals. My research was designed to ascertain whether districts need to improve PDPs to better align with principal evaluation rubrics. Also, this study highlighted a need for school districts to recognize the importance of having experienced and knowledgeable principal supervisors. Identifying the factors that positively impact principal development can help school districts take a more comprehensive approach to PDP design and implementation,

The study concluded that novice principals do not believe their PDPs are aligned with their evaluation rubric. Using Transformation Leadership Theory as the framework for this study surfaced by identifying the significance of the relationship between the principal supervisor and the novice principal's development and evaluation.

The Texas Education Agency (TEA) requires all new administrators to participate in a one-year induction program in which mentor support is included. All but one participant attended a new administrator program as an assistant principal, but only eight attended as a principal. Those who attended an induction program believed their PDP was helpful and informative but did not adequately prepare them for the role. Participants shared that conferences between the principal and principal supervisor felt intentional and meaningful when their principal supervisor acted as a coach and connected their evaluation rubric to their PDP. Novice principals who conducted a self-assessment recognized their current performance level on their evaluation rubric were able to set improvement goals at different intervals throughout the year.

Aguilar (2020) shared that principal supervision requires coaching and planning to enhance leadership effectiveness. The principal supervisor should analyze the novice principal's strengths and weaknesses. If a principal supervisor does not have the skill set to perform this level of analysis, evaluation and development will continue to feel disconnected.

Constructive feedback is evident when the principal supervisor knows their role. The principal supervisor is the principal's evaluator and coach. Therefore, defining and clarifying the role of the principal supervisor is essential to developing PDPs that align with the principal evaluation rubric. In addition, principal supervisors who have served in the principal role can provide a more sophisticated level of rapport and support by establishing credibility.

Novice principals expressed the need to have a mentor as someone to talk to other than their supervisor. The most-appreciated mentors were those who had previously served in the principal role. Although mentors from another campus can provide helpful information, lack of alignment with novice principal developmental needs impeded productive communication and relationship building.

Novice principals' feelings of isolation were also reiterated in this study. Mentors help create a layer of support that allows novice principals to ask questions without feeling embarrassed or judged. Novice principals also reported feeling unprepared, unsupported and left to figure things out independently. Mentors also unpack novice principals' thinking and provide guidance and resources. Several participants mentioned that the role is not sustainable as it is, and mentors can help to smooth the transition.

Ensuring alignment between PDPs and evaluation is critical to the development and retention of principals. However, the missing piece is training the principal supervisor on how to do both. Novice principals should be comfortable throughout their

development phase and evaluation process. However, when the principal supervisor is ineffective, a perpetual cycle of creating ineffective school leaders may result.

Recommendations for Future Research

The findings of this study and the parallels to the literature review indicate the significance of developing PDPs aligned with the evaluation criteria in their rubric. When developing high-performing principals, the educational community might benefit from exploring the curriculum design for PDPs in school districts in the Southeast Region of Texas. One example would be to conduct studies that inform the difference in novice principal development using a principal supervisor, or mentor, versus a principal supervisor and mentor.

Another recommendation would be for the TEA to revise the Texas Administrative Code Rule 241.65 requirement for new administrators to participate in a minimum one-year induction period with mentor support. Mentor support needs to be clearly defined and aligned with principal evaluation criteria that ensures measurable growth and development of novice principals. Currently, a new administrator is defined as a new assistant principal or principal. These roles are substantially different; therefore, the induction period should be as well. TEA should also consider an induction period of more than one year. After one year, novice principals should not be treated in the same manner as experienced principals.

Additionally, the TEA should also consider revising Texas Administrative Code Rule 244.2 for Certificate of Completion for Appraisers to include all appraisal systems. Currently, certification is required only for those districts that choose the recommended appraisal system. Regardless of the evaluation system used, principal evaluation training and certification should be a requirement. Lack of adequate training produces appraisers who do not know how to effectively evaluate, coach, and develop novice principals.

Principal evaluation training is essential to prevent the ineffective use of principal evaluation rubrics and promotes skill acquisition that has the potential to develop high-performing principals.

Another recommendation would be for The United States Government to consider amendments to the current version of Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) to incorporate principal performance. While teacher preparation, training, and recruiting are included in ESSA, these same factors are excluded for principals. Although, ESSA does provide information about principal retention, it fails to address principal performance and its impact on student performance.

