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## Secondary teachers as early childhood principals: A qualitative case study

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SECONDARY TEACHERS AS EARLY CHILDHOOD PRINCIPALS:

A QUALITATIVE CASE STUDY

An Abstract of a Dissertation

Submitted

in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Education

Approved:

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Dr. Victoria Robinson, Committee Chair

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December 2014

## ABSTRACT

Research has demonstrated a correlation between effective education leaders, principals in particular, and student achievement. The correlation included characteristics, or responsibilities, that effective principals exhibit in order to raise student achievement. These responsibilities, along with developmentally appropriate practices, serve as conceptual frameworks for this case study. The purpose of this study was to examine the lived experiences of preschool through third grade teachers who have served under principals with early childhood/elementary backgrounds and those with backgrounds in middle/secondary education.

This qualitative case study focused on 10 Iowa early childhood classroom teachers in grades preschool through third. Further, all participants currently teach in early childhood classrooms in various sizes of school districts from rural, suburban, and urban areas throughout the state of Iowa. Data collection was completed through survey, semi-structured interviews, and document review. This case study focused on the effects principals have on early childhood programming.

The concept of early childhood educational leadership applies to Iowa's early childhood principals who serve teachers, students, and families in grades preschool through third. Themes that appeared throughout this case study included an early childhood principal's need to: (a) have a background in early

childhood education, (b) have an advanced understanding of child development, (c) implement effective teaching strategies to close the achievement gap, (d) communicate and relate to staff and students effectively, and (e) be visible in the early childhood classrooms.

Implications include the option for the Iowa Board of Educational Examiners (BOEE) to reexamine the effects of licensing principals PK-12. In addition, the institutes of higher education within Iowa may need to adjust their programming to better serve the needs of early childhood educational leaders.

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Dr. Susan Etscheidt, Committee Member

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## DEDICATION

Throughout my life I have been fortunate to have supportive adults in my life that guided my personal growth and educational experiences. My immediate family including my mom, dad, and sister guided my personal growth and development. In addition, my extended family was highly influential in my first accomplishments. Upon entering school, I found an additional set of supportive adults who were interested in my overall wellbeing.

Elementary, middle, and high school provided me rich opportunities and learning experiences to grow not only academically but also socially and emotionally. Those teachers who had the greatest impact on my life from my elementary, middle, and high school years include Cheryl Hull, Lori Lourens, Jacqueline Duffy, Chris Hudson, Kurt Wallace, Tracy Coon, Judi Braaksma, and Brenna Autrey. While many other teachers have crossed my educational path, these individuals shared with me their craft, their beliefs, and their expertise in teaching, and they made learning an adventure.

With my K-12 educational experience at an end and my college career beginning, I was introduced to several professors who guided my undergraduate learning at Central College. Those professors who taught me the most were Pamela Mahoney, Beverly Brand, Dr. Joy Prothero, and Dr. Phil George. These professors provided me the basis in educational theory and pedagogy, as well as brought me to deeper understanding of the two areas of education on which I

focus greatly – early childhood education and literacy. I owe much to the efforts of these exceptional professors; they have given me more than they know.

The last group I wish to thank for their work in my life is the group of teachers who were classified as my cooperating teachers throughout my high school and undergraduate years. Cheryl Hull, Carol Oliver, Terri Gotta, and Julie Wallace were exceptional examples after whom I modeled. Their classroom practices, paired with their knowledge of how children grow, develop, and learn, provided a basis for my career in teaching; their influence is seen in my everyday classroom.



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to thank the professors who guided me through the doctoral program and ultimately through the dissertation process. Dr. Victoria Robinson has been a valuable asset to me during my time in the Department of Educational Leadership. Dr. Robinson's guidance and support has been sustaining for the past four years. She has great attention to detail and is quick to offer suggestions in terms of course requirements, dissertation direction, and overall program planning. I credit her with the success of the Department of Educational Leadership; she is an asset to the College of Education.

I would also like to mention Dr. Jill Uhlenberg, Dr. Timothy Gilson, and Dr. Susan Etscheidt. These professors have played a monumental role in the development and completion of my dissertation. I chose these individuals to serve on my dissertation committee for specific reasons; they are the experts in each of their chosen fields of study, and they are essential pieces to the departments of Curriculum and Instruction, Educational Leadership, and Special Education. Their insights have proved essential as I worked through the dissertation component of my doctoral program. I am pleased with their service while on my committee, and I wish to extend to them a heartfelt, "Thank you."

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

#### Leadership: A Teacher's View

##### Year 1

“Your first year is your toughest.” I had heard that sentiment for years as I worked through my undergraduate coursework and completed field experiences, preparing myself for the rigors of teaching. I have always been one to listen to others’ suggestions, advice, and words of wisdom, especially from those who had successfully completed their first year teaching. I remember a first-year teacher panel from my Senior Seminar class that was designed just for those who were currently student teaching. The panel members discussed, openly, what their first year teaching was like. I enjoyed hearing about the members’ experiences because it gave me insight as to what may lie ahead for me as a beginning teacher.

I accepted my first job in June 2005. I had completed my K-6 licensure with endorsements in early childhood and reading. Therefore, my hope was to find a teaching position that was lower elementary and that encompassed reading or literacy to a high degree. With that plan in mind, I interviewed for a third grade placement in my current district. When on the tour of the building, I was told, “If you have first grade, this will be your room,” and, “If you have third grade, this will be your room.” I stopped the tour at that point and asked,

“How many positions are there?” The paraprofessional giving me the tour stated, “There are three positions. We have kindergarten, first, and third grade openings. Kindergarten and first grade became available after the posting.”

I would have gladly accepted the third grade position, even though my heart was set on a lower grade, because it still fell within the early childhood ages of birth to 8. When called the next morning with the position offering, I accepted. I began thinking; however, “What grade do I actually have?” I had accepted, but I did not know what grade level. I called the principal later that day and asked what grade I would be teaching. Her reply was, “Which one would you like?” I was surprised at this offer because I assumed I would be placed, rather than asked. My reply was, “Kindergarten. I would like to have kindergarten.” The principal thought that would be great, and I began planning.

I kept thinking back to that age-old sentiment, “Your first year is your toughest.” Knowing this, I talked with my grade level colleagues, my neighbors in the building, and my mentor both before the school year started and throughout my first year. I prepared for all I could, and surprisingly my first year went really well.

As the first year of my teaching career ended I began to reflect on what had gone well, what may need some work before implementing again, and what I could do better in my second year. One aspect that contributed to my success as a first-year teacher was my principal. She had been in the district only a few

years, but had taught many years preceding her administrative appointment. She, like me, had an elementary teaching degree with early childhood and reading as endorsement areas; we seemed to have *like minds* from Day 1. What I found in my second year, and subsequent ones, was that teaching subsequent years was not at all like my first.

### Years 2-6

I ended my first year teaching with success, and much of that was attributed to my building principal who shared a common vision of what early childhood education should look like, feel like, and sound like. I was not questioned in my approaches to teaching and learning because my principal knew; she knew the background information, she was trained in developmentally appropriate practices, and she provided the materials necessary to meet the needs of all students.

I truly believe the building principal sets the tone for learning and carries out the vision and the mission shared by all stakeholders. What I found in my second year of teaching was a change in administration, and with that came a different vision for learning. My first-year principal was moving on, and a new principal was coming in.

The new principal was from the district and was an in-house transfer from the high school. He taught high school art for eight years and desired to move into a leadership position. Therefore, he was appointed elementary principal of

grades K-6, even though he didn't have the background in elementary teaching. While the general feeling was frustration among the teaching staff, we did see how his leadership reflected that of a transformational nature. He had four young children at home, so even though he didn't have training in elementary education, he was being *schooled* at home as to what the needs of young children looked like. He knew he didn't know everything he needed in terms of elementary and early education, but he knew enough to ask questions when he did not know and was open to letting the grade level leaders make decisions. To the staff, he was empowering.

About midway through my second year teaching with a new principal, word came from the Administrative Office that my principal would be moving to the high school the following year. With that news came the anticipation of whom we would have at the elementary for our principal. The elementary teachers thought... "three principals in three years."

The elementary staff was gathered at a meeting one morning prior to school starting and there was the high school band director, who also had her administrative degree. She had taught for several years and had been the high school assistant principal for the past few years. The superintendent at that time said, "Well, we have passed over Nancy (a pseudonym) the last couple times we appointed a principal, so we will see how she does now." Wow! What a confidence booster. Basically, the elementary team had suggested hiring a

different principal over her the last two times interviews were held because she didn't have a background in elementary or early education. Now, she was assigned to our building and still lacked the training in early childhood and elementary education.

Nancy (a pseudonym), although new to our building, had been in the district nearly 20 years. She had knowledge of the schedule, the bell system, the sharing of teachers between buildings, and a whole host of other things. She transitioned from the high school to the elementary fairly well in terms of the inner workings; however, she was not a good fit for the elementary due to her secondary background. Regardless, she remained in that position for four years. At the end of her fourth year, the district downsized and went to one principal K-12. Due to the fact that the high school principal had one more year of experience, he was appointed to the K-12 position. Coincidentally, this was the same principal I had had during my second year teaching.

Another shift in leadership was about to happen. What would a K-12 principal be like? How would that principal split his time between buildings? To whom would we answer? Who was in charge when he was away or in the other building? The staff had so many questions with few answers. One thing was for sure, even though we didn't know how it would all work out, we did know that each building had had the experience of the one principal, so that would likely

be in our favor. Therefore, the change that was imminent was not as feared as other changes in leadership had been.

During the summer following my sixth year, the summer when the district moved to a K-12 principal, the existing appointed principal resigned and followed the superintendent to a new district. As a result, we were left without a principal and superintendent, and the fear of new leadership set in once again, even though we thought we would make the transition to one principal with ease. Therefore, a search began and we found two new hires from outside the district, one for superintendent and one for PK-12 principal. In addition, the district decided to keep an existing School Administrative Manager (SAM) position at the elementary level to aid in the K-12 principal's absence. The SAM was a new hire as well.

With three new administrators in the district, no one knew what to expect in terms of leadership. Would it be like years past? Would we have the same type of professional development? Who would we answer to at the elementary - the principal or the SAM? Again, the staff had many questions with few answers.

### Years 7-9

A new superintendent, principal, and school administrative manager (SAM) would set the tone for my seventh year teaching. The superintendent and principal had backgrounds in secondary social studies and visual arts. The SAM

had taught elementary, third grade, but lacked knowledge of early childhood and literacy education.

My initial thought was, "Here we go again!" Why is it that the elementary building, staff, and students continued to get administrators who lacked the basic knowledge of instructional practices and approaches to learning for early learners? At this point I felt as though I had been leading the leaders instead of the other way around. My needs as a teacher were not being met due to the lack of expertise among the administrators in my district.

Wouldn't you know it? Years 7 and 8 were rough, to say the least. Year 8 saw another shift in leadership with the district moving back to two separate principals, one PK-6 and one 7-12; the existing SAM became the elementary principal. While the change to two administrators was helpful, the elementary still lacked a principal with extensive knowledge of curriculum, instruction, and assessment, among other characteristics of effective leadership.

In Year 9, two of the three administrators who were hired together just a year earlier resigned their positions and moved on to other districts. Yet again, we were left with finding new administrators. Prior to leaving, the superintendent appointed the K-12 assistant principal to the high school principal position, which was being vacated. Therefore, the district had two principals in place; the question was whether to find a superintendent to fill the vacancy or to find an interim instead.

The district decided to find an interim superintendent for my Year 9. The person filling the rank of superintendent for the year had several years of experience leading districts. In fact, he was a retired superintendent who spent his last few years helping districts in need such as ours. He led the efforts to secure a superintendent who I hope will remain with the district for many years.

### Reflections and Questions

In the first decade of my tenure as a kindergarten teacher I had had four superintendents, five curriculum directors, and five principals. Out of these 14 different educational leaders, two had elementary education degrees, but only one leader had early childhood training. While principals are not required to have early childhood or elementary degrees, I do feel as though it is beneficial for all stakeholders if the principal leading an elementary or early childhood building holds the minimal endorsements for the ages and stages of those being served within the building. In this case the minimal endorsements would be that of K-6 Classroom Teacher for elementary (Endorsement Number 102), and any one of these endorsements for early childhood: (a) Teacher-Prekindergarten through grade 3, including special education (Endorsement Number 100); (b) Early Childhood Teacher-Pre K-K (Endorsement Number 103); Pre-K to grade 3 Teacher-Pre K-3 (Endorsement Number 106); or Early Childhood SPED-PK-K (Endorsement Number 223; Iowa Board of Educational Examiners, 2014a).



As I reflect on the requirements of teachers to fulfill the positions within an early childhood department (PK-3), I wonder how many principals have the same training as the teachers. It had been my experience that only a handful of my administrators had the working knowledge of elementary education or that of early childhood education. Is this the case throughout the state? Were rural schools more susceptible to this type of leadership practice? If so, why? Further, what protocols, or practices, are in place to teach principals effective leadership strategies from the opposite end of the age spectrum? How does one move from teaching elementary to leading high school? More importantly, to this research, how does one move from teaching high school to leading early childhood departments within an elementary setting?

### Early Childhood Principal Leadership

Throughout the United States millions of children attend elementary schools under the direct supervision of elementary principals. These principals are responsible for the safety and wellbeing of each child in their care. In addition, these principals are held accountable for students' development in all domains, cognitive, physical, social, and emotional. Caring and responsive adults including parents and teachers, overseen by trained and competent principals, as well as by curriculum and the environment, nurture the development of each child. The environment is considered a *teacher* as well, third behind parents and teachers (Strong-Wilson & Ellis, 2007).

As early childhood principals interact with teachers and students, the effect and influence they have on those under their supervision is significant. Principals' responsibilities are numerous. One such responsibility is the ability to lead effectively, not only the teachers in one's building, but also the students who enter the classrooms daily. It is therefore imperative that elementary principals have the background knowledge, experience, and understanding that distinguish effective early childhood education from substandard early childhood education.

In Iowa, principals are licensed to lead educational settings in grades preschool-12 (PK-12). This licensure change took effect in 2004. Prior to the change, Iowa licensure allowed principals to serve in the area in which they taught, which means principals could serve in K-6 or 7-12 settings based on their original teaching assignment and endorsements. For the past 10 years, however, principals have been allowed freedom to serve in any PK-12 setting of their choosing, regardless of their background in classroom practice. As a result, principals who once taught secondary core subjects and specialty areas, for instance, may now be hired to lead elementary buildings, and the opposite is true as well.

#### Statement of the Problem

Although the Board of Educational Examiners (BOEE) changed the licensure limitations in 2004, continued studies are needed to gauge the effectiveness of PK-12 licensure versus that of the former licensure options of K-6

and 7-12. The former licensure options of K-6 and 7-12 were directly related to one's background in teaching. The assumption held was a principal was able to serve in the area which (s)he had taught. In other words, a principal would only be allowed to lead a K-6 or 7-12 building if (s)he had first taught in that setting. Currently, and for the past decade, principals are allowed to serve in any PK-12 setting with Iowa administrative licensure. In such allowance, principals may serve in buildings in which they have little or no background knowledge, theory of practice, or training for the population they serve.

Two specific questions surface when examining the effectiveness of PK-12 licensure (1) what are the lived experiences of PK-6 teachers with principals who have a background in early childhood or elementary, and (2) what are the lived experiences of PK-6 teachers with principals who have a background in middle school or secondary?

### Research Questions

Specifically, this study sought to answer the following research questions:

1. What are the lived experiences of PK-6 teachers with principals who have a background in early childhood or elementary?
2. What are the lived experiences of PK-6 teachers with principals who have a background in middle school or secondary?

I studied these questions by interviewing research participants who are early childhood teachers in public school settings. In addition, I provided

participants with a survey from Marzano, Waters, and McNulty's (2005) list of 21 responsibilities of effective principals in terms of student achievement. The 21 responsibilities were surveyed through a Likert Scale manner. By investigating both the data from interviews and from survey results, I was able to examine the perceived effects of PK-12 licensure in the State of Iowa.

### Definition of Terms

The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) defines the early childhood years as those from birth to age 8 (NAEYC, 2014). The State of Iowa, in granting teaching endorsements, also defines early childhood as birth to age 8. The years of primary interest for this study are those academic years of preschool through third grade in public school settings (Iowa Board of Educational Examiners, 2014a).

NAEYC also defines quality early childhood teaching, which utilizes Developmentally Appropriate Practice (DAP). DAP is an approach to teaching that is grounded in the research on how young children develop and learn and in what is known about effective early education. Further, DAP involves teachers meeting young children where they are, by stage and development, both as individuals and as part of a cultural group, and helping each child meet challenging and achievable learning goals (Copple & Bredekamp, 2009).

While NAEYC is focused on approaches to learning, the Iowa Board of Educational Examiners (BOEE) deals primarily with licensure. The BOEE uses

the term PK-12 when referring to licensure for some endorsements. This licensure, of administrators and teachers alike, covers grades preschool through grade 12. Teachers generally receive licensure in areas listed as PK-6 or 7-12; however, in terms of administrative licensure, PK-12 is used for all licensed administrators in the State of Iowa, since 2004 (Iowa Board of Educational Examiners, 2014a).

Many administrators, new and veteran alike may belong to School Administrators of Iowa (SAI), which offers professional learning opportunities to school administrators to explore pertinent topics that face Iowa's schools. These opportunities are stand-alone trainings and also sessions presented at the annual conference. One program offered by SAI to administrators is the Mentoring and Induction Program for new principals (School Administrators of Iowa, 2014).

#### Significance of the Problem

This study represents the effort to investigate the effectiveness of PK-12 administrative licensure in the State of Iowa, by focusing on early childhood teachers' responses to the change in licensure by the Iowa Board of Educational Examiners. Gathering data from teachers of early childhood programs will allow policymakers, departments in higher education institutions, and the State of Iowa to examine the preparation and licensure practices of PK-12 Iowa administrators.

This study will contribute to an improved understanding of how Iowa can prepare its PK-12 administrators for leading early childhood educational settings, teachers, and students. It is my opinion that PK-12 administrators who don't have adequate training hinder the educational process for early learners and their teachers. Investigating this issue within this study will provide empirical data that may lead to improved practices among licensing programs through the Iowa Board of Educational Examiners and its many license-granting institutions. In so doing, students ages 4 to 8 in public school settings may be better guided through their early childhood stages of development.

#### Assumptions

A decades-long understanding in Iowa is that PK-12 administrative licensure has positively impacted public schools. Additionally, research suggests that the candidacy pool of PK-12 Iowa-licensed administrators is greater than when licensure was separated into K-6 and 7-12. Further, Iowa's change from separated licensure programs to one combined PK-12 endorsement doubled the chances of a candidate's acceptance in the administrative field.

#### Limitations/Delimitations

As with all studies, this study will have some limitations. The sample size for this work will be small. The researcher will be examining the lived experiences of 10 early childhood teachers who have had principals who hold either early childhood/elementary education degrees or middle/secondary

education degrees. The teachers will be selected from across the State of Iowa and will include urban, suburban, and rural settings. In addition, the teachers will have taught a minimum of five years in early childhood (PK-3) and will include teachers with bachelor's degrees and master's degrees equally. The focus of this study will be on the lived experiences of those directly related to the field of early childhood education in public school settings. This study would need to be replicated on a larger scale across the State of Iowa to generalize the results.

### Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework for this study was by Marzano et al. (2005) who first posited that 21 responsibilities were tied to successful leadership in terms of student achievement. These responsibilities ranged from interpersonal qualities to knowledge of curriculum, instruction, and assessment. Further, the responsibilities addressed areas of long-term visions and missions of the school.

A second theoretical framework utilized in this study was developmentally appropriate practices (DAP) defined by Copple and Bredekamp (2009). Developmentally appropriate practices are those practices in early childhood education settings that are individually, age, and culturally appropriate (Copple & Bredekamp, 2009). In addition, early childhood educators can meet the needs of children in their programs by: (a) creating a caring community of learners, (b) teaching to enhance development and learning, (c) planning curriculum to achieve important goals, (d) assessing children's

development and learning, and (e) establishing reciprocal relationships with families (Copple & Bredekamp, 2009). The research conducted utilized baseline survey from the teachers' perspective relative to the 21 responsibilities. DAP, an overarching framework, provided the knowledge base on which this study took place.

### Organization of Study

Chapter 1 presents an auto-ethnographic account of the researcher's first 10 years of teaching in terms of administrative leadership. Following, the chapter discusses the problem of PK-12 principal licensure in the state of Iowa, as well as definitions of relevant terminology held by the early childhood field and supported by the National Association for the Education of Young Children, in addition to others. Finally, the chapter details the purpose of the study, the research questions, the methodology for answering the research questions, assumptions, limitations and delimitations, and the theoretical framework that undergirds the study as a whole.

Chapter 2 reviews current literature related to early childhood principal leadership and licensure, common practices within early childhood settings, as well as teacher evaluation. In addition, this chapter provides a basis on which early childhood education is grounded.



Chapter 3 discusses the methodology by which the study is governed. Further, the chapter makes note of the setting, participants, instrumentation, and methods of analysis of the study.

Chapter 4 presents the findings of the research conducted with participants. The data gleaned from the research participants is presented in narrative form as well as in table format for ease of reading.

Chapter 5 emphasizes implications of the findings on current early childhood leadership. The chapter concludes by providing recommendations for future research to improve educational leadership at the early childhood level.