I would suggest further research on the hiring criteria and training of principal supervisors. Exploring the previous roles and responsibilities of the principal supervisor is worth consideration when assigning them the responsibility to develop and evaluate principals. Another consideration would be to gather feedback from novice principals regarding their principal supervisor's effectiveness.

Next, I would recommend examining the frequency and amount of time novice principals spend attending PDPs. The Texas Principal Standards are a framework, but they do not provide program specificities. Another considerations worth exploring is related to program budgets and shared responsibilities that support novice principals.

Further research might include identifying the characteristics of a high-performing principal was also discussed in this research. Further research might include the principal supervisor's perception of a high-performing principal. Upon gathering this information, principal supervisors should be questioned regarding how they plan to develop those skills. An additional consideration would involve determining whether the characteristics of a high-performing principal are embedded in the evaluation rubric used to evaluate the principals they supervise.

I would also recommend that Principal Educator Preparation Programs should routinely evaluate their curriculum to address the unique challenges and ongoing evolution of the principal role. College course requirements should align with the rigor and task requirements for applying their knowledge and skills to become an instructional leader, as outlined in the Principal as Instructional Leader portion of the principal certification exam, also known as the 268.

A final consideration for further research is to conduct a study designed to gather insight regarding the factors that lead to principal turnover rates. This may determine whether a correlation exists principal supervisor effectiveness and novice principal evaluations. Researchers reported the impact of the school leader on student performance. Certainly, principal turnover is a contributing factor that will directly impact student outcomes.

Conclusion

High-performing schools need high-performing principals (Kempa et al., 2017). Davis et al. (2020) stressed the need for effective PDPs that follow research-based guidelines. These changes should include revising the job description of the principal supervisor to eradicate the transfer of ineffective leadership skills (Goldring et al., 2018). The principal supervisors and PDPs are both isolated variables in the evaluation and development of novice principals. The research informed a variety of problems that necessitate the need for further research of novice principal development. Therefore, this study could inform the need to align in principal supervisor's ability, PDP design, educator preparation programs, and principal evaluation to produce high-performing principals.

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APPENDIX A:
INTERVIEW COVER LETTER



University
of Houston
Clear Lake

October 1, 2022

Dear Principal:

As a doctoral student at the University of Houston Clear-Lake, I am conducting a research study to explore whether novice principals believe their principal development program has adequately prepared them for high-performance ratings on their evaluation rubric. At this point in the dissertation process, I have completed chapters 1, 2, and 3, and I am now looking to gather the necessary data in order to complete my study. Because you are a principal in the Southeast Region of Texas, you are being solicited to participate in a semi-structured interview. The data obtained from this study will not only allow UHCL's Educational Leadership Department to track the preparedness of novice principals, but will also provide feedback on principal development programs that may produce high-performing principals. This semi-structured interview will take 45-60 minutes to complete. All of your responses will be kept completely confidential. No obvious undue risks will be endured and you may stop your participation at any time. In addition, you will also not benefit directly from your participation in the study.

Requested Actions:

- You will receive an email from *Docusign* containing the Informed Consent Document. The document will ask for your electronic signature as a participant in this study. Please complete at your earliest convenience.
- Click the link below to schedule your interview for the study.
 - <https://calendly.com/rachelalex/30min>

Your cooperation is greatly appreciated and your willingness to participate in this study is not only greatly appreciated, but invaluable. Should you have any further questions, please feel free to contact Rachel Alex.

Thank you!

Sincerely,

Rachel Alex

Doctoral Candidate

Educational Leadership

APPENDIX B:
INFORMED CONSENT



INFORMED CONSENT: ADULT RESEARCH PARTICIPANT

You are being asked to participate in the research project described below. Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary and you may refuse to participate, or you may decide to stop your participation at any time. Should you refuse to participate in the study or should you withdraw your consent and stop participation in the study, your decision will involve no penalty or loss of benefits to which you may otherwise be entitled. You are being asked to read the information below carefully and ask questions about anything you don't understand before deciding whether or not to participate.

Title: Exploring Novice Principal Perception on Whether Sufficient Alignment Exists Between Their Principal Development Program and Their Principal Evaluation Rubric

Student Investigator(s): Rachel Walker Alex

Faculty Sponsor: Antonio Corrales, Ed.D.

Purpose of the Study: The purpose of the study is to explore whether novice principals believe their principal development program has adequately prepared them for high-performance ratings on their principal evaluation rubric.

Procedures: For this qualitative narrative study, the researcher will solicit a purposeful sample of at least 15 participants who are novice principals to participate in a semi-

structured interview. Participants will answer open-ended questions on their perception and experience on the alignment of their principal development program and their evaluation process.

Expected Duration: The total anticipated interview time will be 45-60 minutes.

Risks of Participation: There are no anticipated risks associated with participation in the study.

Benefits to the Subject

There is no direct benefit received from your participation in this study, but your participation will help the investigator(s) to better understand whether principal supervisors need to modify principal development programs in ways that will produce high-performing principals.

Confidentiality of Records

Every effort will be made to maintain the confidentiality of your study records. The data collected from the study will be used for educational and publication purposes, however, you will not be identified by name. For federal audit purposes, the participant's documentation for this research project will be maintained and safeguarded by the Principal Investigator for a minimum of five years after completion of the study. After that time, the participant's documentation may be destroyed.

Compensation

There is no financial compensation to be offered for participation in the study.

Investigator's Right to Withdraw Participant

The investigator has the right to withdraw you from this study at any time.

Contact Information for Questions or Problems

If you have additional questions during the course of this study about the research or any related problem, you may contact the Student Researcher, Rachel Walker Alex by telephone at 936-391-0676 or by email at Alexr7516@uhcl.edu.

Signatures

Your signature below acknowledges your voluntary participation in this research project. Such participation does not release the investigator(s), institution(s), sponsor(s) or granting agency(ies) from their professional and ethical responsibility to you. By signing the form, you are not waiving any of your legal rights.

The purpose of this study, procedures to be followed, and explanation of risks or benefits have been explained to you. You have been allowed to ask questions and your questions have been answered to your satisfaction. You have been told who to contact if you have additional questions. You have read this consent form and voluntarily agree to participate as a subject in this study. You are free to withdraw your consent at any time by contacting the Principle Investigator or Student Researcher/Faculty Sponsor. You will be given a copy of the consent form you have signed.

Subject's printed name:

Signature of Subject:

Date:

Using language that is understandable and appropriate, I have discussed this project and the items listed above with the subject.

Printed name and title:

Signature of Person Obtaining Consent:

Date:

THE UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON-CLEAR LAKE (UHCL) COMMITTEE FOR PROTECTION OF HUMAN SUBJECTS HAS REVIEWED AND APPROVED THIS PROJECT. ANY QUESTIONS REGARDING YOUR RIGHTS AS A RESEARCH SUBJECT MAY BE ADDRESSED TO THE UHCL COMMITTEE FOR THE PROTECTION OF HUMAN SUBJECTS (281.283.3015). ALL RESEARCH PROJECTS THAT ARE CARRIED OUT BY INVESTIGATORS AT UHCL ARE GOVERNED BY REQUIREMENTS OF THE UNIVERSITY AND THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT.

(FEDERALWIDE ASSURANCE #FWA00004068

APPENDIX C:
INTERVIEW QUESTIONS AND SCRIPT

My name is Rachel Alex and I am a doctoral candidate at the University of Houston Clear Lake. The purpose of my research is to explore whether novice principals believe their principal development program has adequately prepared them for high-performance ratings on their evaluation rubric. As a Leadership Specialist for Region 4, I have the opportunity to engage with many levels of leadership, but the role of the principal speaks to my heart. As a former principal, I understand the need for clear expectations and alignment in order to define and develop high-performing principals. I am hopeful that my research will offer insight as to whether principal supervisors need to modify principal development programs in ways that will produce high-performing principals.

Before we begin, I must obtain your consent to conduct this interview. Although we spoke about the interview process, I want to give you a moment to read, sign, and answer any questions you may have before we begin.

I want to assure you that there will be no identifiable information shared from this interview in the research. Your participation in this interview will remain confidential and is voluntary. The recording of this interview is to ensure that I capture your responses accurately so I can fully engage in our conversation.

Do you have any questions before we begin?

Please answer questions with as much detail as possible.

1. How many years have you been a principal?
2. Is the campus you serve primary or secondary principal?
3. What positions did you hold prior to becoming a principal?
4. Did any prior experiences prepare you for your principal role? If so, how?