## CHAPTER 2

### REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

I began teaching kindergarten in 2005. The building to which I was assigned was a PK-6 building. I felt at home immediately, as I had the training and background in early childhood and elementary education that was required for a building of that design. I had originally interviewed for a third grade position in the district, but later found out three positions were open – kindergarten, first, and third. I was excited to begin my teaching career in the grade in which I felt I belonged – kindergarten. I belonged in kindergarten, but I felt a need to belong within the college arena as well. Therefore, upon completing my first year of teaching I entered my master's programs through the University of Northern Iowa. I had previously earned endorsements in early childhood education and reading in my undergraduate degree. As I contemplated which master's program would be the best fit for me, I noticed the difference between a master's in early childhood education and one in literacy education amounted to only a few courses. Therefore, I enrolled in each of the degree programs and earned two master's degrees concurrently in the Department of Curriculum and Instruction while continuing teaching kindergarten. I completed the two programs in 2009, three years after beginning.

The 2009-2010 academic year presented a similar feeling to that of my first year. I felt removed from academia; for that reason I decided to return to the

University of Northern Iowa for additional graduate work, only this time for educational leadership. Not sure how the two departments of Curriculum and Instruction and Educational Leadership and Postsecondary Education would compare in terms of programming, policies, and procedures, I entered the educational leadership program interested in seeing how the two interrelated. In addition, I wondered how my background in curriculum and instruction would inform my decision-making practices within the principalship program.

Throughout my time in the administrative cohort I found multiple points where the two programs overlapped as well as complimented one another.

Having a background in curriculum and instruction and educational leadership, I feel it is important to note the similarities and differences in terms of early childhood education. What follows in this chapter is a discussion of early childhood education, educational leadership, and of early childhood leadership. Understanding the context by which early childhood administrators must lead is critical to the fields of early childhood education and educational leadership.

The topics selected for this review of literature include early childhood education, educational leadership, and early childhood educational leadership. In order to understand how early childhood educational leadership manifests itself in early childhood settings, practitioners must first appreciate the uniqueness of early childhood as a standalone age and stage of development. Further, practitioners must also value the intricacies of educational leadership.

Pairing the appreciation of early childhood and the intricacies of educational leadership leads to an overarching awareness of the term early childhood educational leadership. By researching these topics, practitioners may be better prepared to understand the scope of early childhood educational leadership.

### Early Childhood Education

Early childhood encompasses all children birth to age 8 (Copple & Bredekamp, 2009). Operating under this premise, Iowa has four teaching endorsements for those seeking early childhood certification: (a) Teacher-Prekindergarten through grade 3, including special education (Endorsement Number 100); (b) Early Childhood Teacher-Pre K-K (Endorsement Number 103); Pre-K to grade 3 Teacher-Pre K-3 (Endorsement Number 106); or Early Childhood SPED-PK-K (Endorsement Number 223; Iowa Board of Educational Examiners, 2014a). Although these early childhood endorsements are available for licensed Iowa teachers, not all elementary teachers choose to complete the endorsement programs. Those who wish to teach preschool must have one of the aforementioned endorsements, but for those teachers in grades kindergarten through third, an early childhood endorsement is not required due to the fact that Iowa's elementary teaching endorsement covers grades K-6. That being said, teachers who are unsure of what grade level they will teach sometimes complete early childhood endorsement programs to prepare them for specific ages or grade levels of early childhood, birth to age 8. Regardless of the early childhood

endorsement sought, general education classroom or special education, the fundamentals of early childhood education are taught. These fundamentals include background knowledge of early childhood theorists who first noted how young children learn differently than older children

### Early Childhood Theorists

While more than 30 pioneers of early childhood education and programming contributed to the field in its infancy, the following will be discussed briefly: (a) John Dewey, (b) Friedrich Froebel, (c) Arnold Gesell, (d) John Locke, (e) Maria Montessori, (f) Elizabeth Peabody, (g) Johann Pestalozzi, (h) Jean Piaget, (i) Jean-Jacques Rousseau, (j) Lev Vygotsky, (k) Erik Erikson, and (l) Patty Smith Hill (Mooney, 2000; Peltzman, 1998). These twelve early childhood theorists played an integral part in establishing and advancing the field of early childhood education.

Throughout the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> Centuries a handful of early childhood theorists informed caregivers and educators about what is developmentally appropriate for young children of varying ages and stages of development. During the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> Centuries the pre-modern pioneers of education were John Locke, Jean-Jacque Rousseau, Johann Pestalozzi, and Friedrich Froebel. These four men differed in their approaches to learning and theories about young children's development, but they did share common themes, two of which are the supposition that early childhood years are unique and that all

children can learn through experiential learning using the senses as a conduit

(Mooney, 2000; Morgan, 2011; Peltzman, 1998).

John Locke (1632-1704). Locke believed that a person was not pre-formed at birth, but developed as a result of encounters with the environment. Locke believed that the individual was a blank slate (*tabula rasa*) who received impressions from the environment via the senses, and that these impressions should be part of education. He placed a strong emphasis on physical activity, believing in a “sound mind in a sound body,” and felt that the family was responsible for education and so provided guidelines for parents. (Peltzman, 1998, p. 73)

Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778). Rousseau’s contributions to education include the suggestion that young children need motor activity, firsthand experiences, and happy games to develop language, mathematical and sensory concepts. He believed in the natural goodness of children and opposed the artificial lifestyle of the times, especially the way children were raised as small adults. He suggested...they [children] should have the freedom to play and be spontaneous; and he advocated a study of how children develop at different ages as the basis for educational practice. (Peltzman, 1998, p. 105)

Johann Pestalozzi (1746-1827). Pestalozzi believed in individual differences and in extending educational opportunity to girls and the poor based on a belief that education should not be denied to anyone. His conviction that children should engage in activities that make them happy and his commitment to firsthand, positive experiences led to an emphasis on proceeding from the concrete to the abstract and from the general to the particular to fit instruction to the way children develop. Sympathy and compassion were the foundation of Pestalozzi’s method. (Peltzman, 1998, p. 91)

Friedrich Froebel (1782-1852). Contributions to education made by Froebel include a belief that learning should be an active process, the inclusion of play as an educational method, and the understanding that childhood is a unique time. He suggested a cooperative social environment rather than a competitive environment and put forth the belief that education was a process of unfolding of abilities. His child-centered curriculum included self-activity, physical activity, music, outdoor activities, and a series of manipulative materials called “Gifts and Occupations,” which used the

senses, followed a specific sequence, and provided detailed teacher directions. This became a systematic, organized connection between theory and practice on which other pioneers built to create early childhood education. (Peltzman, 1998, p. 25)

Friedrich Froebel is considered the father of kindergarten. In his studies of young children Froebel found children ages 5 to 7 are uniquely different than children ages 8 and above (Peltzman, 1998). That being said, Froebel's work became the basis on which modern early childhood pioneers based their research. These modern pioneers of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> Centuries were Elizabeth Peabody, John Dewey, Patty Smith Hill, Maria Montessori, Arnold Gesell, Jean Piaget, Lev Vygotsky, and Erik Erikson. As with the pre-modern pioneers, not all of the modern early childhood theorists accepted one another's works as truth; they too differed in their approaches to learning and beliefs in child development, and thus developed their own theories (Mooney, 2000; Morgan, 2011; Peltzman, 1998).

Elizabeth Peabody (1804-1894). [Peabody] wrote numerous articles and books about the philosophy, curriculum, and value of the kindergarten. Peabody encouraged students of Friedrich Froebel to come to America to organize schools and train teachers. Peabody's effort on behalf of kindergarten was her greatest contribution to American education. (Peltzman, 1998, p. 87)

John Dewey (1859-1952). Dewey's work helped to transform the role of the kindergarten at the turn of the twentieth century and eventually influenced the entire field of early childhood education. Dewey organized the classroom into a community in which children learned in cooperation with each other. He used everyday materials and encouraged child-generated choices about activities and materials. He promoted teacher flexibility, creativity, and responsibility and the introduction of art and

music, field trips, and nature studies, to encourage problem solving and independent thinking. The classroom became a model of group living in which the children initiated activities, projects, and play. The teacher became a guide who enabled children to develop social skills by providing opportunities for their practice. Dewey explained that children develop when they are involved with activities that have a purpose. He maintained that firsthand experiences motivate growth in reading, writing, and arithmetic. When exposed to the right materials and role models, children develop skills for later academic learning as well as the flexibility to cope with social and emotional problems. No other educational philosopher/practitioner has had more influence on early childhood education than John Dewey. (Peltzman, 1998, p. 3)

Patty Smith Hill (1868-1946). Hill's successes in early childhood education include the unification of the kindergarten and first grade so that one teacher could work with both the kindergarten and primary grades; a revision of the curriculum to include new songs, equipment, and activities to promote creativity, social living, and better meet the needs of young children; more work with parents; and changes in teacher training include theory based on the work's of John Dewey, Edward L. Thorndike, Granville Stanley Hall, and William H. Kilpatrick. She encouraged the spread of nursery schools and was a leader in the International Kindergarten Union and the Committee of Nineteen, as well as the Speyer and Horace Mann schools which served as models for training teachers and innovations. Hill supported the link between Teachers' College, Columbia University and model schools to validate the professional status of early childhood educators. Under Hill's leadership early childhood education moved away from Friedrich Froebel's idealism toward a modern scientific knowledge base. (Peltzman, 1998, p. 59)

Maria Montessori (1870-1952). Montessori built on the work of Jean-Marc Gaspard Itard and Edouard Seguire to develop a child-centered approach to education. The innovations of Montessori brought to early childhood education include the belief that each child develops from within as an individual; and that a child must be free to select and use materials with a minimum of adult interference for as long as desired. She...encouraged the use of child-size, moveable furniture, and the use of sensory materials to build the foundation for reading, writing, and arithmetic. Elements of the Montessori Method and adaptations of Montessori materials are used widely today in early childhood programs throughout the world.



Montessori provided insight into and respect for the ways in which young children learn. (Peltzman, 1998, p. 83)

Arnold Lucius Gesell (1880-1961). Gesell's contributions to early childhood education include a new view of how children grow and develop based on film and photographic samples of behavior; respect for individual differences in development; use of age characteristics and interests to plan curriculum and activities; and a commitment to the importance of the ages 2 through 6 in the life of the child. Without Gesell's work in child study, early childhood education would not have been able to move toward recognizing and meeting the needs of all young children. (Peltzman, 1998, p. 29)

Jean Piaget (1896-1980). Piaget's theory of intellectual development provide early childhood educators with the following: the recognition of infancy as a critical period in cognitive development; the concept that the child is an active participant in the learning process from birth; the concept that cognitive development is divided into four distinct stages through which children go in a specific sequence at their own rate which is influenced by experience and maturation; and a change in the role of the teacher from an imparter of information to a designer of activities appropriate to a child's level of development, which allows them to act on materials and develop thinking skills. His theory provided a means by which to assess children's levels of intellectual functioning, intellectual readiness, and the appropriateness of classroom activities. Piaget's work provided insight into how children's understanding of the world changes as they grow and what schools can do for young children. Piaget provided a new way of viewing the importance of the early years in the life of the child as the foundation for later learning. (Peltzman, 1998, p. 93)

Lev Vygotsky (1896-1934). Vygotsky studied and responded to the work of contemporaries Sigmund Freud, Jean Piaget, and Maria Montessori. He searched for answers to the questions raised by his interest in children and their approach to learning new things. That search involved the discovery that in a group of children at the same developmental level, some children were able to learn with a little help while other children were not. He thought research should be both qualitative and quantitative. By this he meant that careful observation of children should be considered as valid as their scores on a test. Vygotsky changed the way educators think about children's interactions with others. His work showed that social and cognitive development work together and build on each other. Like

Piaget, Vygotsky believed that much learning takes place when children play. Vygotsky's primary contribution to our understanding of young children's development is his understanding of the importance of interaction with teachers and peers in advancing children's knowledge. (Mooney, 2000, pp. 81-83)

Erik Erikson (1902-1994). Erikson's work has importance for every early childhood educator, because it shows how children develop the foundation for emotional and social development and mental health. Erikson's theory, which is called the Eight Stages of Man, covers the entire life span of a human being. Erikson was convinced that in the earliest years of life, patterns develop that regulate, or at least influence, a person's actions and interactions for the rest of his or her life. (Mooney, 2000, pp. 37-39)

As evidenced by Mooney (2000), Morgan (2011), and Peltzman (1998), pre-modern and modern early childhood pioneers provided the basis for our practices in today's classrooms. In addition, these pioneers informed the beliefs and theories that practitioners internalize today as best practices, which is to say the practices within the early childhood classroom are developmentally, age, and culturally appropriate as outlined by Copple and Bredekamp (2009). Copple and Bredekamp's (2009) work on developmentally appropriate practices offers insight into how early childhood educators focus their efforts within the classroom to support young children as they grow and develop.

### History of Early Childhood Education

As referenced above, the field of early childhood education has been filled with a multitude of researchers, theorists, and practitioners who have led the profession from its infancy. For the purposes of this study, the history of early

childhood education in the United States will be discussed from the 20<sup>th</sup> Century onward. The history is rich with distinct events that changed the face of early childhood education.

The Committee of Nineteen in 1903. The Committee of Nineteen, working under the auspices of the International Kindergarten Union, was a 10-year debate that discussed the role of the kindergarten. An embracing of developmentally appropriate practices followed, which became the field's defining pedagogy (Goffin & Washington, 2007). In fact, this embracing became the first account of combining pre-modern and modern theorists' work in one culminating faction, which resulted in what early childhood practitioners prescribe to today (Goffin & Washington, 2007; Mooney, 2000; Peltzman, 1998). While the Committee of Nineteen's work held firm for several years, research during the 1960s and 1970s changed, at least in some fashion, how researchers, as well as the public, viewed the field of early childhood.

The 1960s and 1970s. The 1960s and 1970s were decades in which a renewed focus on early childhood education gained momentum. Challenges of newfound practices renewed a focus, and spurred along the issues such as (a) new research on the impact of early experiences, (b) the onset of early intervention programs, and (c) the experimentation with new approaches to early education (Goffin & Washington, 2007). One of these new approaches to early education, initiated by the Johnson Administration, began the National

Office of Head Start in 1964. Head Start, designed to meet the needs of young children who were already deemed at-risk at age four, spread throughout the nation in 1965. In addition, Head Start became the first national effort to address those in poverty, and particularly children.

The 1990s. The last decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century perpetuated the importance of early childhood education, but with that came the issue of what early childhood was, exactly, and how the field would move forward with consensus. The Carnegie Corporation, Kellogg Foundation, and Kauffman Foundation, in conjunction with other smaller foundations, worked to advance ideas to help define early care and education programs (Goffin & Washington, 2007). Further, these foundations collaborated with the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) to create a career development framework. Until this time in American Education, early childhood education had no formal guidelines for those persons working outside of the public school systems.

In 1999, the Kauffman and Packard Foundations sought to aggregate the data amassed in the last decade in an effort to secure public funding for early childhood education. What the two foundations realized, however, was a lack of consensus among those in the field in terms of the definition of early childhood, its focus, the professionals who work with young children, as well as the direction in which the focus, and, therefore, the dollars, should go (Goffin &

Washington, 2007). As a result, the Foundations could not continue to support the work of aggregating data.

Although the works of the Kauffman and Packard Foundations were unsuccessful, another group came together to discuss education and its goals. While this group did not focus solely on early childhood education, it did address the needs of young children, which was a step in the right direction. The nation's governors convened in 1991 and generated a list of 10 goals that were to be accomplished by the year 2000. Indeed, among early childhood educators, the first of the 10 goals spoke to the nature of the field; it read "All children will enter school ready to learn" (Goffin & Washington, 2007, p. 20). While the nine remaining goals did not directly relate to early childhood, the first one did, and that goal became critically important in terms of moving forward with public funding of early childhood education.

A new millennium. While the national goals for 2000 were not met in their entirety, the renewed focus, yet again, became widespread. Goffin and Washington (2007) described the state of early childhood education as it stands:

The current cycle of interest in early care and education is characterized by a convergence that may be unique in the field's history – a convergence that is simultaneously exciting and worrisome. The qualitative difference from previous cycles of interest comes from the fact that multiple rationales – scientific, social, educational, and economic – have converged to make early care and education of interest to a much broader group of individuals, expanding the range and depth of interest and, potentially, the scope of those who benefit. Unlike earlier cycles of support, current debate includes the extent to which all children, not just children deemed

“at risk,” should benefit from publicly financed high-quality programs. (p. 21)

Goffin and Washington (2007) noted that this merger of interests, supported by 40 states, requested the investment of public dollars for preschool programming. They went on to mention the new realities of early childhood education; they explained them as: (a) early care and education has risen in esteem in public good, (b) early care and education has become politicized, (c) early care and education is expected to produce results, (d) early care and education must organize itself as an effective delivery system, and (e) early care and education lacks the capacity to meet the public’s expectations (Goffin & Washington, 2007). In addition to these new realities, Mooney (2012) provided questions intended to guide early childhood practitioners’ and policymakers’ conversations; they are: (a) What promotes the best possible outcomes for children? (b) How do we, the people, create more environments that promote the best outcomes for children? (c) What are the critical and ever-changing needs of the next generation? and (d) How do all of us work together to make high-quality education more abundant and equitably delivered? While these new realities and questions related to future practices were provided, no definitive answers existed. Indeed, it will take commitment, dedication, and perseverance to advance the early childhood field.

From theory to practice. Despite differences in pedagogy, approaches to learning, and beliefs about child development, all early childhood pioneers

shared a desire to care for young children. Feeney (2012) shared a list of characteristics considered best practice in terms of early childhood programming gleaned from pre-modern and modern pioneers. The list included:

- The first six years of life are critically important and impact later development.
- Social, emotional, cognitive, and physical development are interconnected and all should be addressed to promote development (hence early childhood education's attention to the whole child).
- Children are intrinsically motivated to learn.
- Children learn best from direct and hands-on experiences and from investigating their world.
- Curriculum should be meaningful and relevant to the lives of children.
- Play is a valuable tool for learning.
- A carefully prepared learning environment is an important pedagogical tool.
- Education is the life of the child in the present, not just preparation for the future.
- Education is an important vehicle for ameliorating the effects of poverty on young children.
- The role of the teacher is to nurture and guide children.

- Respectful relationships are essential to children's healthy development.
- Families play a major role in children's lives.
- The relationship between home and school is of utmost importance.

Feeney (2012) posited that early childhood programs, based on the work of the pre-modern and modern early childhood theorists, teach to the whole child.

Further, she noted all developmental domains are interrelated. Working under that assumption, early childhood educators have the responsibility of preparing environments and activities that encompass all developmental domains.

### Teaching to the Whole Child

Educating the whole child is a premise on which current early childhood educators function. The history of educating the whole child began in Germany following World War I (Krogh & Slentz, 2001). The idea stemmed from a talk related to politics, economics, and education, and how education should develop a child's natural talents and permit individual personalities to bloom rather than to train them for an industrial society (Krogh & Slentz, 2001). The Waldorf schools, named for the original company at which the talk took place, spread throughout Germany, the Netherlands, and Great Britain. Then, in 1928, the Waldorf schools opened in the United States, first in New York City. During the remainder of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century nearly 500 Waldorf schools were opened and



maintained throughout the world, 200 of them found in the United States (Krogh & Slentz, 2001). Although the approach known as educating the whole child found its roots in Germany, it too followed Froebel's kindergarten movement to the United States, wherein current researchers and practitioners added to and enhanced the theory of practice.

The whole child approach, embraced by early childhood educators throughout the United States, promotes learning in all developmental domains – cognitive, physical, social, and emotional (Casbergue, 2010/2011). In fact, the whole child approach was an integral program component in the design of Head Start in 1965 (Zigler, Gilliam, & Barnett, 2011). Zigler et al. (2011) note,

Emotional self-regulation has been found to be an especially important component of learning. Children must be able to focus their attention to the task at hand and to control their emotions when in the classroom. They must be able to organize their behavior and listen to the teacher. All of these are noncognitive factors that foster learning. Further, this type of emotional self-regulation can be developed through play when children take turns, regulate one another's behavior, and learn to cooperate. (pp. 87-88)

This research supposition emphasizes the need for all early childhood educators to acknowledge and embrace the whole child approach.

Although some dissenters of the whole child approach believe those who do embrace it disregard cognitive development, research indicates a strong correlation between cognitive development and whole child approaches to learning. Copple (2012) suggested “when children have appropriately

stimulating surroundings, including interaction with responsive caretakers, rapid brain growth occurs; from preschool to kindergarten, the brain grows steadily, increasing from 70% to 90% of its eventual adult weight” (p. 25). Therefore, the research indicated a strong correlation between the social-emotional development and cognitive function.

Cognitive function is linked to brain-compatible teaching principles. Early childhood educators need to be aware of and employ these principles, as “the brain is the only organ that is shaped through interactions with the environment” (Sprenger, 2008, p. 2). The principles are:

- Every brain is totally unique.
- Emotions guide our learning.
- Stress affects learning.
- There is a brain-body connection.
- The brain has multiple memory systems and multiple modalities.
- The brain seeks meaning and relevance.
- The brain learns through experience.
- The brain is social.
- The brain learns in patterns.
- The brain grows through enrichment.

Sprenger (2008) discussed NAEYC's early childhood principles in conjunction with the brain-compatible teaching principles. The compilation of Sprenger's (2008) brain-compatible teaching principles and NAEYC's early childhood principles are:

- Domains of children's development – physical, social, emotional, and cognitive – are closely related. Development in one domain influences and is influenced by development in other domains.
- Development occurs in a relatively orderly sequence, with later abilities, skills, and knowledge building on those already acquired.
- Development proceeds at varying rates from child to child as well as unevenly within different areas of each child's functioning.
- Early experiences have both cumulative and delayed effects on individual children's development: optimal periods exist for certain types of development and learning.
- Development proceeds in predictable directions toward greater complexity, organization, and internalization.
- Development and learning occur in and are influenced by multiple social and cultural contexts.