5. Did your district offer a principal development program? If yes, explain. If no, what did you do independently to prepare you for the role?
6. What is your perception of the characteristics of a high-performing principal?
7. In what way(s) do the characteristics of a high-performing principal surface in your principal evaluation?
8. Describe the training and professional development you received before assuming the role of principal.\
9. Describe the training and professional development you received after assuming the role of principal? \
10. Which professional development sessions have made the most impact on your role as a principal? \
11. Describe your perception of the training or relevant information you received on how your performance would be evaluated.
12. What is your perception on the quality and effectiveness of the evaluation training you received, if applicable?)
13. How has your evaluation impacted your leadership growth?
14. Describe the impact of your principal supervisor during the principal development process.
15. Describe the impact of your principal supervisor during the evaluation process.
16. How has your principal supervisor utilized the principal evaluation rubric for your leadership development?
17. Describe the frequency of observations you received from your principal supervisor.
18. Describe the feedback you received from your principal supervisor.
19. How can districts provide better and sustained support for novice principals through principal development programs?
20. Do you believe that your principal development program prepared you for the principal role?
21. Do you believe that your principal development program was aligned to the evaluation rubric?

Thank you so much for participating in this interview. Your insight and experience will add tremendous value to my research. Before we conclude, I want to make sure you have my contact information should you have any questions. I also want to know whether I may contact you if I have any questions or need clarification after analyzing the interview.

Again, thank you for your valuable time.

APPENDIX D:
SAMPLE RUBRIC

7 th Grade Kid Friendly Expository Rubric				
	Score 4	Score 3	Score 2	Score 1
Organization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The essay is written in expository form and responds to the prompt in a meaningful way. The writer uses organizational strategies that work particularly well for the expository task. The essay is organized with a clear controlling idea. Supporting ideas are strongly related to the controlling idea and focused on the topic of the prompt. Meaningful transitions and sentence-to-sentence connections show the relationships among ideas. The reader can easily follow the writer's train of thought. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The essay is written in expository form and responds to the prompt. The writer uses organizational strategies that satisfy the expository task. The essay is organized with a clear controlling idea. Most supporting ideas are related to the controlling idea, although there may be some minor problems with focus. Most transitions are meaningful, and sentence-to-sentence connections help to show how the ideas are related. The reader can follow the flow of the essay. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The writer tries to write in expository form, but the essay may not be clear because the ideas are not well organized. The controlling idea is weak or difficult to understand. Most supporting ideas are related to the topic of the prompt, but may not be connected to the controlling idea which causes the writing to lose focus. Sometimes the writer's ideas are confusing or are repeated. Weak transitions and sentence-to-sentence connections make it difficult to follow the relationships between ideas. It is difficult to follow the writer's thinking. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The essay is not written in expository form or does not respond to the prompt. The organizing strategy does not work well or is not evident. The writing does not have a controlling idea, or the controlling idea is confusing. The writing does not stay focused on the topic, includes extraneous information, or shifts suddenly from idea to idea. The writer's ideas are confusing or repeated, and are not connected. The essay is hard to understand.
Development of Ideas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The writer uses specific details and examples to fully develop the ideas in the essay. The essay is thoughtful and holds the reader's interest. The writer uses his/her own experiences and ways of thinking to connect the ideas in interesting ways. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The writer uses specific details and examples to make the essay interesting. The essay shows some thoughtfulness because the writer is expressing his/her own original ideas and not following a particular formula for the writing. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The writer uses details and examples that are not always complete or well-connected to the other ideas. The essay is not thoughtful because the writer is following a formula, rather than expressing his/her own ideas. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The writer uses details and examples that are not explained or are not connected to the other ideas. The essay is confusing or the ideas are only weakly linked to the prompt.
Conventions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The writer chooses words that are precise and add to the quality of the writing. He/she creates an appropriate tone for the writing. All sentences have a purpose, and the writer uses different types of sentences to make the writing strong. The writer has good control of sentence boundaries, spelling, capitalization, punctuation, and grammar. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The writer chooses words that express his/her ideas in a clear way. He/she creates an appropriate tone for the writing. The writer uses some different types of sentences. The writer has fairly good control of sentence boundaries, spelling, capitalization, punctuation, and grammar. There may be some errors, but they do not interrupt the meaning of the essay. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The writer uses words that are either not specific or not correct and make the writing confusing. The tone of the writing may not be appropriate. Some sentences are awkward. The writer has some trouble with sentence boundaries, spelling, capitalization, punctuation, and grammar. Some errors are distracting and take away from the meaning of the essay. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The writer uses words that limit his/her ability to write an effective essay. The tone of the writing is not appropriate. Sentences are simple or awkward and take away from the ideas of the essay. The writer has little or no control of sentence boundaries, spelling, capitalization, punctuation, and grammar. Serious errors make the essay difficult to understand.