- Children are active learners, drawing on direct physical and social experience as well as culturally transmitted knowledge to construct their own understandings of the world around them.
- Development and learning result from interaction of biological maturation and the environment, which includes both the physical and social worlds that children live in.
- Play is an important vehicle for children's social, emotional, and cognitive development as well as a reflection of their development.
- Development advances when children have opportunities to practice newly acquired skills as well as when they experience a challenge just beyond the level of their present mastery.
- Children demonstrate different modes of knowing and learning and different ways of representing what they know.
- Children develop and learn best in the context of a community where they are safe and valued, their physical needs are met, and they feel psychologically secure.

Therefore, early childhood educators must know and understand how young children grow and develop, as well as how cognitive function is included in the process. In addition, they must discern when children struggle with development and to scaffold their learning in ways that move the young child to

the next highest level of development (Berris & Miller, 2011; Casbergue, 2010/2011). This list, provided by the McCormick Tribune Foundation (as cited in Sprenger, 2008), describes a 10-point list to boost brainpower. It includes:

- Interaction
- Loving Touch
- Stable Relationship
- Safe, Healthy Environment
- Self-Esteem
- Quality Child Care
- Communication
- Play
- Music
- Reading

Combining Sprenger's (2008) theory of brain-compatible teaching principles, NAEYC's early childhood principles, and the McCormick Tribune Foundation's list to boost brainpower, enabled early childhood educators to teach in terms of best practice. In turn, early childhood educators recognized the cycle of growth and development, as well as scaffolded learning experiences to move children to higher levels of learning. Early childhood educators who are well versed in early education theory and practice understand windows of

opportunity exist in terms of reaching each learner. Sprenger (2008) noted “there are certain time periods when the brain appears to be very receptive to certain types of learning. These periods are called ‘windows of opportunity,’ the ideal time to provide the input that these active brain areas require” (p. 15). Sprenger (2008) went on to mention how “the windows of opportunity do not slam shut” but “learning is much easier for the brain during these periods” (p. 15).

Therefore, it is imperative that early childhood educators be mindful of these windows of opportunity, as well as responsive, as needs arise. One way early educators may be responsive to student needs is through the Response to Intervention service delivery plan.

Response to intervention in early childhood education. Responding to the needs of individuals is often referred to as differentiation. The Response to Intervention (RTI) model is based on the idea of providing students what they need when they need it to move them into the core group of students, thus reducing the need for additional supports (Buysse & Peisner-Feinberg, 2013; Coffee, Ray-Subramanian, Schanding, & Feeney-Kettler, 2013). In fact, RTI is now part of the special education process; which means teachers and specialists must employ the process of RTI prior to staffing a child into special education services, exclusive of speech, motor, and vision services (Coffee et al., 2013; Jackson, Pretti-Frontczak, Harjusola-Webb, Grisham-Brown, & Romani, 2009). In so

doing, teachers meet the needs of students using scientifically based practices, thereby reducing the need for special education placements.

The Response to Intervention model is a three-tiered approach, and may be implemented for either academic or behavior interventions. The model suggests a typical class has 80 to 90% of students in tier one, which houses universal interventions to all students; these are preventive and proactive. Tier two addresses the needs of 5 to 10% of students in a class; these are the students who are at-risk as well as those who receive the universal interventions afforded to all students. Tier three is the last tier and it caters to the needs of a select few, 1 to 5 % of a classroom (Greenwood et al., 2011). Students in this tier receive the universal interventions in tier one, targeted group interventions in tier two, and intensive, individualized interventions in tier three (Buysee & Peisner-Feinberg, 2013; Coffee et al., 2013; Jackson et al., 2009). This approach to learning is often applied to behavior as well as academics in the early childhood grade levels PK-3. In such application, the needs of the whole child are met, and the student is successful in academic and social settings. The Response to Intervention (RTI) approach is a way to meet the needs of the whole child that incorporates developmentally appropriate practices.

#### Developmentally Appropriate Practices

The term developmentally appropriate practices (DAP), predicated on the notion that all children differ in their growth and development, yet follow a

specific sequence became the theory by which early childhood practitioners taught. The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) provides position statements in an effort to promote excellence in the field of early childhood education. One position statement that has been provided is, *Developmentally Appropriate Practice in Early Childhood Programs Serving Children from Birth through Age 8*. This position statement, in its first drafts, called attention to appropriateness in terms of (a) age and (b) individualism. With the 2006 revision, researchers in the field added a third characteristic – culture-appropriateness (Copple & Bredekamp, 2009; Feeney, 2012). Under the umbrella of developmentally appropriate practices is the method by which early childhood educators can meet the needs of children in their programs; it includes: (a) creating a caring community of learners, (b) teaching to enhance development and learning, (c) planning curriculum to achieve important goals, (d) assessing children’s development and learning, and (e) establishing reciprocal relationships with families (Copple & Bredekamp, 2009).

With the outline of how to accomplish developmentally appropriate practices within the early childhood classroom, early childhood educators are informed as to how to best meet the needs of all stakeholders in their program, including families. Kostelnik and Grady (2009) stated,

The principles of age appropriateness, individual appropriateness, and social and cultural appropriateness are intertwined. Considered as a whole, they form a comprehensive framework for thinking about,



planning, implementing, and evaluating high-quality programs for young children. Most important, DAP requires everyone responsible for educating young children to recognize that children are not miniature adults. Early childhood is a distinct time of life both qualitatively and quantitatively unlike later childhood or adolescence. (p. 77)

They continue with the 12 central components of developmentally appropriate practices in programs serving children birth to age 8. Although similar in nature to NAEYC's teaching principles, they do differ in terms of speaking directly about the curricula and assessment. They are as follows:

- Adults build warm, caring relationships with children.
- Child guidance is directed toward helping children achieve self-regulation.
- Curricula are comprehensive.
- Curricula address the learning needs of all children.
- Curricula are integrated.
- Children have many opportunities to learn through firsthand experiences.
- Children initiate many activities and make choices about how they will learn.
- Classroom environments are safe and stimulating and routines are well suited to the needs of young children.

- Teachers assume a variety of roles and use a wide array of strategies to support children's development and learning.
- Children have many opportunities to learn through play.
- Assessment is continuous, multidimensional, and observation based.
- Education involves reciprocal relationships with families.

Teachers who adhere to NAEYC's DAP position statement facilitate classroom settings where all children, regardless of ability, may be successful. Simply put, "programs are designed *for* young children based on what we know *about* young children" (Gordon & Browne, 2013, p. 26). In so doing, Gartrell (2012) noted,

Developmentally appropriate practice, in the context of comprehensive education services, provides the most promising approach to closing the achievement gap. And developmentally appropriate practice makes possible, through its emphasis on the whole child and healthy brain development, children's progress toward the five democratic life skills. (p. 53)

The democratic life skills to which Gartrell (2012) referred may be described as "[those] social and emotional capacities individuals need to function civilly in modern, diverse, and complex democratic society" (p. 5). These democratic life skills are: (a) finding acceptance as a member of the group and as a worthy individual, (b) expressing strong emotions in non-hurting ways, (c) solving problems creatively - independently and in cooperation with others, (d) accepting unique human qualities in others, and (e) thinking intelligently and

ethically (Gartrell, 2012, p. 5). Further, democratic life skills may only be practiced when the environment allows for such experiences.

### Early Childhood Environments

Developmentally appropriate practices call for the appropriateness of age, individual, and culture when planning experiences for young children. While the environment in which children learn is not specifically mentioned, it goes without saying the environment must be age, individually, and culturally appropriate if sustained learning is to occur. Copple and Bredekamp (2009) suggested environments be based on the needs of children, be safe and welcoming, and be conducive to children's exploration. In addition, they advocated for learning areas to be indoors and out. In so doing, the early childhood educator offers multiple and varied ways of acquiring skills (Berris & Miller, 2011; Copple & Bredekamp, 2009). Further, routine is a critical component in terms of the environment; it allows for self-regulation throughout the blocks of time for self-guided exploration. Routine is not only critical for general education students, but also for students receiving special education services.

The inclusive environment. Although Iowa offers an endorsement specifically for early childhood special education, all early childhood educators may have the opportunity for students with special needs in their classrooms. Therefore, it is imperative early childhood programs be inclusive as well as

provide the necessary environment for all children. In fact, three overarching laws mandate what is required for students with special needs.

The Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA), Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), delineate what schools are required to do in terms of serving students with special needs. While IDEA deals particularly with schools due to its funding streams, Section 504 and the ADA are the responsibility of the education community as a whole (Bartlett, Etscheidt, & Weisenstein, 2007). IDEA also outlines four principles of special education under Part B; they are:

- All children over age 3 who are identified as having potential disabilities are entitled to a full, nondiscriminatory assessment of their educational needs and a determination of eligibility for programs and services.
- Based on data assessed by a team of professionals and the child's parents, an IEP is prepared for the eligible student which establishes the framework for the provision of a free and appropriate public education (FAPE).
- An educational placement is chosen by a team of parents and professionals in which to carry out the IEP. The placement must be the least restrictive environment (LRE) appropriate to meet the child's

educational needs. Schools must have a continuum of placements available to meet the needs of all eligible children with disabilities.

- Parents are entitled to an extensive system of procedural safeguards, including attendance at meetings, notice of school actions, due process hearings, and confidentiality of education records.

The principles are in place to protect the rights of children with disabilities.

These principles go into effect the day the child turns three years old, as outlined in Part B (Bartlett et al., 2007). Students who exhibit special needs prior to age 3 are also afforded special education services, but not in the formal school setting (Hojnoski & Missall, 2006). Instead, services are performed, generally, at the child's home or at local area education agencies. Children who are birth to age 3 receive special education services through Part C of the IDEA, which is a voluntary state program reserved for infants and toddlers under the age of 3 (Bartlett et al., 2007). In addition, Part C addresses the needs of the family, which is carried out through an individual family service plan (IFSP). Further, states have the right to serve at-risk students in the under-age-three population as well with IDEA, Part C funding. Regardless of type of disability and IFSP in place, schools must transition students from home or preschool settings to kindergarten with IEPs in place; the IFSP may continue at that time or be discontinued with parental consent (Bartlett et al., 2007; Kritikos, LeDosquet, & Melton, 2012).

Part C of the IDEA is intended to support early intervention services. The purpose of these services is to reduce, or eliminate, the need for special education services upon entering kindergarten (Kritikos et al., 2012). Research has shown, however, that 62.6% of children enrolled in Part C services continue to receive Part B services in the early grades (Kritikos et al., 2012). This may be, in part, due to the IDEA reauthorization in 2004, that allowed for states' flexibility in offering Part C benefits up to the age of kindergarten entry; prior to the reauthorization, states did not have the option to provide services beyond age 3 (Kritikos et al., 2012). See Table 1 for a comparison of Part C and Part B services under the IDEA reauthorization of 2004.

Table 1

*Comparison of Part C and Part B Services*

	<b>Part C (Birth to Age 3)</b>	<b>Part B (Ages 3-21)</b>
<b>Focus</b>	Family as primary change agent in promoting children's development.	Child-centered focus related to individual educational needs.
<b>Eligibility</b>	Children who are experiencing a developmental delay (as determined by individual state criteria) or have a diagnosed condition that is highly likely to result in a developmental delay.	Special education services must be provided for children who fit into one or more of the following categories: <i>Autism</i> <i>Deafblindness</i> <i>Deafness</i> <i>Developmental delay (ages 3-9)</i> <i>Emotional disturbance</i> <i>Hearing impairment</i> <i>Intellectual disability</i> <i>Multiple disabilities</i> <i>Orthopedic impairment</i> <i>Other health impairments</i> <i>Specific learning disability</i> <i>Speech or language impairment</i> <i>Traumatic brain injury</i> <i>Visual impairment</i>
<b>Individualized Plans</b>	Individualized family service plan (IFSP)	Individualized education plan (IEP)
<b>Services</b>	Early intervention services are designed for the child and family to meet the needs of the child and to promote the family's abilities to meet the needs of the child. A service coordinator, a role typically assumed by the person whose expertise is most relevant to the child's needs, is assigned to guide the family and facilitate communication and services among agencies and assist parents in obtaining necessary supports.	Special education and related services are designed to meet the educational needs of the child, and, to the maximum extent possible, ensure that the child participates in the general education curriculum.

*Table continues*

	<b>Part C (Birth to Age 3)</b>	<b>Part B (Ages 3-21)</b>
<b>Service Settings</b>	To the maximum extent possible, services are provided in natural environments, including home and community locations where children without disabilities would typically participate, and emphasizing rhythms and routines of daily life as a context for development and learning.	Services are provided with consideration for the least restrictive environment (LRE), including maximum exposure to educational settings with nondisabled peers.
<b>Family Involvement</b>	Families participate in all team decisions regarding the individualized plan for their children's services. Families may receive additional services to improve their abilities for meeting the needs of their children with disabilities.	Families participate in all team decisions regarding the individualized education plan for their children's services.

*Note.* Adapted from *Foundations of Assessment in Early Childhood Special Education*, by E. P. Kritikos, P. L. LeDosquet, and M. E. Melton, 2012, Pearson, Upper Saddle River, NJ, p. 19.

Kritikos et al. (2012) discussed the differences in IDEA Part B and Part C, as well as the early childhood environments that support those differences. They mentioned the need for careful thought in terms of the design of early childhood environments, in an effort to enhance the learning of children with special needs. Young children, and especially those with disabilities, need to experience hands-on learning, using their senses as a guide. Further, Kritikos et al. (2012) defined the environment for young children to include: (a) organization of space, (b) materials, and (c) interplay among children, adults, and peers as a means to that



end. They also stressed the importance of environments and their objective of promoting development across all domains (Kritikos et al., 2012). Even with the definition of environment in place, settings themselves may differ.

Young children with and without disabilities may receive early education in a variety of programming placements; they include: (a) general education preschool, (b) self-contained early childhood special education classroom, (c) special education preschool that includes children with and without disabilities, such as Head Start, and (d) a combination of any half-day special education program and a community preschool (Taylor, McGowan, & Linder, 2009).

Further, Hojnoski and Missall (2006) stated that nearly 5% of all preschoolers nationwide have been part of the Head Start program. Taylor et al. (2009) mentioned,

No single setting is better in meeting the needs of all children. A child's unique needs, disability, strengths, weaknesses, as well as the availability of programs, are all factors in the child's educational placement. Regardless of the setting, a high-quality early childhood program should adhere to developmentally appropriate practices (DAP), as described by the National Association for the Education of Young Children. DAP is not a curriculum model; rather, it is a set of guidelines to help practitioners and policy makers distinguish between appropriate and inappropriate teaching techniques to use with young children. (p. 120)

All programs, regardless of teacher endorsement, must provide access to all young children. In so doing, all children would have access to high-quality programming in an effort to meet the needs of regular and special education

children. One way to meet the needs of all children in terms of curricula is to offer play-based programming.

### Play as a Vehicle for Learning

Young children learn best through play due to the fact that play experiences offer a variety of social-emotional skills, which enable children to move into higher levels of self-regulation (Copple & Bredekamp, 2009; Thomas, Warren, & deVries, 2011). The type of play to which Copple and Bredekamp (2009), Gronlund (2010), and Thomas et al., (2011) referred to is not just any play; it is purposeful, planned, intentional in nature, and includes high levels of imagination and exploration. Therefore, it is the teacher who prepares environments with purposeful materials, curricula, and scaffolded instruction in an effort to move children into higher levels of learning. In so doing, teachers of young children can move beyond the first two levels of play into the third, where true learning takes place. The first level of play is chaotic, or out-of-control, which means children move about within the room frequently without attention to the materials at hand. The second level of play is simplistic, or repetitive, which means children use materials in a manner that is simple in form and application, without moving to higher levels. The third level, the level around which much of the early childhood day should center, is purposeful, complex play that engages children's full attention (Gronlund, 2010).

Copple and Bredekamp (2009) noted studies that supported the use of play-based learning in early childhood classrooms.

A study of children from around the world, from Indonesia to Italy to Ireland (and the United States), showed that when preschool experiences at age 4 included lots of child-initiated, free-choice activities supported by a variety of equipment and materials – the kinds of environments that support play – these children had better cognitive (and language) performance at age 7 than their peers. (pp. 131-132)

Other research shows that pretend play strengthens cognitive development including sustained attention, memory, logical reasoning, language and literacy skills, imagination, creativity, understanding of emotions, and the ability to reflect on one's own thinking, inhibit impulses, control one's behavior, and take another person's perspective... (Gronlund, 2010, p. 6)

These studies underscore the importance of play as a means of learning.

Play is to be cross-curricular, open-ended, and creative in nature. By providing these play experiences, teachers enhance all developmental domains. Further, the American Academy of Pediatrics stated "play is essential to development because it contributes to the cognitive, physical, social, and emotional well-being of children and youth" (Gronlund, 2010, p. 6). Further, Falk (2012) stated, "The science is clear. Free play promotes better physical and mental health, and playful learning is related to better outcomes in social and academic ability – in reading, spatial learning, and mathematics" (p. 25). Although play is sometimes viewed as simply that – play, the levels of play need to be considered. Further, play is misunderstood, at times, especially when accountability enters the conversation.

### Accountability and Assessment

Kostelnik and Grady (2009) suggested “one of the most critical elements in structuring effective early childhood programs is to make sure they are providing documented benefits to the children who are enrolled” (p. 163).

Further, they listed the areas in which documented development must be demonstrated; it included:

- Emotional and social development
- Language development
- Literacy
- Numeracy
- Concept development and problem solving
- Understanding and appreciating one’s own culture and people from other cultures
- Large- and small-motor abilities
- Self-care in health and safety
- Appreciating and participating in the creative arts

The role of assessment has four defining characteristics; they are (a) to guide children’s learning and to inform instruction, (b) to identify children with special needs, (c) to assess the strengths and needs of programs and to judge the worth of the effort, and (d) to hold programs accountable for academic achievement

(Kostelnik & Grady, 2009). Each of these four characteristics is evident within a comprehensive early childhood program, yet disproportionately utilized. The disproportionate use is intentional. The most utilized characteristic is the use of assessments to guide children's learning and to improve instruction. The second most defining characteristic is the use of assessments to identify children with special needs. This is followed by the two characteristics of program evaluation and accountability. Although further removed from assessment of the child within the program, these two characteristics inform various stakeholders of the program's overall success (Kostelnik & Grady, 2009). As noted, each of the four purposes for assessment is evident within early childhood programming, yet utilized in various manners.

The most utilized purpose for assessment is that of driving instruction and meeting the needs of individual students. Teachers of early childhood implement various methods of assessment that include, but are not limited to: (a) observation, (b) checklists, (c) inventories, (d) work samples, (e) repeated performances, and (f) surveys. As with the characteristics of assessment, each of these types of assessment has its purpose (Kostelnik & Grady, 2009). Another use of assessment is screening.

Screening assessments are universal in nature, which means every child receives the same assessment. Early childhood educators use this type of assessment to gain a better understanding of all children in a program. The two

types of screening assessments most implemented are (a) transition screenings from preschool to kindergarten, for example, and (b) screenings that identify children with special needs (Kostelnik & Grady, 2009).

Transition screenings include a variety of skills, generally focusing on cognitive and physical development. Typically, screens do not include the domains of social and emotional development due to the fact that screening tools are quickly administered and therefore reduce the reliability of noting a child's social-emotional development (Kostelnik & Grady, 2009). That being said, screens provide teachers with a surface level amount of information. Further, teachers use the results for purposes of checking what children know at a specific point in time.

Special needs screenings are used to determine a child's level of development and whether or not the development qualifies him or her for special education services. If a child is found to have developmental delays with the use of a screening tool, a full evaluation may follow; this full evaluation and its findings determine a child's eligibility for an individualized education plan (Taylor et al., 2009). The determination must indicate "that a child has a 25 percent delay in one or more of the developmental domains, is exhibiting atypical development, or has evidence of a diagnosed medical condition that suggest a high probability of developmental delay" (Taylor et al., 2009, p. 66). Unlike transition screenings, special education screenings must be

comprehensive and multidimensional in nature. These types of screens are required under Parts B and C of IDEA (Taylor et al., 2009).

Whether implementing transition or special education screens, choosing valid and reliable screening tools is critical. Validity informs educators as to the quality of the screen. Reliability, on the other hand, lets educators know how well the test is designed; which means the test offers consistent results when administered time and again (Kritikos et al., 2012).

The validity and reliability of transition screens is not the only factor in terms of screening and transitioning children from preschool to kindergarten. Another important factor is readiness. Conversations have been held among the nation's early childhood experts regarding children being ready for school versus schools being ready for children.

### Ready Schools

The concept of ready schools began, in part, in 1990 when President George H. W. Bush established the National Education Goals Panel in an effort to determine the nation's education efficacy. Goal 1 stated by the year 2000 all children would start school ready to learn (Passe, 2010). Then, in 1998, the panel convened specialists who determined 10 key points to ready schools. They included,

- Ready schools smooth the transition between home and school.

- Ready schools strive for continuity between early care and education programs and elementary schools.
- Ready schools help children learn and make sense of their complex and exciting world.
- Ready schools are committed to the success of every child.
- Ready schools are committed to the success of every teacher and adult who interacts with children during the school day.
- Ready schools introduce or expand approaches that have been shown to raise student achievement.
- Ready schools are learning organizations that alter practices and programs if they do not benefit children.
- Ready schools serve children in communities.
- Ready schools take responsibility for results.
- Ready schools have strong leadership.

The idea of ready schools is relatively new, having been established, fully, in 1998. Although the concept is in its infancy, schools have begun to ask the questions related to readiness (Hojnoski & Missall, 2006). These initial questions rest primarily on the personnel with whom the children interact on a daily basis (Passe, 2010). The person, with whom the children interact the most, unequivocally, is the early childhood teacher. The person who oversees the early



childhood teacher is the building principal. The last of the 10 key points of ready schools lists the schools as having strong leadership. A discussion follows of what effective educational leadership includes.

### Educational Leadership

Equal to early childhood education's continued development in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, advanced thinking of educational leadership took root. The National Policy Board for Educational Administration (NPBEA) convened for the first time in 1988, comprised by 10 professional organizations charged with the primary purpose to improve school leadership (Wilmore, 2002). Five years later, in 1993, the Panel's 10 organizational founders appointed a working group to further investigate educational leadership. This group became known as the Educational Leadership Constituent Council (ELCC). The ELCC combed through data from the 10 organizational groups in an effort to combine features from all of them that would satisfy accreditation of degree-offering colleges and universities through the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE; Wilmore, 2002).

The Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) is the national organization to which leaders in state departments of education, and various other leaders from national organizations, belong. Through its membership, the CCSSO advises Congress, federal organizations, professional organizations, and the public (Wilmore, 2002). Further, one of the subsets of the CCSSO is the

Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISSLC), founded in 1994 with 24 member states.

The purpose of ISSLC is to foster ways for states to work collaboratively to develop and implement assessment, professional development activities, and licensing procedures for school leaders. Its goals are to raise the bar for school leaders and to redefine Educational Leadership. (Wilmore, 2002, p. 11)

The NPBEA revised the ELCC guidelines to integrate the ISSLC standards (Wilmore, 2002). What resulted was a joint set of standards that provided a framework for all professional entities and their work together. These standards were formally adopted in 1996 and have undergone word editing, at times, but have remained the same in terms of overall standards since that time (Wilmore, 2002).

Due to the fact that persons in educational leadership are not solely principals, but fill the roles of superintendent and curriculum director, the standards reflect what is generic for each role. Bush (2009) articulated the notion that the inception of ISSL throughout the United States has, “created a measure of consistency across programs” (p. 387). Therefore, regardless of educational leadership position held, the ISSLC standards apply. They are:

*A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by...*

1. Facilitating the development, articulation, implementation, and stewardship of a school or district vision of learning that is shared and supported by the school community.
2. Advocating, nurturing, and sustaining a school culture and instructional program conducive to student learning and staff professional growth.
3. Ensuring management of the organization, operations, and resources for a safe, efficient, and effective learning environment.
4. Collaborating with families and community members, responding to diverse community interests and needs, and mobilizing community resources.
5. Acting with integrity, fairness, and in an ethical manner.
6. Understanding, responding to, and influencing the larger political, social, economic, legal, and cultural context.
7. Substantial, sustained, standards-based experiences in real settings that are planned and guided cooperatively by university and school district personnel for graduate credit.

Wilmore (2002) noted “these joint standards provide all school leaders with a common framework for attaining excellence” (p. 14). Following the ISSLC’s lead, the Iowa Department of Education formed its standards for school leadership;

correlations to the ISSLC noted. The Iowa Standards for School Leadership (ISSL) include:

*An educational leader promotes the success of all students by...*

1. Facilitating the development, articulation, implementation, and stewardship of a vision of learning that is shared and supported by the school community. (Shared Vision)
2. Advocating, nurturing, and sustaining a school culture and instructional program conducive to student learning and staff professional development. (Culture of Learning)
3. Ensuring management of the organization, operations, and resources for a safe, efficient, and effective learning environment. (Management)
4. Collaborating with families and community members, responding to diverse community interests and needs, and mobilizing community resources. (Family and Community)
5. Acting with integrity, fairness, and in an ethical manner. (Ethics)
6. Understanding the profile of the community and responding to, and influencing the larger political, social, economic, legal, and cultural context. (Societal Context; Iowa Department of Education, 2008, p. 1)

As noted, the ISSL outlines six standards for administrators, whereas the ISSLC has seven. The seventh one for ISSLC is designed primarily for the use with degree-granting institutions wherein an internship is required for licensure.

Therefore, the seventh standard from ISSLC is not needed at the state level (Iowa Department of Education, 2014).

The Iowa Board of Educational Examiners (BOEE), the licensing bureau for the state, revised its administrative licensure following the revisions of the ISSLC and ISSL. These revisions, initially discussed at the State of Iowa Board of Educational Examiners monthly meeting in October 2002, included the combining of the K-6 and 7-12 principal endorsements into one PK-12 administrative license (Iowa Board of Educational Examiners, 2014b). Licensure officials at the Iowa BOEE discussed how similar the competencies of elementary and secondary principal preparation programs were, as well as what coursework or internship experience may be needed to offer a combined PK-12 endorsement. Further, discussion followed regarding the need for teachers to have experience teaching the grades on the level at which the person would serve as an administrator, which was current practice. The Board discussed, at its March 2003 meeting, that the BOEE would prescribe what must be encompassed in the practical training of those desiring to serve at a level outside of the current licensed area; these discussions would become part of the proposal at a later date (Iowa Board of Educational Examiners, 2014b).

In May 2003 the BOEE reconvened and discussed the proposal of combining the K-6 and 7-12 principal endorsement into one PK-12 endorsement. In addition, the BOEE introduced the question of special education supervision

as a possible addendum to the PK-12 endorsement proposal. Upon meeting with representatives from the Iowa Department of Education, teacher preparation institutions, and directors of special education, licensure officials from the BOEE recommended to the full Board the proposal to offer a PK-12 Principal/PK-12 Supervisor of Special Education license. The Board decided to leave all remaining program components and updates in programming to the degree-granting institutions themselves (Iowa Board of Educational Examiners, 2014b).

At its June 2003 meeting, the BOEE reviewed the rules for a combined PK-12 administrator endorsement. Under the new rules, upon Board approval, programs would offer additional content to reflect the wider range of grade levels, as well as offer content related to special education. In regard to content offered for special education, the Board voted to change the current wording of special education supervision which stated individuals could oversee students “from age 5 to 21” to the updated language “from birth to 21” (Iowa Board of Educational Examiners, 2014b). With that vote, the Board agreed to file under ‘Notice of Intended Action’ for the October 2003 meeting.

The October 2003 meeting of the Iowa Board of Educational Examiners included in its agenda a proposal to offer a combined administrative endorsement to serve grades PK-12 as well as oversee special education services. While the School Administrators of Iowa (SAI) shared some concerns prior to full adoption by the Board, the Board felt comfortable in moving forward; the Board

voted unanimously to approve the change in principal licensure (Iowa Board of Educational Examiners, 2014b). This change took effect in 2004.

What had been a two-year long process of updating administrative licensure was now in Iowa Administrative Code. Beginning with the 2004-2005 academic year, degree-granting institutions changed their program components for principal licensure to include content related to all grade levels (PK-12) and special education. Further, programs increased the number of internship hours to include specific numbers of hours at each level of education – early childhood, elementary, middle, and secondary; these hours also included an increase in special education (Iowa Board of Educational Examiners, 2014b).

From 2004 onward, the PK-12 administrative license became Iowa's most offered endorsement in terms of educational leadership. For principals who previously earned their administrative degree in either K-6 or 7-12, professional development opportunities were created to earn the additional area of licensure. Therefore, all principals in the state of Iowa were offered the chance to lead within the PK-12 arena if they chose (Iowa Board of Educational Examiners, 2014a). Regardless of a principal's choice to serve in K-6 or 7-12, he or she exhibits a leadership style conducive to his or her personality, perspective, theory of practice, and pedagogical beliefs related to education.

## Leadership Styles

Throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> Century and into the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, the terms associated with *principal* have changed. Bush (2011) noted that principals have been named 'educational administration,' 'educational management,' and now, 'educational leadership.' He went on to mention that no term is "correct," and that any term is considered 'arbitrary' in nature due to the multiple inferences associated with the overarching role of *principal* (Bush, 2011). For the purposes of this study, the term 'educational leadership' will be used.

Participants in educational leadership preparation programs study the types of leadership models currently established in schools around the world. Three leadership styles are tied closely with the idea of collegiality. Collegiality, as Bush (2011) wrote, became widespread in primary schools in the 1980s and 1990s. Further, collegiality refers to the nature of leadership within a building; all stakeholders share a vision for learning and work, as a team, to accomplish school-wide goals (Bush, 2011). The three leadership styles of collegiality closely related to primary schools are (a) transformational leadership, (b) participative leadership, and (c) distributed leadership.

Transformational leadership. Bush (2011) wrote,

This form of leadership assumes that the central focus of leadership ought to be the commitments and capacities of organizational members. Higher levels of personal commitment to organizational goals and greater capacities for accomplishing those goals are assumed to result in extra effort and greater productivity. (p. 84)



In addition, transformational leadership is based on eight dimensions; they include:

1. building a school vision
2. establishing school goals
3. providing intellectual stimulation
4. offering individualized support
5. modeling best practices and important organizational values
6. demonstrating high performance expectations
7. creating a productive school culture
8. developing structures to foster participation in school decisions

(Leithwood, 1994, as cited in Bush, 2011)

Moreover, transformational leadership is said to have a greater impact on teachers' classroom practices versus student achievement (Bush, 2011). While transformational leadership is prevalent among elementary school principals, so is the idea of participative leadership.

Participative leadership. Hoyle and Wallace (as cited in Bush, 2011) stated, "[The] participation refers to 'the opportunities that staff members have for engaging in the process of organizational decision-making'" (p. 87). Further, participative leadership is said to relieve pressures on the principal due to the fact that decisions are made as a whole and based on common goals or

philosophies of thought. Those areas listed most participative by staff members include: (a) school policy, (b) student discipline, (c) teaching load, (d) general policy, and (e) time allocation. Moreover, “people are more likely to accept and implement decisions in which they have participated, particularly where these decisions related directly to the individual’s own job” (Bush, 2011, p. 87). Even though participative leadership has its merits, the 21<sup>st</sup> Century principals are implementing what is known as distributed leadership.

Distributed leadership. Harris (as cited in Bush, 2011) commented,

‘Distributed leadership concentrates on engaging expertise wherever it exists within the organization rather than seeking this only through formal position or role,’ ... ‘it is characterized as a form of collective leadership,’ and collegiality is ‘at the core of distributed leadership.’ (p. 88)

Further, distributed leadership “involves both vertical and lateral dimensions of leadership practice, suggesting a link to both formal and collegial models” (Bush, 2011, p. 88). The formal models of educational leadership include: (a) structural, (b) systems, (c) bureaucratic, (d) rational, and (e) hierarchical (Bush, 2011).

Formal models of educational leadership share common features. These features define formal models from collegial models. Formal models incorporate the following characteristics into their beliefs:

1. They tend to treat organizations as *systems*.
2. Formal models give prominence to the *official structure* of the organization.

3. In formal models the official structures of the organization tend to be *hierarchical*.
4. All formal approaches typify schools and colleges as *goal-seeking* organizations.
5. Formal models assume that managerial decisions are made through a *rational* process.
6. Formal approaches present the *authority* of leaders as essentially a product of their official positions within the organization.
7. In formal models there is an emphasis on the *accountability* of the organization to its sponsoring body, (Bush, 2011, pp. 40-41).

While five formal models exist, all share the same tenets and, when eyed superficially, can be seen as all the same type of leadership. Nuances, however, are present within each type of formal leadership, thus differentiating itself from the previous (Bush, 2011).

Structural model of leadership. Structural models of leadership are hierarchical in nature, and are based on six core assumptions:

1. Organizations exist primarily to accomplish established goals.
2. For any organization, a structural form can be designed and implemented to fit its particular set of circumstances.
3. Organizations work most effectively when environmental turbulence and the personal preferences are constrained by norms of rationality.

4. Specialization permits higher levels of individual expertise and performance.
5. Co-ordination and control are essential to effectiveness.
6. Organizational problems typically originate from inappropriate structures or inadequate systems and can be resolved through restructuring or developing new systems, (Bolman & Deal, 1991; as cited in Bush, 2011).

Further, structural models are based on organizational levels. These levels include:

1. The *central level*, including national, provincial, or state governments, and official bodies appointed by them, which are collectively responsible for overall planning, resource allocation, and the monitoring of standards.
2. The *local level*, including local and district authorities, which are responsible for interpreting government policies and, often, for administering the educational system.
3. The *institutional level* – schools, colleges, universities, and other educational organizations.
4. *Sub-unit level*, such as departments of faculties in colleges and universities, and departments and pastoral units in schools.

5. The *individual level* – teachers, students, or pupils and support staff

(adapted from Becher and Kogan, 1992; as cited in Bush, 2011).

As noted, the five levels increase in status and may be termed hierarchical.

Schools in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century have gone away from this type of formal model due to the “specified or emergent needs of the schools” that may be met by collaborating with local area schools or districts (Bush, 2011).

Systems model of leadership. Within the systems model of leadership, focus is given to the entity itself. Which means, ‘school’ or ‘college’ is thought of as a sacred place, with long held practices, procedures, and traditions. In such thinking, the institution, or system, becomes humanistic, and those working within the system go unnoticed (Bush, 2011). This type of leadership model may be considered *dangerous* in terms of community building and the local environment.

Bolman and Deal (as cited in Bush, 2011) stated,

Environment is typically seen as everything outside the boundaries of an organization, even though the boundaries are often nebulous and poorly drawn. It is the environment that provides raw materials to an organization and receives the organization’s output...Schools receive students from the community and later return graduates to the community. (p. 45)

Systems models have student success at their core, yet do so without the participative nature of the faculty in terms of decision-making. This type of leadership model is closely related to the bureaucratic leadership model.

Bureaucratic model of leadership. Said to be the most important of the formal models of leadership, the bureaucratic model applies to most, if not all, schools and colleges in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century (Bush, 2011). This belief, supported by Weber, discusses the mechanical nature of a bureaucratic system; Weber wrote,

The purely bureaucratic type of administrative organization...is, from a technical point of view, capable of attaining the highest degree of efficiency and is in this sense formally the most rational means of carrying out impressive control over human beings. It is superior to any other form in precision, in stability, in the stringency of discipline, and in its reliability. (as cited in Bush, 2011, p. 47)

As formal organizations exhibit the bureaucratic model of leadership, specific features inform the organization's practices; they are:

1. It stresses the importance of the *hierarchical authority structure*, with formal chains of command between the different positions in the hierarchy. This pyramidal structure is based on the legal authority vested in the officers who hold places in the chain of command. Office holders are responsible to superordinates for the satisfactory conduct of their duties. In educational institutions teachers are accountable to the head or principal.
2. In common with other formal models, the bureaucratic approach emphasizes the *goal orientation* of the organization. Institutions are dedicated to goals which are clearly delineated by the officers at the apex of the pyramid. In colleges or schools goals are determined

largely by the principal or head and endorsed without question by other staff.

3. The bureaucratic model suggests a *division of labor*, with staff specializing in particular tasks on the basis of expertise. The departmental structure in secondary schools and colleges is an obvious manifestation of division of labor, with subject specialists teaching a defined area of the curriculum. In this respect, English primary schools do not resemble bureaucracies because staff are typically classroom teachers who work with one group of children for much of their time.
4. In bureaucracies, decisions and behavior are governed by *rules and regulations* rather than personal initiative. Schools typically have rules to regulate the behavior of pupils and often guide the behavior of teachers through bureaucratic devices such as the staff handbook. These rules may extend to the core issues of teaching and learning. Sandholtz and Scribner (as cited in Bush, 2011) note that increased regulation and bureaucratic controls at school and district levels undermine teachers' professional development.
5. Bureaucratic models emphasize *impersonal* relationships between staff, and with clients. This neutrality is designed to minimize the impact of individuality on decision-making. Good schools depend in part on the

quality of personal relationships between teachers and pupils, and this aspect of bureaucracy has little influence in many schools.

6. In bureaucracies the recruitment and career progress of staff are determined on *merit*. Appointments are made on the basis of qualifications and experience, and promotion depends on expertise demonstrated in present and previous positions. Schools and colleges fulfill this criterion in that formal competitive procedures are laid down for the appointment of new staff and for some promoted posts. Internal promotions, however, depend on the recommendation of the head or principal and there may be no formal process. (Bush, 2011, pp. 47-48)

While some level of bureaucratic leadership is evident within the United States' model of education, it is not solely dependent on each of the features. Bush (2011) warned too much bureaucracy in terms of educational leadership may lead to teachers' lack of enthusiasm and therefore failure of externally imposed changes. Perhaps opposite of the bureaucratic model, and for that matter, feasibility among staff, is the rational model of leadership.

Rational model of leadership. In terms of formal models of leadership, the rational model differs greatly in that its focus is on processes rather than structure or goals (Bush, 2011). Structure is still present in terms of decision-making; the process is as follows:



1. Perception of a problem or a choice opportunity.
2. Analysis of the problem, including data collection.
3. Formulation of alternative solutions or choices.
4. Choice of the most appropriate solution to the problem to meet the objectives of the organization.
5. Implementation of the chosen alternative.
6. Monitoring and evaluation of the effectiveness of the chosen strategy  
(Bush, 2011, p. 50).

This type of leadership results in accomplishing goals set forth by the organization, even though its outset focus is not goal-oriented. In turn, the results are generally student-based and guided by what is best practice for students in the program (Bush, 2011). Rational models of leadership may not be the governing models within schools today, but they are present within workgroups, or professional learning communities. The type of model most evident in today's schools is hierarchical.

Hierarchical models of leadership. Hierarchical models depend heavily on top-down methods of communication, policies, and procedures. In the 21<sup>st</sup> Century school system, at least in the United States, the hierarchy is established in this fashion: (1) local school boards, (2) superintendent, (3) principal, and (4) faculty and staff. While this type of leadership is prevalent, it is considered highly bureaucratic. Packwood (as cited in Bush, 2011) noted,

One of the basic properties of bureaucratic organizations is the way in which occupational roles are graded in a vertical hierarchy. Authority to prescribe work passes from senior to junior roles, while accountability for the performance of work passes in the reverse direction from junior to senior. Authority and accountability are impersonal in that they are attached to roles, not to the personalities of the individuals who occupy the roles. (p. 53)

Hierarchical models of leadership are impersonal in nature. The model itself may yield results in terms of efficiency, but it does not embrace the personalities of those who power the organization.

Leadership models. Leadership models vary seemingly as much as the personalities that employ them. While one leadership model may represent much of a staff, it may not be the best model for them. Likewise, one model may have worked for years but may need to be restructured in an effort to improve practices. Therefore, not one leadership model works for all organizations or for all people. That being said, “the validity of the various models depends on five overlapping considerations” (Bush, 2011, p. 205).

1. Size of the institution
2. Organizational structure
3. Time available for management
4. The availability of resources
5. The external environment.

Each of these five considerations dictate to what extent formal or collegial models of leadership will work, as well as to what extent the work of the principal becomes managerial in nature or that of a leader.

### Leadership Versus Management

The terms leadership and management are used interchangeably within the educational context, even though stark differences exist between the two. Law and Glover (as cited in Miller & Cable, 2011) provided an understanding of the two. Management is the act of planning, making decisions, organizing and clarifying work roles, coordinating the organization, and taking responsibility for the overall effectiveness of the organization. Leadership, on the other hand, is the act of offering direction, inspiration, and respect, as well as building teamwork, and exhibiting acceptance of various points of view (Law & Glover, 2000, as cited in Miller & Cable, 2011). Miller and Cable noted Hall's (1996) research conclusion that "management with leadership was unethical...leadership without management irresponsible" (p. 14). Therefore, it is evident that both management and leadership are needed to effectively and efficiently operate a school; finding the balance between the two is critical (Shoemaker, 2000). In fact, Bloom (2003) suggested "leaders do the right things; managers do things right." (p. 3)

Leadership. Leadership has strong ties to relationships and the emotions of those involved (Lindon & Lindon, 2011). Leadership, as a whole, encompasses

the following characteristics, but is not limited to: (a) accountability for quality, (b) setting a culture's 'vision' and shared values, (c) the ability to lead and manage change, and (d) the ability to take responsibility for the needs of children, staff, and families (Lindon & Lindon, 2011, p. 15). Bloom (2003) noted these characteristics of effective leaders: (a) inspirational, (b) motivational, and (c) representative in terms of the collective. Further, Bloom (2003) wrote that leaders must be influential in order to lead others well. Table 2 indicates a comparison of leadership versus management.

Table 2

*Two Sides of Early Childhood Administration: Leadership and Management*

<b>Leadership</b>	<b>Management</b>
Wants to do the right things	Wants to do things right
Concerned with effectiveness	Concerned with efficiency
Asks, "What tasks do I want to accomplish?"	Asks, "How can I best accomplish this task?"
Focuses on relationships	Focuses on rules and policies
Spends time on establishing a vision and seeking opportunities	Spends time on planning, organizing, and creating systems
Willing to take risks	Seeks stability
Thinks long range	Thinks short term
Stresses adaptive change	Supports the status quo
Motivates and inspires	Implements the work plan
Develops new alternatives and approaches	Establishes procedures and allocates resources

*Note.* Adapted from *Leadership in Action: How Effective Directors Get Things Done*, by P. J. Bloom, 2003, New Horizons, Lake Forest, IL, p. 4.

While leadership and management techniques are important to the overall operation of a school or organization, research has found that beginning leaders tend to focus on the two equally (Bloom, 2003). These beginning leaders are new to their roles and want things to operate smoothly. Therefore, they try to lead and manage equally in an effort to show their effective leadership. What is important to note, is that “leaders and managers are different and this difference is not one of better-worse” (Lindon & Lindon, 2011, p. 9).