APPENDIX E:

SAMPLE PAGE FROM T-PESS RUBRIC

Indicator 5.3: Effective Classroom Routines and Instructional Strategies – Develops effective routines, instructional strategies, and experiences for all students										
Ratings						Distinguished	Accomplished	Proficient	Developing	Needs Improvement
	Dis	Acc	Pro	Dev	NI	Strategically develops model classrooms to showcase effective instructional practices; Leads change efforts through structured practices, observations, and debriefs as teachers develop mastery of effective instructional strategies and practices across classrooms	Actively utilizes leadership teams and high-performing teachers to model high-leverage classroom routines and instructional strategies Provides real-time feedback to teachers as strategies are practices and implemented Consistently observes and coaches teachers to facilitate mastery of research-based, high-leverage instructional practices	Facilitates and supports the implementation of high-leverage instructional strategies, classroom procedures, and routines that are modeled and practiced with fidelity in all classrooms Conducts regular walkthroughs and observations that include feedback using a research-based instructional rubric	Incorporates instructional routines and strategies that are teacher-driven Monitors the effectiveness of practices when teacher and/or student needs arise	Comment Required
BOY	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>					
MOY	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>					
EOY	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>					
Appraiser Comments/ Growth Opportunities										

APPENDIX F:
CITI PROGRAM CERTIFICATE



Completion Date 27-Feb-2021
Expiration Date 27-Feb-2024
Record ID 41114349

This is to certify that:

Rachel Alex

Has completed the following CITI Program course:

Not valid for renewal of certification
through CME.

Social-Behavioral-Educational Researchers
(Curriculum Group)

Social-Behavioral-Educational Researchers
(Course Learner Group)

1 - Basic Course
(Stage)

Under requirements set by:

University of Houston-Clear Lake

CITI
Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative

Verify at www.citiprogram.org/verify/?wa2847d16-bffe-4402-9bc2-e9e855c841e4-41114349

APPENDIX G:
CPHS APPROVAL



University
of Houston
Clear Lake

Office of Sponsored Programs

COMMITTEE FOR THE PROTECTION OF HUMAN SUBJECTS (CPHS)
Institutional Review Board (IRB)

REVIEW ACTION

DATE: October 5, 2022
To: Antonio Corrales, Ed.D. and Rachel Alex
PROPOSAL TITLE: Exploring Novice Principal Perception on Whether Sufficient Alignment Exists Between Their Principal Development Program and Their Principal Evaluation Rubric
REMARKS: Expedited approval based on DHHS Code of Federal Regulations, HHS 45 CFR 46.101 (b) (4).

The Committee for the Protection of Human Subjects (IRB) for the University of Houston-Clear Lake has reviewed the above-referenced human subject research protocol and consent form(s) and **approves** the project as written, as a study involving **minimal risk** and assigning it to **research category 7**. The research study may now be initiated. Any modifications in the study or to the informed consent procedure must receive review and approval prior to implementation unless the change is necessary for the safety of subjects.

Any adverse events encountered during the study must be reported promptly by calling 281.283.3015. Written documentation of the adverse event must be received by the IRB/CPHS via SP within five (5) working days. Any new and significant information that may impact a research participant's safety or willingness to continue in the study must also be reported.

This approval is for the maximum one-year period, and will expire **October 5, 2023**. Prior to this expiration date, an approval for continuation of this protocol is required if you are to continue with data collection beyond the above expiration date.

The UHCL CPHS is organized and operated according to the US Code of Federal Regulations and operates under Federalwide Assurance No. 00004068.

Sincerely,

Kathryn I. Matthew, Ph.D.
Institutional Signing Official
FWA00004068
Office of Sponsored Programs
sponsoredprograms@uhcl.edu

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