Management. Lindon and Lindon (2011) suggested management is “rational and about systems and control” (p. 10). That being said, management is matter of fact, and those who manage may be seen as equally characteristic. Lindon and Lindon (2011) went on to mention a manager must be (a) organizational in nature, (b) evaluative – formative and summative, (c) supervisory, (d) professional and ethical, and (e) communicative. Bloom (2003) wrote that managers often are capable people who are able to (a) plan, (b) budget, (c) organize, and (d) staff. These hands-on actions are needed of any organization; managers fill this role. Moyles (2006) offered a comparative list of leadership and management characteristics as well (see Table 3).

Table 3

*Leadership versus Management*

<b>Leadership</b>	<b>Management</b>
Be visionary	Ensure effective human resource management and administration
Be responsible for, and thoughtful about, basic needs	Ensure effective curriculum management
Be accountable	Ensure effective interaction, involvement, and intervention at setting level
Be a leader	Ensure effective interaction, involvement, and intervention at local level
Be flexible and versatile	Ensure effective interaction, involvement, and intervention at national and international level
Be knowledgeable and be an informational resource for staff	Ensure effective decision making
Understand the importance of shared values	Ensure effective planning and strategy making
Understand how to lead and manage change	Ensure effective implementation and monitoring of ideas
Ensure that all relevant people are empowered and enabled	Ensure effective operation of basic administrative procedures
Earn status and rank as a culture setter	Ensure effective physical resource management and administration

*Note.* Adapted from *Effective Leadership and Management in the Early Years*, by J. Moyles, 2006, Open University Press, Berkshire, UK, pp. 32-98.

While Bloom (2003) offered a comparison in terms of explicit characteristics, Moyles (2006) listed qualities and duties associated with leaders and managers. Regardless of position held, leader or manager, a principal undoubtedly fulfills the role of both at one time or another. When those situations arise, it is critical that principals exhibit professional skills and

attributes, personal characteristics, and positive attitudes that are indicative of successful leaders and managers (Moyles, 2006).

Moyles (2006) suggested the demands of educational leaders are, often times, unenviable. They are tasked with maintaining the inner workings of the school as well as the personalities that comprise the staff. In such leadership, a principal must (a) be diplomatic; (b) be an active listener; (c) have the ability to diffuse an argument and use compromise effectively; (d) handle and disseminate paperwork of various kinds; (e) be a mediator, sounding-board, and negotiator; (f) be able to mediate in potentially heated discussions; and (g) ensure honesty as well as professional courtesy and respect between those involved. By exhibiting these professional skills and attributes, principals demonstrate their ability to lead successfully. Other personal characteristics are also indicative of successful leadership.

#### Characteristics, Roles, and Responsibilities of Effective Educational Leaders

Cotton (as cited in Marzano et al., 2005) wrote, principal leadership positively affects the following dependent variables: (a) student achievement, (b) student attitudes, (c) student behavior, (d) teacher attitudes, (e) teacher behaviors, and (f) dropout rates (p. 24). Further, Cotton noted 25 categories of principal leadership that affected the preceding dependent variables. They are:

1. safe and orderly environment
2. vision and goals focused on high levels of student learning

3. high expectations for student learning
4. self-confidence, responsibility, and perseverance
5. visibility and accessibility
6. positive and supportive climate
7. communication and interaction
8. emotional and interpersonal support
9. parent and community outreach and involvement
10. rituals, ceremonies, and other symbolic actions
11. shared leadership, decision making, and staff empowerment
12. collaboration
13. instructional leadership
14. ongoing pursuit of high levels of student learning
15. norm of continuous improvement
16. discussion of instructional issues
17. classroom observation and feedback to teachers
18. support of teachers' autonomy
19. support risk taking
20. professional development opportunities and resources
21. protecting instructional time
22. monitoring student progress and sharing findings
23. use of student progress for program improvement



24. recognition of student and staff achievement

25. role modeling

Cotton found these 25 categories to be the most prevalent among the results in her 81-report analysis. Further, Cotton provided a qualitative narrative review and not that of quantitative. A quantitative review came from Marzano et al. (2005) who conducted a meta-analysis of 69 schools from 1978-2001, with over 2800 schools represented. The authors noted, "The average correlation of .25 was based on principal leadership" (p. 41). The 21 responsibilities and their correlations with student academic achievement follow in Table 4.

Table 4

*The 21 Responsibilities of the School Leader*

<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>The extent to Which the Principal...</b>	<b>Average <i>r</i></b>
Affirmation	Recognizes and celebrates accomplishments and acknowledges failures	.19
Change Agent	Is willing to challenge and actively challenges the status quo	.25
Contingent Rewards	Recognizes and rewards individual accomplishments	.24
Communication	Establishes strong lines of communication with and among teachers and students	.23
Culture	Fosters shared beliefs and a sense of community and cooperation	.25
Discipline	Protects teachers from issues and influences that would detract from their teaching time or focus	.27
Flexibility	Adapts his or her leadership behavior to the needs of the current situation and is comfortable with dissent	.28
Focus	Establishes clear goals and keeps those goals in the forefront of the school's attention	.24
Ideals/Beliefs	Communicates and operates from strong ideals and beliefs about schooling	.22
Input	Involves teachers in the design and implementation of important decisions and policies	.25
Intellectual Stimulation	Ensures faculty and staff are aware of the most current theories and practices and makes the discussion of these a regular aspect of the school's culture	.24
Involvement in Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment	Is directly involved in the design and implementation of curriculum, instruction, and assessment practices	.20
Knowledge of Curriculum Instruction, and Assessment	Is knowledgeable about current curriculum, instruction, and assessment practices	.25
Monitoring/Evaluating	Monitors the effectiveness of school practices and their impact on student learning	.27
Optimizer	Inspires and leads new and challenging innovations	.20
Order	Establishes a set of standard operating procedures and routines	.25

*Table continues*

Responsibility	The extent to Which the Principal...	Average <i>r</i>
Outreach	Is an advocate and spokesperson for the school to all stakeholders	.27
Relationships	Demonstrates an awareness of the personal aspects of teachers and staff	.18
Resources	Provides teachers with materials and professional development necessary for the successful execution of their jobs	.25
Situational Awareness	Is aware of the details and undercurrents in the running of the school and uses this information to address current and potential problems	.33
Visibility	Has quality contact and interactions with teachers and students	.20

*Note.* Adapted from *School Leadership that Works: From Research to Results*, by R. J. Marzano, T. Waters, B. A. McNulty, 2005, McREL, Aurora, CO, pp. 42-43.

While Cotton's (as cited in Marzano et al., 2005) list contained four characteristics more than Marzano et al. (2005), the evidence correlated nicely between the two studies, one qualitative and one quantitative in nature. Sullivan (2010) provided another list of characteristics, or values, of effective leaders.

Sullivan noted,

- purpose (sense of importance)
- truth
- justice
- empathy
- empowerment, distributing power among others
- harmony with others
- power with, not power over others

- just words, and actions that match
- sharing leadership with others
- discipline
- caring
- understanding
- awareness
- celebration
- imagination
- perception
- listening
- openness
- honesty
- quality control
- acceptance
- fairness

When comparing Cotton's (as cited in Marzano et al., 2005), Marzano et al.'s (2005), and Sullivan's (2010) lists, some characteristics overlap while others stand out as highlights. Shoemaker (2000) noted the most successful leaders in her studies fell into five categories in terms of effectiveness. Effective leaders:

1. Provide social support for employees and groups.

2. Provide high task orientation.
3. Provide a high degree of technical expertise.
4. Maintain a high degree of role differentiation.
5. Provide general supervision.

Shoemaker (2000) went on to mention “people want a leader who can be a focal point. It is much easier to follow a leader who supplies resources, provides goal orientation and facilitates group attainments, and resolves conflicts between people” (p. 51). Moreover, Onorato (2013) indicated that, “it is the principal’s leadership that sets the tone of the school, the climate for teaching, the level of professionalism, and morale of teachers, and the degree of concern for what students may or may not become,” (p. 35). Further, Duignan (2012) provided a list of capabilities indicative of successful principals. The list includes:

1. Generate a clear and moral purpose from which collectively clear goals and high expectations for quality teaching and learning are derived;
2. Develop and maintain an effective inquiry and problem-solving culture in their organization;
3. Respect and tolerate different points of view and accept critique as essential in knowledge growth;
4. Adapt to contemporary challenges and provide for change through participative feedback and reflection;

5. Ensure that people have the freedom to fully participate in processes of learning and growth;
6. Defend their decisions on the basis of their contribution to long-term, value-added learning;
7. Promote and support high standards of performance and transform learning and learners within their fields of influence;
8. Actively promote and participate in their own and especially their teachers' learning and development; and
9. Nurture and support the growth of colleagues and enable others to become authentic and influential as leaders.

Each of these roles and responsibilities by Duignan (2012) is part of the authentic leadership model, which encourages leaders to be real, authentic in their interactions and daily workings. Aubrey (2011) investigated the roles and responsibilities of effective leaders, similar to Duignan's work, but listed the results in terms of answers provided by the leader and answers provided by the groups which the leader led. Therefore, an accurate account of the leader and the group were documented. Table 5 contains the findings.

Table 5

*Roles, Responsibilities, and Functions of Effective Leaders*

<b>Leader Responses</b>	<b>Group Responses</b>
Raising achievements, focusing on personal and social development, enjoyment and well-being;	Raising children's achievements;
Understanding the local community (knowledge of children, families, and other local provision);	Understanding the local community (or families);
The role of staff standards, aspirations, and morale;	Positive leadership qualities, such as being approachable, visible, flexible and motivating and unhelpful aspects of leadership related to criticism, dictatorial approaches and lack of vision were identified;
Links to other organizations and networking.	Links with other groups, such as nurseries, the church were identified.

*Note.* Adapted from *Leading and Managing in the Early Years*, by C. Aubrey, 2011, Sage, London: UK, p. 42.

As you can see from Aubrey's (2011) findings, among the highest responses in terms of high-quality education were those related to (a) student achievement, (b) understanding the local population and their support services, (c) the role of staff and leaders, and (d) networking within the societal aspect. While these responses may not be the highest correlation on Marzano et al.'s list of 21 responsibilities, they were noted as important in Aubrey's (2011) study. Similar to Aubrey's (2011) and Marzano et al.'s (2005) findings is Reeves's (2002) work on the daily disciplines of leadership. Reeves (2002) suggested "leadership is inextricably linked to student achievement" (p. 143). He went on to note how "every element of achievement, from professional development to organization

to assessment to collaboration, requires an enormous investment of time” (p. 143). In such a commitment of time, leaders are equipped to raise student scores, which is a strong focus in today’s era of accountability.

Dunklee and Shoop (2006) discussed the provisions of annual testing under the *No Child Left Behind Act* (NCLB, 2002), and how students must make adequate yearly progress (AYP), overall as well as within five subgroups. These five subgroups include: (a) minority students, (b) students on free or reduced lunch, (c) students who have individualized education plans (IEPs), (d) students for whom English is a new language, and (e) a comparison of girls and boys. While NCLB has no direction of administrators’ use of time, time management has been linked to student achievement. Therefore, it is critical that principals utilize their time, not just in terms of management, but also in terms of instructional in an effort to fulfill the role of instructional leader. Similar to the characteristics, roles, and responsibilities of effective leadership are the dimensions of effective leadership.

#### Dimensions of Effective Leadership

As with characteristics of effective leadership, numerous dimensions of effective leadership exist as well. Cunningham and Cordeiro (2009) noted the 1980s allowed for departures from previous theoretical perspectives of educational leadership. With such departures came several lists of accepted characteristics and dimensions of effective educational leadership. In fact, each of



the 15 widely accepted lists in the 1990s included one from each of the professional organizations that contributed to the work of the Interstate School Leadership License Consortium (ISSLC; Cunningham & Cordeiro, 2009). These dimensions, discussed by Preskill and Brookfield (2009), include:

1. learning to be open to the contributions of others
2. learning critical reflection
3. learning to support the growth of others
4. learning collective leadership
5. learning to analyze experience
6. learning to question
7. learning democracy
8. learning to sustain hope in the face of struggle
9. learning to create community

These nine dimensions coincide with characteristics of effective leadership. Further, the nine dimensions build upon one another (Preskill & Brookfield, 2009). The first dimension is foundational, as all other dimensions rest upon it, and once accepted and practiced, dimensions two and three follow easily. Preskill and Brookfield (2009) noted that learning to develop the concept of collective leadership “flows from a culture in which engagement in, and sharing of, learning is an expectation and a priority” (p. 15). Following that, the fifth dimension challenges leaders to analyze their experiences, which may be

difficult if the leader must challenge old assumptions and long held beliefs. In addition, that dimension is closely related to the sixth dimension that involves the leader's ability to question himself or herself, as well as others in the organization. In so doing, a leader is able to consider others' points of view. As a result, he or she may change his or her beliefs of philosophies related to certain situations. Changing beliefs is not an easy task, and it is one that involves the ongoing study of democracy, which is the seventh dimension. Preskill and Brookfield (2009) noted that when efforts to live democratically fall short, the eighth task comes in to play, which discusses the idea of sustaining hope in the face of struggle. When a leader moves through the eight dimensions of effective leadership, he or she is equipped to build community within and among his or her immediate setting (Preskill & Brookfield, 2009). Building community begins with relationships.

### Relationships in Education

Relationship building may take place between and among stakeholders. Principals must recognize the importance of building positive relationships with students, staff, and families. Biddle (2012) suggested five ingredients to being in a relationship; they are: (a) communication, (b) time, (c) trust, (d) respect, and (e) the ability to handle conflict agreeably (p. 19). She also noted, "In order to learn together and create shared beliefs, group members must *speak* to one another, *listen* to one another, and *hear* one another" (p. 19). In so doing, group members

solidify their trust in each other, as well as take risks due to their increased level of comfort. Although sizes of learning teams, physical space, and time dictate, from time to time, the effectiveness of relationship building, it is imperative that educational leaders set program-wide norms. These norms tell others this is “the way we live together here,” instead of “restrictive rules to follow” (Biddle, 2012, p. 27). With the implementation of program-wide norms, members feel welcomed, appreciated, and safe to share their beliefs. Biddle noted,

Strong, supportive relationships undergird all of the work that an organization does. The relationships of the individuals within a program impact teacher knowledge, student learning, program effectiveness, and leadership. Donaldson (2001) says the heartbeat of leadership is a *relationship*, not a person or a process. He suggests that good leadership is invitational. That is, *everyone* is invited to be a leader. Roles and responsibilities are distributed among many people creating a strong web of relationships among all stakeholders in a program. Leadership becomes a collective relationship where individuals are both shapers of and shaped by one another. Without such collegial relationships, reciprocal learning and reflective practice are not likely to occur. The work of building, nurturing, and sustaining relationships is intentional and must not be ignored or taken for granted. (p. 33)

The stakeholders within a program are not restricted to principals and teachers. Instead, they include parents, families, and individual students. Building relationships with these stakeholders is equally critical to the success of student learning. The National Association for Elementary School Principals (NAESP; 2005) suggested that “children who are nurtured...are better at forming relationships with adults and peers” and “children who feel the benefits of a supportive community...that promote social and emotional growth bring rich

experiences and knowledge to their learning” (p. 23). The NAESP posited that, “Communication and relationships between home and schools helps to ease transitions and enable children to be comfortable with adults and peers at school” (p. 23). Although Marzano et al.’s (2005) correlation of .18 in terms of relationships and student achievement were relatively low in comparison to other characteristics and responsibilities, the NAESP communicated that relationships are of greater influence. Therefore, principals must work together to form positive relationships with students, families, and staff (Skattebol, 2010). One way to work collaboratively and communicate effectively, while building strong relationships in a shared leadership role, is through the methodology of professional learning communities.

### Professional Learning Communities

DuFour and Marzano (2011) discussed how schools, districts, and classroom leaders might improve student achievement through the use of professional learning communities. At the heart of all education reform efforts is student achievement. The work of DuFour and Marzano (2011) provided teachers and administrators the tools necessary to collaborate effectively to shift the focus of past practice to new learning. Although DuFour and Marzano (2011) and DuFour and DuFour (2012) engaged teachers and leaders in professional practices, it was John Dewey who first posited that schools be social communities. Moreover, Dewey argued “the quality of education is realized in

the degree in which individuals form a group” (as cited in Matthews & Crow, 2010). In addition, Dewey’s thoughts related to laboratory models for schools where inquiry serves as a teacher’s main focus resurfaced in the works of DuFour and DuFour (2012). These inquiry-focused sessions led by active teachers stimulate innovation and further inquiry into the teaching-learning process (Wood, 2007).

Mathews, Williams, and Stewart (2007, cited in Matthews & Crow, 2010) compiled data related to various models of professional learning communities. They found 10 cultural elements most common throughout all the models investigated. They are:

1. Principal leadership that is focused on student learning.
2. Common mission, vision, values, and goals that are focused on teaching and learning.
3. Participative leadership that focuses on teaching and learning.
4. High-trust embedded in school culture.
5. Interdependent culture that sustains continuous improvement in teaching and learning.
6. Teaming that is collaborative.
7. Decision making based on data and research.
8. Use of continuous assessment to improve learning.

9. Academic success for all students with systems of prevention and intervention.
10. Professional development that is teacher driven and embedded in daily work.

In terms of school reform efforts, the professional learning community model has led to student success by (a) a shared sense of purpose, (b) participation in collaborative activities, (c) a focus on student learning, (d) a deprivatization of teaching practices, and (e) an engagement in reflective dialogue (Matthews & Crow, 2010). Matthews and Crow (2010) cited the U.S. Department of Education's research related to teachers' abilities to "provide a holistic and coherent approach to reform" and that "learning communities offered a potentially more sustainable approach than many more narrowly based reform initiatives" (p. 50). Further, DuFour and Marzano (2011) postulated that "school reform is about changing people, and PLCs are a necessary condition to this end" (p. 47). In addition, DuFour and Marzano (2011) presented research that the PLC process addresses 19 of the 21 responsibilities of effective leadership provided by Marzano et al. (2005). The two responsibilities not housed in the collaborative process of PLCs are contingent rewards and discipline due to the fact that those two responsibilities ask a principal to focus on an individual, therefore not conducive to the team approach.

The PLC model may be comprised in various modes. For instance, some schools choose a vertical alignment where teams are comprised of grade level representatives. On the other hand, some schools choose to combine grade levels in a horizontal alignment, and still others create collaborative teams in a combination of horizontal alignment. This means, for example, the second and third grade teams collaborate together, just as do grades fifth and sixth (DuFour & DuFour, 2012; DuFour & Marzano, 2011). Regardless of how collaborative teams are comprised, teams focus their work on four guiding questions; they are:

1. What do we want students to know?
2. How will we know if they are learning?
3. How will we respond when individual students do not learn?
4. How will we enrich and extend the learning for students who are proficient?

The idea of a collective responsibility in a PLC is what drives the community forward. Asking and answering the four guiding questions allows teams to work collectively, as well as reflect on practices related to student learning and approaches to learning (Baccellieri, 2010). In terms of student learning, Matthews and Crow (2010) asserted that “the principal is a central figure in determining the quality of a school” (p. 51). Further, Brass (as cited in Matthews & Crow, 2010) explained principal centrality as “persons who are centrally located in the communication network are hypothesized to have

potential access to and control of relevant information and thus have potential power” (p. 51). Moreover,

The role of the principal allows for centrality, control of information, and power because the principal has the opportunity to observe and hold discussions with every teacher. Further, most teachers seek out the principal for feedback and advice, and the principal has the authority to inform teams, therefore connecting teachers to one another. (Matthews & Crow, 2010, p. 51)

With the principal as the central figure in PLC models, teachers and principals have the opportunity to work together to improve student learning. One way teachers and principals may work collaboratively outside of the PLC approach is through teacher evaluation. Evaluations are required under state law; principals and teachers have the opportunity to make them positive in nature. Equipped with the background of PLCs, principals and teachers may find it easier to move into evaluation mode.

### Teacher Evaluation

Evaluation of teacher performance is a part of every teacher’s career. Likewise, principals are equally involved in the process. Supervisors must, in the process of evaluation, observe and analyze the work of the teacher and encourage the development of the teacher’s strengths, as well as look for ways to enhance the teacher’s abilities in weak areas (Reno, Stutzman, & Zimmerman, 2008; Sciarra, Dorsey, & Lynch, 2010). Caruso and Fawcett (2007) noted that supervision of staff is a subjective process, and although the principal may



adhere to a particular leadership philosophy, it is important to recognize and embrace differences in teaching and approaches to learning that teachers exhibit during the evaluative process.

While the evaluative process is completed annually, at best, for teachers in public schools, informal feedback may be provided on a more regular basis. Reno et al. (2008) suggested that offering informal feedback two to three times per year disallows negative behaviors to manifest. Nolan and Hoover (2008) commented on the formal evaluation. They noted eight principles as a guide for effective supervision and evaluation; they included:

1. Teacher evaluation should be broad and comprehensive in nature, accounting for all of the duties that teachers are expected to perform.
2. Effective evaluation systems make use of a wide variety of data sources to provide an accurate and reliable portrait of teacher performance.
3. Well-qualified, trained administrators are the appropriate personnel to make summative judgments concerning teacher performance.
4. Ongoing professional development focused on the teacher evaluation system must be provided for all professionals in the organization.
5. The process used to develop and assess the teacher evaluation system should be participatory and open to representatives from various stakeholder groups.

6. The process used to evaluate teacher performance should emphasize the use of professional judgment informed by a deep understanding of both the research and teaching in the specific teaching context.
7. The teacher's due process rights must be protected by the teacher evaluation system.
8. The procedures used for the evaluation of veteran teachers who are performing at a satisfactory or higher level should differ from those procedures used to evaluate preservice teachers, novice teachers, or veteran teachers whose performance is marginal or below.

While most school districts have evaluative policies and procedures in place, Nolan and Hoover (2008) suggested principals use the National Board for Professional Teachers Standards (NBPTS) provided a district lacks an existing process for teacher evaluation. The NBPTS is a widely accepted list of teaching standards and criteria. The NBPTS include: (a) teachers are committed to students and their learning, (b) teachers know the subjects they teach and how to teach those subjects to students, (c) teachers are responsible for managing and monitoring student learning, (d) teachers think systematically about their practice and learn from experience, and (e) teachers are members of learning communities (National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, 2014).

Marzano and Toth (2013) indicated comprehensive models of teacher evaluation be utilized, including classroom strategies and teaching behaviors. Further, they

noted teacher evaluation be based on a developmental scale as well as acknowledge growth over time with rewards (Marzano & Toth, 2013). Given that teachers, novice and veteran alike, enter recurring cycles of evaluation, Marzano and Toth (2013) provided five recommendations to increase the frequency of observations, formal and informal. These five recommendations included:

1. Start with teacher self-evaluation.
2. Use announced observations for specific types of lesson segments.
3. Use video recordings of the three planned observations.
4. Use data from brief walkthroughs to augment other observational scores.
5. Ask teachers to provide video evidence or artifacts for specific strategies.

In following Marzano and Toth's (2013) recommendations, principals may ease the process of evaluation. Further, teachers may feel at ease when principals are (a) trained and skilled evaluators, (b) supportive for teachers needing assistance, (c) resources within the system, and (d) fair in governance structures that enable sound personnel decisions (Darling-Hammond, 2013). Moreover, Darling-Hammond (2013) reported,

Strong evaluation systems need principals and other evaluators with deep knowledge of teaching and learning, as well as understanding of how to evaluate teaching, how to give useful feedback, and how to plan professional development that supports teacher learning. The lack of such

knowledge and training has been a major problem for the validity, fairness, and utility of many teacher evaluation systems. (pp. 115-116)

Principals enter into the process of teacher evaluation with varying degrees of preparation. Educational leadership programs offer coursework related to teacher evaluation, yet not all facets of teacher evaluation may be practiced or attainable in a semester's timeframe. Therefore, it is imperative that practicing principals seek out additional supports in terms of teacher evaluation if they feel inadequate in their formal preparation (Darling-Hammond, 2013).

### Early Childhood Educational Leadership

Early childhood educational leadership is similar to, yet vastly different from general educational leadership. Educational leadership speaks of serving students, families, and staff in grades PK-12. While the years of early childhood span preschool to third in terms of general educational leadership, early childhood also extends down to include children from birth to preschool (Copple & Bredekamp, 2009). Therefore, it is imperative that school principals have the background knowledge, skill sets, and education, or certification, to effectively lead early childhood settings. Effective early childhood administrators exhibit specific characteristics that enable them to lead successfully.

### Characteristics of Effective Early Childhood Educational Leaders

Similar to leaders of upper elementary, middle, and high school buildings and their display of certain characteristics which make them successful in their

placements, early childhood leaders exude characteristics that make them successful in the early childhood field. Early childhood leaders demonstrate competence in leadership by performing the 21 responsibilities of effective leaders referenced by Marzano et al. (2005), equal to their counterparts in grades 4-12. In addition, Lindon and Lindon (2011) suggested 10 individual characteristics that highlight the work of early education leaders. They included:

1. Drive for responsibility and task completion – achievement.
2. Vigor and persistence in pursuit of goals.
3. Risk taking and originality in problem solving – insight.
4. Drive to exercise initiative in social situations – initiative.
5. Self-confidence and a sense of personal identity.
6. Willingness to accept the consequences of decisions made and actions taken – responsibility.
7. Readiness to absorb interpersonal stress – cooperativeness.
8. Willingness to tolerate frustration and delay – tolerance.
9. Ability to influence other people’s behavior.
10. Capacity to structure social interaction systems to the purpose in hand – sociability.

These individual characteristics, together with Marzano et al.’s (2005) 21 responsibilities, created a template for early childhood leaders by which to operate. Further, Lindon and Lindon (2011) provided a list of four factors

associated with personality; these factors are indicative of effective leaders. The factors are (a) extraversion or surgency (being outgoing) – you are likely to be assertive and social, having positive energy; (b) openness or intellect – you are likely to be informed, insightful, curious, and creative; (c) agreeableness – you are likely to be accepting, trusting, nurturing, and conforming; and (d) conscientiousness or dependability – you are likely to be thorough, organized, controlled, decisive, and dependable.

While lists of characteristics of effective early childhood leaders exist, five specific traits have been identified as central to leadership. These traits are:

1. Self-confidence – the ability to be certain (accurate) about your skills and abilities. This includes self-esteem, emotional stability, and the belief that you can make a difference.
2. Intelligence – particularly in terms of reasoning, verbal fluency, and the cognitive ability to ‘see the wood for the trees.’ Leaders are more conceptually skilled than non-leaders in dealing with the information relevant to their business or service. They are able to solve problems and make decisions. It is sometimes said that the best leaders are intelligent but not brilliant. They need to be able to communicate in words that their team can understand; they are not so different that others find them hard to relate to.

3. Sociability – leaders are friendly, outgoing, courteous and tactful, with good interpersonal skills. They seek to have cooperative relationships with others.
4. Determination – leaders really want to achieve the goals of their business or service. They have drive, persistence, and energy. They have a passion for their work and this is linked with a good knowledge of the sector in which they operate. Leaders are assertive and will take a dominant stance when required. Most important, they want to lead other people and are willing to assume that responsibility.
5. Integrity – leaders are honest, being truthful even when this is a tough choice. They avoid deceit, are dependable and loyal to their team. A credible leader is seen as worthy of being trusted and so inspires confidence in their followers.

(Lindon & Lindon, 2011).

Sullivan (2010) supported Lindon and Lindon (2011) in terms of leadership traits, as well as expands on them. Sullivan's (2010) list included:

- planning
- team-building
- negotiating
- scheduling

- modeling
- arbitrating
- setting goals
- supervising
- setting performance expectations
- motivating
- group dynamics – understanding
- problem-solving
- making decisions
- strategizing
- multitasking skills

Another study of leadership characteristics, conducted by Kets de Vries (as cited in O'Sullivan, 2009), found three characteristics received 50% or more of the votes in every study, regardless of geographic location; they were (a) honesty, (b) inspiration, and (c) competence.

As noted by Marzano et al. (2005), Lindon and Lindon (2011), and Sullivan (2010), several skills, characteristics, or traits describe an effective early childhood leader. The authors also noted that leaders at other levels of education may fit into the criteria of an early childhood leader, as some skills, characteristics, and traits overlap. In addition, the list is not all-inclusive in terms



of early childhood leaders, nor is it exclusive of leaders within other grade levels (Lindon & Lindon, 2011).

O'Sullivan (2009) noted Aubrey's (2011) work which applied leadership skills, characteristics, or traits into categories for effective leadership practice. The categories are as follows:

- ensuring shared understandings, meanings, and goals
- effective communication
- encouraging reflection
- monitoring and assessing practice
- commitment to ongoing, professional development
- distributed leadership
- building a learning community and team culture
- encouraging and facilitating parent and community partnership
- leading and managing: striking the balance
- identifying and articulating a collective vision

(Aubrey, 2011)

These categories encompass the skills, characteristics, and traits shared by Marzano et al. (2005), Lindon and Lindon (2011), Sullivan (2010), and O'Sullivan (2009) as applied to early childhood educational leadership. When categorized, leaders may begin to think systemically in terms of how they fit into a specific

leadership model, as well as how they demonstrate effective leadership. One way is to first begin with an organization's vision and mission statements, which Moyles (2006) indicated holds consensus among early childhood practitioners.

### Vision and Mission Statements

The Iowa Standards for School Leadership (ISSL) outline six standards for effective leadership. The first of the six standards refers to the vision of the organization. Standard 1 states:

*A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by facilitating the development, articulation, implementation, and stewardship of a school or district vision of learning that is shared and supported by the school community. (Wilmore, 2002, p. 19)*

As a result, school administrators must steward a vision within their setting. Some administrators choose to continue a former administrator's vision or mission, while others design their own to suit their leadership style (Stamopoulos, 2012). Lindon and Lindon (2011) went on to mention that the vision, or mission, is "focused closely on one critical aspect of operation and is accompanied by a strategy to enable successful implementation" (pp. 55-56). Moreover, the mission or vision is created in a group setting, often times with the whole staff, and then shared widely with all stakeholders. In so doing, the mission or vision becomes colloquial in nature; it is accessible to all. Briggs and Briggs (2009) suggested, "The vision of leadership permeates the workplace and

is manifested in the actions, beliefs, values, and goals of your leadership role.” (p. 81)

As discussed by Bloom (2003), Lindon and Lindon (2011), and Moyles (2006), leadership and management are often separated in terms of duties or responsibilities, yet used interchangeably in terms of definition. Briggs and Briggs (2009) offered a clear separation when discussing vision and mission statements. They suggest that leadership and management work together to set new direction (vision) as well as manage the resources (mission). Krieg, Davis, and Smith (2014) discussed the notion that management is ‘present minded’ while leadership is ‘future oriented.’ The way to work leadership and management together stems from an understanding of theory of practice, pedagogical beliefs, as well as experience in the field. In fact, O’Sullivan (2009) stated,

Pedagogical leadership therefore implies that the leader has to understand pedagogy. In simplistic terms pedagogy is how Greeks described the process of leading a child to learning. The Romans developed the term into the concept of education, the art of science of teaching. I like to think of a pedagogical leader as someone who understands how children learn and develop and makes this happen, taking account of every element of the service from home to school including significant relationships at home, at school, and the wider community. (p. 76)

In order for principals to be educational leaders, they must have an understanding of pedagogy. One way early childhood leaders acquire the pedagogical beliefs of other early childhood practitioners is by earning an

endorsement in the area of early childhood, general or special education.

Another option for early childhood administrators is to belong to professional organizations geared specifically for early childhood education. While the latter of the two choices produces benefits and understanding over time when compared to the first option, it is a viable way of informing early childhood leaders of trends in education as well as what is considered best practice for early learners.

#### Education and Certification of Early Childhood Leaders

In the state of Iowa, educational leaders and principals need to acquire a PK-12 administrative endorsement prior to leading. While some endorsements exist for those serving targeted populations of K-6 or 7-12, or even K-8 or 5-12, they are outdated and no longer offered in Iowa. Persons who hold those licenses may keep them so long as they complete the necessary requirements to renew their certification. As of 2004, Iowa offers a PK-12 combined endorsement to its pre-service and practicing administrators, as well as the option to update a practitioner's license to serve in the opposite area of either K-6 or 7-12, should they be a licensed principal who currently holds an endorsement in either K-6 or 7-12 (Iowa Board of Educational Examiners, 2014a).

Other than obtaining an administrative license, no other requirements hold principals accountable in terms of leading. Therefore, it is possible for principals to have taught one area and lead another. While leading outside of a

principal's area of expertise isn't commonplace, it does happen. Rodd (2006) noted, "Although any early childhood practitioner can display and gain acceptance as an authentic leader, visionary and inspirational leadership is associated with experience" (p. 27). Moreover, Zeng and Zeng (2005) noted the need for early childhood principals to have appropriate professional qualifications that focus on early childhood methodology and not just on leadership or management. Practitioners in the field look to the leader of the organization for guidance, assuming he or she has had experience in the field, and is therefore able to answer questions, offer assistance, and correct patterns of misapplication, if needed. Rodd (2006) went on to state,

Leadership in the early childhood field is more than style used, the personal attributes and psychological make-up of the individual in charge, the conditions where and the settings in which leadership emerges. It is about how communication skills, the early childhood professional's tools of trade, are used as a means of building more satisfying relationships. Such relationships contribute to enhanced development and learning by children, parents, and the staff who are part of the service. Given that it is the responsibility of the leader to ensure that early childhood service meets a diversity of needs and expectations for a range of consumers, it is essential that the leader understands the importance of self-presentation and performance in the area of communication and their relationship to leadership. (p. 65)

Communication, as Rodd (2006) stated, is critical to leading early childhood organizations, and it is a conduit in terms of reaching all stakeholders. If early childhood leaders lack the experience or knowledge base of the early childhood field, practitioners will not be able to communicate effectively with

their leaders causing the organization to struggle, as well as affecting teacher efficacy, student learning, and parent participation. Further, Jorde-Bloom (as cited in Rodd, 2006) argued “that the role [of the early childhood leader] is both critical and complex, requiring conceptual and practical skill in organizational theory and leadership, child development and early childhood programming, fiscal and legal issues, and committee, parent, and community relations” (p. 259). As a result, PK-12 leaders who have experience in middle and secondary classrooms struggle to connect with early childhood practitioners due to their lack of knowledge related to child development and early childhood programming, at a minimum. Zigler et al. (2011) stated “district leadership is critical to designing and implementing sound PreK-3<sup>rd</sup> learning experiences for students. Leadership by superintendents and elementary school principals is crucial for success” (p. 183). To follow up, Culkin (2000) created a list of characteristics of an advanced complex and influential early childhood education practitioner, in this case, the principal. They included:

- Sees things holistically - “the whole picture,” rather than just a limited section or component.
- Recognizes interconnections among different systems, realizing that a change in one may affect all the others.

- Sees situations as multiply caused, rather than “linear,” one cause-one effect terms; meaning that situations may be addressed by multiple actions.
- Is not upset by unpredictability; tends to use it to advantage, “going with” the emergent directions.
- Recognizes patterns in situations that may seem chaotic, which can lead to productive self-organization.
- Sees the value of structure in an organization, as contrasted to lack of definition or formal efforts to overcontrol.
- Strikes an appropriate balance between concern with details and letting things evolve.
- Does not see things as proportionally additive – recognizes that too much may lead to more of what isn’t desired, and that a small action or input into a system may lead to a major outcome.
- Sees turbulence as an opportunity for positive change rather than requiring an increased emphasis on control.
- Is able to see recursion effects, that is, how a system feeds back on itself and generates new patterns and effects.

- Utilizes the concept of “fractal,” or scale, to encourage coherence in an organization; for example, the staff is treated with the same attitudes as the children.
- Recognizes “sensitive dependence on initial conditions,” or the butterfly effect – that a very small input can lead to a very large output – and the implications, both positive and negative, of this phenomenon.
- Sets the tone and direction, in order to generate energy around a goal, but does not overdefine or overdirect.

(Culkin, 2000, p. 122).

As discussed, principals are critically important to the overall operation of an early childhood program, as well as vital to the undercurrents that comprise an early childhood program. The work of a principal is complex, to say the least. Moving into the role of principal is eased when equipped with the knowledge, background, and skills related to the area of leadership as well as early childhood education. In addition, the field of early childhood education is evolving, growing, and maturing at great pace, equal to that of the 1980s (Lindon & Lindon, 2011). The field is changing, and with that change, the need for change agents, or effective early childhood leaders, is necessary.



### The Early Childhood Leader and Change

Early childhood leaders, like principals in other levels of education, provide the resources, materials, and circumstances for change. These changes may be first-order changes or second-order changes (Marzano et al., 2005). First-order changes are incremental in nature, changes that occur naturally. For example, a first-order change in early childhood education may involve moving portions of the schedule around due to an unexpected happening. Second-order changes are dramatic, and cause disruption throughout the organization. An example of a second-order change may involve changes in principals, or leadership within a building or district (Marzano et al., 2005).

When Marzano et al. (2005) completed their meta-analysis that led to the results of the 21 responsibilities of effective leaders, they ranked the 21 responsibilities in terms of first- and second-order change. The authors noted that all 21 responsibilities are part of and a function of first-order change. This is how they ranked:

1. Monitoring/Evaluating
2. Culture
3. Beliefs/Ideals
4. Knowledge of Curriculum, Assessment, and Instruction
5. Involvement in Curriculum, Assessment, and Instruction
6. Focus

7. Order
8. Affirmation (tied with number nine)
9. Intellectual Stimulation (tied with number eight)
10. Communication
11. Input
12. Relationships
13. Optimizer
14. Flexibility
15. Resources
16. Contingent Rewards
17. Situational Awareness
18. Outreach
19. Visibility
20. Discipline
21. Change Agent

Educators can see a relationship exists between each of the 21 responsibilities and first- and second-order change. In addition, researchers see that items one through three involve stakeholders, which are critical to any change process. On the other end of the spectrum, researchers see that items 19 to 21 are more concerned with the change agent himself or herself. The process of change requires all stakeholders' participation. Marzano et al. (2005) cautioned

against overinterpreting the rank order; the fact is that all 21 responsibilities are involved in first-order change.

When educators consider second-order change in relationship to the 21 responsibilities, only seven of the 21 apply. These seven responsibilities include:

1. Knowledge of Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment
2. Optimizer
3. Intellectual Stimulation
4. Change Agent
5. Monitoring/Evaluating
6. Flexibility
7. Ideals/Beliefs

Reflecting on these seven characteristics allows practitioners to see how operating as a change agent is centralized. That is, the responsibility of the change agent is to be an optimizer who has knowledge of curriculum, instruction, and assessment as well as someone who offers intellectual stimulation as a result of having the knowledge. In addition, the change agent is flexible in his or her practices, yet acknowledges that ideals and beliefs govern his or her actions as he or she monitors and evaluates early childhood programming. Marzano et al. (2005) proposed that principals who seek to implement second-order change have the following priorities:

1. Being knowledgeable about how the *innovation* will affect curricular, instructional, and assessment practices and providing conceptual guidance in these areas (Knowledge of Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment).
  2. Being the driving force behind the new *innovation* and fostering belief that it can produce exceptional results if members of the staff are willing to apply themselves (Optimizer).
  3. Being knowledgeable about the research and theory regarding the *innovation* and fostering such knowledge among staff through reading and discussion (Intellectual Stimulation).
  4. Challenging the status quo and being willing to move forward on the *innovation* without a guarantee of success (Change Agent).
  5. Continually monitoring the impact of the *innovation* (Monitoring/Evaluating).
  6. Being both directive and nondirective relative to the *innovation* as the situation warrants (Flexibility).
  7. Operating in a manner consistent with his or her ideals and beliefs relative to the *innovation* (Ideals/Beliefs).
- (Marzano et al., 2005, pp. 70-72).

As listed, three of the seven second-order change responsibilities rank high in terms of first-order change as well. These three responsibilities are (a)

knowledge of curriculum, instruction, and assessment; (b) monitoring and evaluating; and (c) ideals and beliefs. Noting these three as critically important solidifies the notion that principals need to have a vast understanding in each of these areas in order to effectively lead an early childhood program. Further, Marzano et al. (2005) discussed four responsibilities that are negatively impacted by second-order change. These four included:

1. Culture
2. Communication
3. Order
4. Input

Culture and communication rank high among early childhood educators as marks of quality. In addition, early childhood educators feel empowered when provided the opportunity to offer input into programming practices, especially in a distributed leadership model (O'Sullivan, 2009). Lastly, educators, and students thrive when order and control are part of the program; they feel safe and routinized (Marzano et al., 2005). Therefore, administrators must be cognizant of the negative effects of second-order change. While not all change is negative in thought and practice, the process may become negative quite easily. To remedy this type of negativity throughout the change process, administrators need to have experience in change, especially in terms of the context to which the change is applied. This means, that, for example, principals need to have

working knowledge and experience in adopting a new curricular series.

Although the idea of changing curricula is not welcomed by all stakeholders, the process of change can be made easier through the administrator's practices and beliefs. The point in time where early childhood leaders may make the most difference, among all stakeholders, is when they actively advocate for best practices related to early childhood education.

### Advocacy and the Early Childhood Leader

The Iowa Standards for School Leadership (ISSL) has as its sixth standard a dedication to advocacy. Standard 6 says,

*A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by understanding, responding to, and influencing the larger political, social, economic, legal, and cultural context. (Wilmore, 2002, p. 92)*

Wilmore (2002) mentioned how Standard 6 differs from Standards 1 to 5.

With the partial exception of Standard 4, all remaining standards of school leadership pertain to the building itself and the practices of the leader within the building. Standard 6 requires the administrator to step out into society and share what he or she knows and understands about educational practices. Wilmore (2002) stated,

*The principal must stay abreast of current and potential local, state, and federal law and policy development that also might have implications on students, families, or the school community. Going a step further, the principal must become an advocate for any factor that could improve educational and social opportunities and engage others to do likewise. (p. 93)*

As required by the Iowa Standards for School Leadership, administrators must advocate for any factor that may improve educational and social opportunities (Wilmore, 2002). Those opportunities may include the following factors (a) quality programming as well as accessibility and teacher and leader qualifications, (b) developmentally appropriate practices which include play-based learning and outdoor learning time, (c) class size, (d) evaluations of early childhood educators, and (e) professional development.

Quality programming. Early childhood programs serving children birth to age 8 have an arduous task before them. In fact, public school early childhood programs may entice parents to programming through marks of high quality. Programs of high-quality encompass multiple facets of children's and family services (Kagan & Kauerz, 2012). These programs offer preschool programming that utilizes research-based curricula; participates in healthy habits related to the Healthy Kid Act, such as balanced meals and snacks, as well as teeth brushing; coordinates community-wide learning; and implements best practices in terms of approaches to learning outlined by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC; Kagan & Kauerz, 2012).

NAEYC advocates daily for best practices in terms of early care and education for the nation's youngest learners. Principals too need to advocate for quality programming. Kostelnik and Grady (2009) noted that 40 to 50% of the nation's early care programs did not receive a high- or medium-quality rating

when visited. This means, 40 to 50% of our nation's children receive subpar early care and education within these programs, and attend programs daily, which are classified as low-quality (Kostelnik & Grady, 2009). Further, the negative effects encountered within these low-quality programs take up to five years to correct; these results have been studied worldwide (Kostelnik & Grady, 2009).

Kostelnik and Grady (2009) presented research that indicates 10 variables represent essential components of high-quality early learning programs; they include:

1. Teachers and staff are well prepared and appropriately compensated.
2. Staffing is stable.
3. Group sizes are small, and a small number of children are assigned to each adult.
4. Adults establish warm, attentive relationships with children.
5. Environments are well organized, safe, and healthy.
6. Environments are stimulating and geared to the unique ways in which young children learn.
7. Teachers understand and address the needs of diverse learners.
8. Families are involved in their children's education.
9. There is continuity between home, the early childhood program, and the primary school.



10. There are links to comprehensive community services. (Kostelnik & Grady, 2009, pp. 23-24)

In terms of what principals may do to promote high-quality early learning programming within their schools, the National Association for Elementary School Principals (NAESP) identified six standards that illustrate effective leadership. The standards are:

1. Embrace high-quality early childhood programs, principles, and practices as the foundation for education throughout the school community;
2. Engage families and community organizations to support children at home, in the community, and in prekindergarten and kindergarten programs;
3. Provide appropriate learning environments for young children;
4. Ensure high-quality curriculum and instructional practices that foster young children's learning and development in all areas;
5. Use multiple assessments to strengthen student learning and improve the quality of programs; and
6. Advocate for universal opportunity for children to attend high-quality early childhood education programs. (NAESP, 2005, in Kostelnik & Grady, 2009)

By exemplifying these standards of practice, early childhood principals call attention to high-quality programming, as well as the desire to aspire to high-quality education for all. One facet of high-quality education is an appropriate learning environment for children. These high-quality environments must be developmentally appropriate in terms of individualism, ageism, and culture (Coppie & Bredekamp, 2009).

Developmentally appropriate practices. Developmentally appropriate practices (DAP) are those practices within the early childhood classroom that are age, individually, and culturally appropriate for each child. Principals need to embrace the methodology of DAP and infuse it within all early childhood classrooms PK-3. In so doing, best practices in terms of learning and approaches to learning elicit students' interests and increase abilities. Lev Vygotsky discussed the Zone of Proximal Development, the space just outside the reach of a child's ability that may be reached by scaffolded instruction and activities (Peltzman, 1998). The ZPD theory of practice is rooted in DAP. Further, DAP suggests that learning take place at the level of the child, which in early childhood classrooms may be presented through play.

Play-based learning. Falk (2012) defined playful learning as "both free play and guided play and encompasses a whole-child educational approach that promotes academic, socioemotional, and cognitive development" (p. 27). Free play is considered intrinsically motivating, flexible in timing and routine, and is

imaginative. Guided play, on the other hand, promotes academic knowledge through play (Falk, 2012). Therefore, each type of play is considered appropriate for young children, birth to age 8, and should be part of the child's day. The NAEYC stated,

Play provides a context for children to practice newly acquired skills and also to function at the edge of their developing capacities, to take on new social roles, attempt novel or challenging tasks, and solve complex problems that they would not (or could not) otherwise do, and the results from these studies are uniformly positive: Learning during free or guided play matches (or exceeds) that in direct instruction. (Falk, 2012, pp. 28-29)

In terms of reducing playtime to allow for more learning, or academic time, the Parent Teacher Association (2006) found,

Millions of American schoolchildren are missing out on unstructured play and exercise with their peers as schools eliminate recess to spend more time on test preparation. For young children, recess provides a learning space to acquire peer-level social skills, imagination, creativity, and physical fitness/coordination. (as cited in Falk, 2012, p. 159-160)

Gronlund (2010) suggested play-based learning take place at every level of instruction within the early childhood classroom. In such practice, play-based learning is evident in whole-group, small-group, and one-on-one settings.

Gronlund (2010) warned against shying away from play-based learning in an effort to adhere to standards and benchmarks. In fact, Gronlund (2010) said, "Early learning standards provide reasonable expectations for young children's development and can guide curriculum planning as well as assessment processes" (p. 142). Further, Gronlund (2010) stated,

Planning curriculum with early learning standards in mind does not require a complete change in teaching practices. Providing play, exploration, and active learning opportunities and recognizing the value in daily routines and the importance of caring adults as guides and observers are still the best ways to teach young children. Incorporating standards requires adding a layer of awareness to your planning and implementation so that you can clearly see where standards are being addressed and add ways to bring them more to the forefront. (Gronlund, 2006, in Gronlund, 2010, p. 143)

Adding standards to the play-based curriculum is not good habit for the teacher alone, but also for the parents, families, and administrators. These stakeholders may see play as simply that – play. Addressing the standards and benchmarks throughout the classroom allows others to see and understand the correlation between the two ideas. Early childhood standards and benchmarks were created as a means of knowing what children should know and be able to do at certain milestones in their lives. Much of the work of the NAEYC supports the idea that play-based learning is critical to child growth and development. This type of curriculum allows for relationship building, especially when class sizes are limited.

Class sizes in early childhood classrooms. The age ranges for early childhood education span birth to age 8. Within each of those age ranges are fixed student to teacher ratios. The following is a guide provided by the NAEYC in terms of what size class is appropriate for each age group when considering accreditation (see Table 6).

Table 6

*Adult to Child Ratios Within Group Size*

Age Group	Group Size 12	Group Size 14	Group Size 16	Group Size 18	Group Size 20	Group Size 22	Group Size 24
	Adult-Child Ratio	Adult-Child Ratio	Adult-Child Ratio	Adult-Child Ratio	Adult-Child Ratio	Adult-Child Ratio	Adult-Child Ratio
Three-year-olds	1:6	1:7	1:8	1:9			
Four-year-olds			1:8	1:9	1:10		
Five-year-olds			1:8	1:9	1:10		
Kindergarten			1:8	1:9	1:10	1:11	1:12

*Note.* Adapted from *Getting It Right From the Start: The Principal's Guide to Early Childhood Education*, by M. J. Kostelnik, and M. L. Grady, 2009, Corwin Press, Thousand Oaks, CA, p. 231.

These ratios are guidelines and must be followed by programs seeking accreditation by the NAEYC, as well as those receiving state dollars for the Iowa Statewide Voluntary Preschool Program Grant. The only guideline of those provided by the NAEYC that is not followed in Iowa is kindergarten. The reason for that is because kindergarten is provided, primarily, in public schools. As a result, public schools generally do not seek national accreditation from the NAEYC. Therefore, kindergarten adult-child ratios greatly increase (Kostelnik & Grady, 2009).

It is known that “young children learn best in predictable, responsive, environments in which they are treated as valued individuals. Such environments are characterized by close personal relationships between children

and the same adults over time” (Kostelnik & Grady, 2009, p. 231). Therefore, principals must provide class sizes necessary to build trusting relationships and foster positive growth and development. In providing the conditions for appropriate class sizes in early childhood classrooms, principals increase the likelihood that learning takes place. When that happens, students and teachers benefit, students in terms of learning, and teachers in terms of teaching. Positive experiences with teaching and learning are documented through the teacher evaluation process.

Teacher evaluation. Early childhood practitioners like teachers of grades 4-12 experience the evaluative process. Principals administer the evaluative process annually throughout schools and districts. It is likely, however, that veteran teachers, unless considered subpar, do not participate in the process annually as do their leaders. Generally, veteran teachers enter into a rotation, or cycle, of evaluations, and work through the process (Caruso & Fawcett, 2007). Early childhood principals need to be cognizant of the ways in which early childhood teachers instruct and assess. While principals may have a general idea of what instruction and assessment looks like, it is quite different in birth to grade 3 classrooms than classrooms designed for grades 4 through 12. Therefore, it is imperative that principals have the background knowledge, skills, and wherewithal to address teaching and learning for those in the early childhood classroom (Feeney, 2012; Taylor et al., 2009). In addition, evaluations allow

teachers and leaders to focus continuing efforts on professional development needs.

Early childhood education professional development. All public school teachers in Iowa, as part of their contract, participate in professional development activities. Professional development takes on several faces; it can focus on curriculum, new school wide or district wide initiatives, positive behavior instructional supports, or a variety of other topics. Kagan and Kauerz (2012) identified gaps in professional development for early childhood educators. Those gaps mentioned by Kagan and Kauerz (2012) include: (a) content, (b) sector – center-based versus school-based program, (c) higher education, (d) leadership development, and (e) data. These gaps apply to the following groups of early childhood teachers: (a) family childcare settings, (b) center-based infant-toddler sectors, (c) public schools in grades PK-3, (d) before- and after-school programs, and (e) Head Start. Although two of the five targeted groups apply to typical age groups within public schools, the members within the groups are abundant (Kagan & Kauerz, 2012). Further, one group that lacks quality professional development is early childhood special education teachers. While the work of these early childhood specialists is critical to the workforce and students with special needs, less attention is focused on their efforts to enhance their practices.

Cardno (2012) suggested a holistic approach to professional development, similar to the whole-child approach in teaching and learning. The holistic professional development model includes four equal components; they are: (1) school development, (2) curriculum development, (3) management development, and (4) personal development (Cardno, 2012). These components are not equal in terms of emphasis; focus should be on immediate need, yet all components should hold equivalent weight in the professional development model implemented throughout the academic year. While this type of professional development model is not prevalent throughout the early childhood arena, it is important to advocate for such models.

Professionalism is not restrictive to professional development alone. Teachers and administrators alike perform their duties in a professional manner each day. Feeney (2012) suggested,

Professionalism in early education is being an advocate for what is right for children and families. Advocacy is part of the historical tradition of early childhood education and is called for now because all is not right for children in our country and in the world. Who better to help improve children's lives than those who have committed themselves to work with them every day? (Feeney, 2012, p. 71)

As the topics of early childhood education and educational leadership shape our understanding of early childhood educational leadership, thoughts surface that provide us an idea of what it means to effectively lead early childhood settings for PK-3 educators. In an effort to examine these thoughts



related to early childhood educational leadership, the following study was carried out with PK-3 teacher participants who serve in public school settings. These early childhood settings provide the foundation of early learning and skill acquisition for Iowa's youngest learners.

Iowa's youngest learners are shaped by the experiences within the early childhood classroom. By researching the theorists, pedagogical practices, and means by which young children learn, present day practitioners may have an educated background as to how to lead in today's classroom. In addition, by delving deeply into the styles of educational leadership as well as into the characteristics of effective educational leaders, today's principals and institutes of higher education may identify effective practices that are not only suitable for educational leaders of elementary, middle and secondary education centers, but also for early childhood settings. This study sought to bring about those answers.

## CHAPTER 3

### METHODS

#### Introduction

The purposes of this case study were to examine (1) what are the lived experiences of PK-6 teachers with principals who have a background in early childhood or elementary, and (2) what are the lived experiences of PK-6 teachers with principals who have a background in middle school or secondary. In terms of qualitative research, the case study format was best suited for this topic due to the nature of multiple perspectives and data sources. These multiple perspectives and data sources allowed the researcher to aggregate data across cases while maintaining the distinctive nature of each case (Padgett, 2008). Further, the case study approach was necessary because the researcher must consider the natural context of the topic (Cresswell, 1994; Padgett 2008).

#### The Research Problem

Although the State of Iowa changed administrative licensure from PK-6 and 7-12 to one license of PK-12 in 2004, a review of the literature revealed a lack of understanding in terms of leadership among those early childhood principals who once taught at the secondary level. Further, research indicated that educational administration programs are not requiring enough of their pre-service principals in terms of educating them with the knowledge and skills of serving outside of your teaching area. These two deficit areas have the potential

to destabilize PK-3 school settings, settings that are critically important to children's overall learning and development.

### Setting

This study was conducted in urban, suburban, and rural school settings across the State of Iowa. In addition, these settings were from each of the six Iowa High School Athletic Association's 2013 Football Districts: (a) 4A, schools with enrollment greater than 700 as well as smaller schools within their conferences; (b) 3A, the next 64 largest schools based on enrollment data; (c) 2A, the next 64 largest schools; (d) 1A, the last group of 64 largest schools; (e) A, the remaining 11 schools in Iowa; and (f) districts with less than 115 students, which play 8-man football (Iowa High School Athletic Association, 2014).

Due to the fact that not all Iowa high schools offered the same co- and extra-curricular school sanctioned sports in 2013, one identifier was utilized to select the districts for inclusion in the study; football was the common denominator in the fall of 2013 when selection criteria was developed. In an effort to generalize among differing sizes of schools across the state of Iowa, the six Iowa High School Athletic Association's 2013 Football Districts were utilized; this provided the researcher with rural, suburban, and urban districts throughout the state of Iowa. The settings, specifically, were early childhood buildings that house, at a minimum, grades PK-3, within the district sizes listed

above. Further, all settings – schools and classrooms – were generically titled as to afford anonymity.

### Participants

Those interviewed for this study included PK-3 public school teachers. Moreover, to be included in this study, the public school teachers must have taught for a minimum of five years in early childhood classrooms in public schools, and must have had either a bachelor's degree or master's degree in elementary education or early childhood education. In addition, the participants were limited to two from each grade level, from preschool through third grade.

All participants were either personal contacts of the researcher or were suggested by colleagues in the field. One teacher participant of the 10 was a current colleague; the remaining nine teacher participants were from outside the researcher's current teaching placement. Further, all participants were currently employed in Iowa and work within one of the six Iowa High School Athletic Association's 2013 Football Districts. Additionally, all participant's identities are to remain confidential, and pseudonyms are utilized in sharing the narratives of the conversations held throughout the interview process.

### Instrumentation

The researcher examined the lived experiences of PK-3 public school teachers under the direction of principals with either early childhood/elementary or middle/secondary backgrounds. This portion of the

research was based on preliminary data gathered from the McREL 21 responsibilities Likert Scale query (Marzano et al., 2005). Interviews were held with 10 classroom teachers, two teachers from each grade level, preschool through third. Teachers who completed the Likert Scale provided two sets of forms; one for an administrator under whom they have worked who had a background in 7-12 classroom practice, while the other was for an administrator under whom they have worked who had a background in PK-6 classroom practice. All teacher participants had experience with principals with each type of teacher certification, either PK-6 or 7-12.

Teacher participants provided survey information prior to the interviews. Further, they completed the rank order of McREL's 21 responsibilities of effective leaders pre-interview. This measure guided the interviewer in asking questions and leading the interview in a manner that was meaningful to all stakeholders. Moreover, it allowed the researcher an opportunity to frame questions specifically to the experiences of each individual participant.

Following each teacher interview, transcribing and coding occurred. Coding utilized the 21 responsibilities as key terms. These key terms – the 21 responsibilities – were tabulated in terms of frequency and commonality among and throughout participant's interviews. In addition, coding included overall themes that emerged as a result of the personal interviews. These themes were

tied to the 21 responsibilities and offered insight into the concept of early childhood educational leadership.

### Data Analysis

Case study methodology guided the process of data collection and analysis throughout this study. Stake (1995) and Yin (2003; as cited in Baxter & Jack, 2008) note the similarity between case study methodology and constructivism. They state

Constructivists claim that truth is relative and that it is dependent on one's perspective. This paradigm "recognizes the importance of the subjective human creation of meaning, but doesn't reject outright some notion of objectivity. Pluralism, not relativism, is stressed with focus on the circular dynamic tension of subject and object," (Miller & Crabtree, 1999, p. 10; as cited in Baxter & Jack, 2008). Constructivism is built upon the premise of a social construction of reality (Searle, 1995; as cited in Baxter & Jack, 2008). One of the advantages of this approach is the close collaboration between the researcher and the participant, while enabling participants to tell their stories (Crabtree & Miller, 1999; as cited in Baxter & Jack, 2008). Through these stories the participants are able to describe their views of reality and this enables the researcher to better understand the participants' action. (Lather, 1992; Robottom & Hart, 1993; as cited in Baxter & Jack 2008, p. 545)

Further, Yin (2003; as cited in Baxter and Jack, 2008) notes four characteristics researchers must answer prior to beginning a case study approach. They include: (a) the focus of the study is to answer "how" and "why" questions, (b) you cannot manipulate the behavior of those involved in the study, (c) you want to cover contextual conditions because you believe they are relevant to the phenomenon under study, or (d) the boundaries are not clear between the

phenomenon and the context. Once these questions have been answered, Yin (2003) and Stake (1995; as cited in Baxter & Jack, 2008) suggest placing boundaries on the case itself to avert pitfalls case studies often provide – numerous objectives or a too broad topic. Three boundary-guiding characteristics indicate streamlined analysis of data. They are: (a) by time and place (Cresswell, 2003; as cited in Baxter & Jack, 2008), (b) by time and activity (Stake, 1995; as cited in Baxter & Jack, 2008), and (c) by definition and context (Miles & Huberman, 1994; as cited in Baxter & Jack, 2008). Applying these boundary characteristics ensures a reasonable scope of study.

Another facet of case study methodology includes type. Referring to Stake's (1995; as cited in Baxter & Jack, 2008) work, three case studies exist: (a) intrinsic, (b) instrumental, and (c) collective. Each type of case study exhibits characteristics specific to the case study itself. Intrinsic case studies describe studies where researchers have an interest in the case. This means, researchers appreciate the case due to its particularity or ordinariness. In addition, the purpose of an intrinsic case study is not to build theory, although theory sometimes results (Stake, 1995; as cited in Baxter & Jack, 2008). In terms of instrumental case studies, researchers implement this type to provide insight into an issue or to help refine an existing theory. Further,

The case is of secondary interest; it plays a supportive role, facilitating our understanding of something else. The case is often looked at in depth, its contexts scrutinized, its ordinary activities detailed, and because it helps

the researcher pursue the external interest. The case may or may not be seen as typical of other cases. (Stake, 1995; as cited in Baxter & Jack, 2008, p. 549)

The last type of case study is collective. This type of case study is used when comparing one or more case studies; it allows researchers to draw conclusions across studies in an effort to predict results, supportive or contrastive (Stake, 1995; Yin, 2003; as cited in Baxter & Jack, 2008).

For the purpose of this study I chose to conduct my research in an instrumental case study approach. In so doing, I analyzed not only the data provided by research participants, but also the data related to the phenomena of Iowa administrative licensure for principals PK-12. This allowed me to draw conclusions from early childhood teacher participants' relationships to the PK-12 principal as a position and not solely as a specific person. In order to draw conclusions from the research participants I wrote the following questions or statements to guide the interview process:

1. Tell me about a time when you felt supported by your building principal. Do you feel as though their support was a result of understanding early childhood practices?
2. Tell me about a time when you felt alienated by your building principal. Do you feel as though their alienation was a result of a lack of understanding of early childhood practices?



3. To what extent do you feel your building principal understands early development and how it is a prerequisite for later learning?
4. Describe a situation where you felt your training in elementary/early childhood education was better suited for classroom practice versus that of the prescribed curricula/initiative of the district.
5. Explain a situation in which you voiced a concern about developmentally appropriate practices in your classroom when questioned by your building principal. Was the opposition/questioning related to the administrator's amount of understanding of early childhood education?
6. What do you feel are the roles and responsibilities of the elementary principal?
7. How visible is your building principal in your early childhood classroom compared to the upper grades? Is it comparative/disproportionate? If so, why do you believe so?
8. How relevant do you feel the need for elementary principals to have (a) taught in an elementary setting prior to leading it, and (b) acquired certification/endorsements in early childhood/elementary education?
9. Please share with me one word that describes your feeling about the relationship between you and your building principal. Explain.

10. If you have been part of the mentoring/coaching program, how effective do you feel it is for new teachers? Do you feel administrators new to the field of elementary and/or early childhood education would benefit from a similar program?

Prior to meeting with each teacher participant I provided her a data collection sheet that requested basic information related to her teaching position. This basic information included: (a) certification and endorsement areas, (b) number of years taught, (c) number of principals under which she worked, (d) number of principals who had early childhood or elementary training versus those who had backgrounds in secondary education, (e) grades taught, and (f) number of districts/schools in which she taught. In addition, I provided each participant a list of the questions or statements listed above to guide her conversation as well as to reduce anxiety related to the interview process.

I scheduled interviews with each teacher participant and limited the visit to one hour but afforded them the option of speaking longer if they desired. These interviews took place in their classrooms, with the exception of one, which took place in my classroom, and were digitally recorded for later transcription purposes. Following each interview, I transcribed the interaction between the teacher participant and me, and scanned the discussion for themes related to the current literature. In addition, I provided the participant a copy of the transcription and theme analysis to review. Upon review of each transcription,

participants noted the accuracy of the conversation and thematic analysis, which Cresswell and Miller (2000) suggest “confirm[s] the credibility of the information and narrative account” (p. 4). Once transcription and themes were identified for each teacher participant I compared the stories and looked for commonalities among participants, as well as characteristics unique to certain participants. The uniqueness of one participant over another, or even one grade level over another, provided areas for analysis.

In reviewing the participants’ surveys related to the 21 responsibilities, I noted the desired rating as described by Marzano et al. (2005) with the actual ratings for administrators with and without early childhood backgrounds. Ratings described by Marzano et al. (2005) were based on the original study of several hundred participants related to K-12 principals; these became the desired ratings for this study. The ratings in this study were derived from 10 teacher participants’ feedback related to early childhood principals of grades PK-3 according to the 21 responsibilities survey. In addition, the ratings in this study were perceptions of those teacher participants interviewed.

The ratings of this study are based on 10 possible answers. Therefore, a rating of 0.4 means four of the 10 teacher participants answered in a particular manner. Likewise, a rating of 0.9 equates to nine of the 10 respondents answering the same. Table 7 shows the desired ratings presented by Marzano et al. (2005),

as well as the actual ratings of those principals with and without backgrounds in early childhood education, which were provided by the teacher participants.

Throughout the data analysis process, transcripts of the participants' interviews served as the theme's foundations. Each participant's transcribed interview was coded according to each of the 21 responsibilities listed by Marzano et al. (2005). For example, a respondent stated, "I've felt like I can disagree with them if I need to; do it in a professional way. I've never had a bad working relationship, knock on wood, with any of them." After transcribing the interview, I cross referenced the 21 responsibilities, this time, the term - relationship, and found it mentioned four times throughout the one session. This type of coding was present throughout each of the transcribed interviews.

Upon transcribing all teacher interviews, as well as reviewing the surveys collected, I noted the concepts most discussed or most common in terms of ranking on the survey, and grouped them together to create five separate but equal themes. These five themes focus on the early childhood principal's need to: (a) have a background in early childhood education, (b) have an advanced understanding of child development, (c) implement effective teaching strategies to close the achievement gap, (d) communicate and relate to staff and students effectively, and (e) be visible in the early childhood classrooms.

## CHAPTER 4

### RESULTS

#### Introduction

The purpose of this chapter was to present the results of the data analysis in conjunction with current literature. Data was discussed in terms of interviews as well as survey information that the primary interviewer collected prior to the face-to-face interviews with research participants. Preceding that discussion was an explanation of the case study approach utilized.

#### Research Questions

This case study sought to answer the following questions.

1. What are the lived experiences of K-6 teachers with principals who have a background in early childhood or elementary?
2. What are the lived experiences of K-6 teachers with principals who have a background in middle school or secondary?

#### Summary of Findings

In an effort to better understand the relationship between early childhood teachers and their secondary teacher-now-principal, the 10 narratives of the teacher participants were combined. The following results present the findings within five themes. From the perspective of early childhood teachers, early childhood principals need: (1) a background in early childhood education; (2) an advanced understanding of child development and developmentally appropriate

practices; (3) to focus on early childhood education to close the achievement gap; (4) to foster positive relationships with effective communication; and (5) to be visible in early childhood classrooms.

Table 7 provides an analysis of the data related to the 21 responsibilities of effective leadership from the survey conducted with teacher participants. The table demonstrates the desired ranking versus the actual ranking based on the teachers' lived experiences with principals. See Table 8 to see how this data is relative to each of the five themes. In addition, the data outlines three separate criteria: (a) desired ranking of elementary principals' skills, (b) actual score of an elementary principal with early childhood/elementary background, and (c) actual score of an elementary principal with a middle/secondary background.

Table 7

*Teachers' Desired and Perceived Responsibilities of Effective Leadership*

Responsibility	Actual rating for principals <i>with</i> early childhood background	Actual rating for principals <i>without</i> early childhood background	Desired rating for all principals of early childhood settings	Teachers' Responses by grade level (PK-3)				
				P 1	P 2	K 2	K 3	1 3
Affirmation	.7	.1	.7	P 1	P 2	K 2	K 3	1 3
Change Agent	.6	.2	.4	P 1	P 2	K 2	K 3	1 3
Contingent Rewards	.3	.1	.4	P 1	P 2	K 2	K 3	1 3
Communication	.3	.2	1.0	P 1	P 2	K 2	K 3	1 3
Culture	.5	.3	.7	P 1	P 2	K 2	K 3	1 3
Discipline	.5	.2	.8	P 1	P 2	K 2	K 3	1 3
Flexibility	.3	.2	.7	P 1	P 2	K 2	K 3	1 3
Focus	.6	.2	.8	P 1	P 2	K 2	K 3	1 3
Ideas / Beliefs	.6	.2	.6	P 1	P 2	K 2	K 3	1 3
Input	.5	.2	.6	P 1	P 2	K 2	K 3	1 3
Intellectual Stimulation	.3	.1	.3	P 1	P 2	K 2	K 3	1 3
Involvement in C / I / A	.4	.2	.4	P 1	P 2	K 2	K 3	1 3

*Table continues*

Responsibility	Actual rating for principals <i>with</i> early childhood background	Actual rating for principals <i>without</i> early childhood background	Desired rating for all principals of early childhood settings	Teachers' Responses by grade level (PK-3)				
Knowledge of C/ I/ A	.5	.2	.7	P	P	K	K	1
				1	2	2	3	3
Monitoring / Evaluation	.5	.3	.6	P	P	K	K	1
				1	2	2	3	3
Optimizer	.5	.1	.6	P	P	K	K	1
				1	2	2	3	3
Order	.4	.2	.6	P	P	K	K	1
				1	2	2	3	3
Outreach	.7	.2	.6	P	P	K	K	1
				1	2	2	3	3
Relationships	.5	.2	.9	P	P	K	K	1
				1	2	2	3	3
Resources	.6	.4	.5	P	P	K	K	1
				1	2	2	3	3
Situational Awareness	.4	.3	.7	P	P	K	K	1
				1	2	2	3	3
Visibility	.4	.3	.8	P	P	K	K	1
				1	2	2	3	3

In regard to the last column, teacher participants' responses by grade levels, those cells shaded in gray indicate grade level teachers who responded with the highest ranking of five on the survey. The rankings of the survey, in terms of importance to early childhood teachers, include: (1) very low, (2) low, (3) neutral, (4) some, and (5) very high.



### Theme 1: Background in Early Childhood Education

Although not part of the 21 responsibilities as a stand-alone item, a background in early childhood education easily became the number one response provided by teacher participants throughout the interview process. In fact, within the 10 interviews held, the idea of having a background in the area in which a principal chooses to lead was verbally stated a minimum of 15 times. One of the kindergarten teacher respondents noted, "It is imperative that a principal have a minimum of five years teaching in the area he or she chooses to lead." Further, "...without such a background, how can [he or she] lead effectively?" The same respondent suggested principals teach within the scope of their leadership. This means, she believed principals leading PK-6 buildings should have experience teaching a variety of the grades PK-6. Likewise, she believed someone leading a secondary building should have experience in grades 9-12. Table 8 shows the 21 responsibilities closely related to the premise of principals' background in leading early childhood buildings.

Table 8

*Twenty-one Responsibilities of Effective Leaders: Theme 1*

Responsibility	Definition of Responsibility	Desired Rating
Intellectual Stimulation	Ensures faculty and staff are aware of the most current theories and practices and makes the discussion of these a regular aspect of the school's culture	.3
Outreach	Is an advocate and spokesperson for the school to all stakeholders	.6

In terms of intellectual stimulation, respondents discussed the degree to which the current theories and practices related to education overall versus that of early childhood, the area in which they taught. One first grade teacher participant admired one of her former principals who had a background in early childhood education as well as literacy. She stated, "With such a background, reading curriculum adoption practices were made simple, and the early childhood staff noticed." I posit the rating between intellectual stimulation, on the part of the principal, and the effectiveness of the faculty and staff is stronger than 0.3 that the data indicates. Indeed, three of the participants marked the idea of intellectual stimulation as "high," while six participants assigned a rank of "some importance," and one noted her belief as "neutral." Therefore, nine of 10

participants believed intellectual stimulation is of either some or high importance.

From the interviews and surveys collected, participants discussed the idea of outreach. A second grade teacher shared her thoughts on a principal's role in the community. She noted, "Principals need to be exceptional in public relations." In addition, she suggested, "Principals be involved in after hours school and community activities." Her principal had participated in PTO events, high school ballgames, and the summer event - National Night Out. When reviewing the data collected from the survey, six of 10 teacher participants identified outreach as "high" importance, with another three participants noting outreach as "some" importance. Therefore, nine of 10 felt as though outreach, as defined by Marzano et al. (2005) resulted in responses that were of some or high importance.

In terms of data collected related to intellectual stimulation and outreach, data indicated principals who have a background in elementary or early childhood education and led an elementary or early childhood building performed at a higher rate than those principals with a secondary background who led an elementary or early childhood building. For instance, respondents noted principals with like backgrounds as teachers have a rating of 0.3 in regard to intellectual stimulation, compared to their counterparts with differing backgrounds; their rating is 0.1. Further, participants commented on principals'

ability to conduct outreach. Those principals with like backgrounds had a rating of 0.7 and those with unlike backgrounds had a rating of 0.2. Therefore, the data indicated a stronger connection and increased effectiveness for those principals who had the same background as the teachers in which they served.

### Theme 2: Advanced Understanding of Child Development

The second of five themes discovered throughout the research indicated a need for elementary and early childhood principals to have an advanced understanding of child development as well as developmentally appropriate practices. In fact, the data indicated eight of 10 teacher participants noted a lack of understanding among their administrators related to developmentally appropriate practices. Eighty percent of practicing administrators lacking the knowledge of advanced child development and developmentally appropriate practices is alarming to early childhood practitioners.

One of the first grade teacher participants discussed an issue related to developmentally appropriate practices and how misunderstanding on the part of the building principal perpetuated the problem. The issue of active play – recess – for young learners presented itself. The principal in this situation felt it better to eliminate morning and afternoon recess in an effort to raise scores. He continued by challenging the early childhood staff to convince him how large motor play linked with early learning, and that its importance trumped test scores. The participant, having taught 32 years, researched recess and its connection to

downtime and student learning. When presented, the principal felt as though he had been “ambushed” and did not fully understand that the teacher only followed up with what he had suggested. As a result of the teacher taking extra steps to promote developmentally appropriate practices, recess remained in place for all early childhood grade levels; the principal did reduce second and third grade recess times to only one following lunch.

Another example of a building principal not fully understanding developmentally appropriate practices dealt with the teacher participant in the last situation. She noted her principal’s dislike for center time in her classroom as a means of learning stations. He commented to her that it “looked like recess” in there and it did not appear as though learning took place. The teacher knew she remained the only teacher in first grade in that district to teach using center-based learning, so she prepared herself prior to this instance for his comments. She provided him a rationale as to why this practice made sense for the age and stage of her learners, as well as how the practice extended whole group learning and kindergarten routines. She continued with the explanation that center-based learning provides opportunities for students to develop social skills, to work within their ability levels, and to foster relationships in small group fashions. Further, center-based learning increases students’ self-regulation and independence, each of which is a goal of any early childhood program. As a result of the conversations held, the first grade teacher was successful in

convincing her building principal that center-based learning was an effective method of meeting students' needs. Table 9 shows the 21 responsibilities closely related to the premise of principals' advanced understanding of child development and developmentally appropriate practices.

Table 9

*Twenty-one Responsibilities of Effective Leaders: Theme 2*

Responsibility	Definition of Responsibility	Desired Rating
Involvement in Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment	Is directly involved in the design and implementation of curriculum, instruction, and assessment practices	.4
Knowledge of Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment	Is knowledgeable about current curriculum, instruction, and assessment practices	.7
Monitoring / Evaluating	Monitors the effectiveness of school practices and their impact on student learning	.6

While two of the three responsibilities closely relate to curriculum, instruction, and assessment, the rating between the two differ. Teacher participants desired the principal to have knowledge of curriculum, instruction, and assessment to the degree of 0.7, yet desired the principal's active

involvement at a rate of only 0.4. In fact, the ratio of “knowledge of” is almost twice that of “participation in” which means teachers desired their principal’s input, or involvement, a little more than half the time.

A preschool teacher respondent indicated her principal lacked the understanding of early childhood practices, as a whole, and therefore is unable to relate to her in terms of curriculum, instruction, and assessment. She noted that the principal, instead of receiving information from the Area Education Agency (AEA) and the Iowa Department of Education and interpreting the information for dissemination, forwarded all information to her related to preschool practices and the district’s participation in the Statewide Voluntary Preschool Program Grant. She also noted, “[The principal] had similar practices when I served as a special education teacher within the building; he would forward all information to me and let me notify others if it affected them. He served the PK-6 faculty, yet was unable, or unwilling, to lead the early childhood department effectively.”

When discussing the areas of curriculum, instruction, and assessment in terms of principals’ understanding, the conversation soon turned to teacher evaluation and monitoring of program effectiveness. Take, for example, the teacher listed above. She was one of two teachers in the district who complied with the requirements of the Statewide Voluntary Preschool Program Grant. If she was solely responsible for the program’s effectiveness, instead of the

building principal, how is he able to evaluate her appropriately? Having knowledge of and involvement in the process of curriculum, instruction, and assessment is critical to a principal's ability to monitor and evaluate effectively. What may result, due to the lack of knowledge or involvement on the principal's behalf, are inappropriate evaluations that remain in a teacher's permanent file for the entirety of his or her tenure in the district. Therefore, it is important that principals have an understanding of child development and developmentally appropriate practices for the age and stage of children in their buildings.

This theme was supported by the data collected in the survey related to the 21 responsibilities in relation to principals with and without backgrounds in elementary or early childhood. For those principals with a background in elementary or early childhood, a rating of 0.4, as shown in Table 7, resulted in terms of involvement in curriculum, instruction, and assessment. On the other hand, principals serving elementary or early childhood settings who held secondary licensure as a teacher presented a rating of 0.2. Further, principals with the same licensure as those in the buildings they serve show a rating of 0.5 when discussing knowledge of curriculum, instruction, and assessment, whereas their 7-12 counterparts have a rating of 0.2. As mentioned above, curriculum, instruction, and assessment closely relate to monitoring and evaluation. In fact, the rankings of the desired outcomes versus the actual rankings of the two principal groups were nearly identical. This means, early childhood teachers



desired principals to have knowledge of curriculum, instruction, and assessment at a rate of 0.7 as well as to be able to monitor and evaluate teachers effectively at a rate of 0.6. While the previous data were desired outcomes, the actual results for the same responsibilities are 0.5 for knowledge of curriculum, instruction, and assessment and 0.5 for monitoring and evaluating – these were from the principal group that shared certification backgrounds with the teachers. For those principals with differing backgrounds, the rating for knowledge of curriculum, instruction, and assessment was 0.2 and 0.3 for monitoring and evaluating. The data demonstrated a 20-30% drop in effectiveness based on a principal's background in middle/secondary education.

### Theme 3: Closing the Achievement Gap

The third theme was the need for early childhood principals to focus on quality early childhood education practices in an effort to close the achievement gap. Seventy percent of the respondents noted the feasibility and necessity to invest in high quality practices that fostered learning and focus on the whole child. In so doing, the achievement gap that is present among preschool-aged children, and beyond, may decrease.

Each of the teacher participants listed initiatives in which they are involved either as a grade level or as a school, or even as a district. These included, but were not limited to: (a) Reading First, (b) Everyday Math, (c) Creative Curriculum and GOLD Assessment, (d) Positive Behavior Instructional

Supports (PBIS), and (e) NAEYC accreditation. It is important to note as well, that some districts represented in this study currently participated in more than one initiative, thus increasing a teacher's need to choose the approaches to learning that best fit the needs of his or her students in order to close the achievement gap. What is evident from the list of initiatives is the fact that all of them are evidence-based and scientifically researched, which means the initiatives have proven results.

Two additional items teacher participants noted in relation to closing the achievement gap were the ideas of implementing strategies at an early age to intervene and thereby reduce the need for supports at a later age. Further, the teachers shared the notion that the outline of what is to be taught at each age and stage had been made easier with the adoption and implementation of the Common Core State Standards (CCSS; 2014). With such guidance, grade levels may begin to identify gaps and overlaps in terms of teaching and learning. As a result of such work, the closing of the achievement gap may accelerate.

Table 10 shows the 21 responsibilities closely related to the premise of principals' need to focus on early childhood education practices in an effort to close the achievement gap.

Table 10

*Twenty-one Responsibilities of Effective Leaders: Theme 3*

Responsibility	Definition of Responsibility	Desired Rating
Change Agent	Is willing to challenge and actively challenges the status quo	.4
Culture	Fosters shared beliefs and a sense of community and cooperation	.7
Flexibility	Adapts his or her leadership behavior to the needs of the current situation and is comfortable with dissent	.7
Focus	Establishes clear goals and keeps those goals in the forefront of the school's attention	.8
Ideals / Beliefs	Communicates and operates from strong ideals and beliefs about schooling	.6
Optimizer	Inspires and leads new and challenging innovations	.6
Resources	Provides teachers with materials and professional development necessary for the successful execution of their jobs	.5

This theme housed the greatest number of the 21 responsibilities – seven. The following responsibilities may prove critical in terms of closing the achievement gap: (a) change agent, (b) culture, (c) flexibility, (d) focus, (e) ideals and beliefs, (f) optimizer, and (g) resources. Further, six of the seven responsibilities have a rating of 0.5 or higher, indicating they were involved in successful schools half or more of the time.

A kindergarten teacher respondent shared an experience with her building principal that shed light on the change agent and optimizer responsibilities. The kindergarten teacher currently teaches in a district that is housed in two separate towns. Each town has an elementary building which offers programming to students in PK-5. In addition, one of the towns houses the middle school while the other town houses the high school. The programming has been this way for quite some time, and it appeared to work efficiently. The kindergarten teacher noted plans led by her building principal to change grade levels per town. Acting as a change agent for the district, one of the elementary building principals is challenging the status quo. His plan would reframe the two elementary buildings from two PK-5 buildings to one PK-2 and one 3-5 with PK offered as well due to program times and transportation issues. The kindergarten teacher participant stated the positive reception this challenge had generated; this principal saw the need to house early childhood grade levels, for the most part, together in one building in an effort to close the achievement gap.

Coincidentally, this building principal had a background in elementary education and taught within the building prior to leading it. As a result, he had a strong tie to the inner workings and underpinnings of the school, and was able to anticipate the culture of the building and the community.

Another respondent, this time from third grade, discussed the efforts her building principal had undertaken to reduce the achievement gap. The third grade teacher noted the emphasis placed on the early grades within her building related to Response to Intervention (RTI). The building principal, in charge of a PK-5 building, allocated more resources to the teachers of grades K-2 in an effort to increase student achievement and decrease gaps in learning. She also noted, "The emphasis of district resources spent on grades K-2 coincides with the district's participation in the Statewide Voluntary Preschool Program Grant." This means specialized State dollars are utilized to fund quality preschool programming, and state-funded district dollars are utilized to enhance existing curricula in reading and math in its RTI practices. As with the former scenario, this building principal also shared a background in elementary education.

It is evident, with these two experiences, principals with like backgrounds in education performed successfully in relation to the 21 responsibilities. In fact, principals with elementary or early childhood backgrounds had a rating of 0.6 in terms of effectiveness as a change agent compared to those with differing backgrounds, whose rating was 0.2. Moreover, the rating between those with

(0.5) and without (0.1) backgrounds in elementary or early childhood education in terms of optimizing educational practices resulted in a 40% difference.

Further, respondents noted a rating of 0.6 to 0.4 when discussing resource allocation. While the spread in data points was not extensive, it did equate to a 20% difference.

An additional responsibility attributed to this theme was flexibility. One of the second grade teacher participants shared a situation concerning principal flexibility in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century classroom. Along with the Common Core State Standards (CCSS; 2014), the *No Child Left Behind Act* and its Watch Lists, as well as the initiatives implemented within one district, flexibility was key in terms of meeting students' needs and teaching to the whole child, which, in turn, led to diminished gaps in achievement.

The second grade teacher discussed her time implementing a new math curriculum – Everyday Math. She happened to have a walkthrough one day by her building administrator who later commented on her lesson and the rationale for the student practice that he observed. She stated that the lesson asked for partnered practice versus that of whole group or small group practice. The teacher explained that the curriculum asks for various groupings of students from day to day in order to gauge understanding. Her building principal did not understand the practices she described in terms of grouping, yet wanted her to implement the new curriculum with fidelity. To her, she did what he suggested

she do; however, the principal did not fully understand the practices related to the new curriculum and therefore could not make an informed decision.

Needless to say, the teacher nervously awaited her principal's future visits. She did what she felt best for her students, as well as what had been adopted by the school board in terms of curriculum. Based on his lack of understanding, proving to her building principal that she acted with purpose would be difficult. This evidence of the principal's inflexibility in terms of implementing new curriculum did not resound with faculty and staff.

Flexibility, displayed by the leader, was the ability to adapt his or her leadership to the situation at hand, even though dissent may occur. In this situation, dissent did occur, and the principal did not handle it well. While he may have been leading in terms of the district's focus, to enhance student achievement with newfound initiatives, he may have been able to better support his teachers by learning the initiatives alongside them. In terms of flexibility, respondents noted a higher degree of rating for those principals with experience in elementary or early childhood settings; the rating was 0.3. Those principals with secondary experience had a rating of 0.2, one degree of separation. Although not significantly higher for principals with early childhood or elementary experience, respondents did note a higher degree of flexibility.

Focus, on the other hand, had a much higher rating than did flexibility to those who shared certifications versus those who differed in their educational

coursework. Teacher participants suggested a rating of 0.6 compared to 0.2 for those with and without elementary or early childhood certification. In addition, focus and ideals and beliefs shared identical ratings. The data suggested that focus and ideals or beliefs were inseparable and therefore coincided with principal leadership effectiveness in terms of student achievement.

Each of the six responsibilities discussed thus far in relation to the third theme incorporate culture. Marzano et al. (2005) defined culture as the ability to foster shared beliefs and a sense of community and cooperation among stakeholders. Therefore, in terms of the experiences listed for Theme 3, a rating of 0.5 to 0.3 was noted for those with the same backgrounds in education versus those who differed when discussing school culture. As noted throughout this theme, principals who demonstrated shared beliefs and ideals related to education had better outcomes related to student achievement, according to Marzano et al., (2005).

#### Theme 4: Positive Relationships and Effective Communication

The fourth of the five themes discovered throughout this research was the need for early childhood principals to foster positive relationships through effective communication. This theme was the one with the strongest rating among all teacher participants. From the data collected, 90% of respondents noted a positive relationship between teacher and principal was critical to student achievement. In addition, all participants shared a commonality in terms



of communication. 100% of respondents believed effective communication among stakeholders imperative. In fact, throughout the 10 interviews and surveys collected, teacher participants mentioned relationships and communication a minimum of 20 times.

In Marzano et al.'s (2005) original meta-analysis that generated the list of 21 responsibilities of effective principals, the concept of affirmation ranked twentieth out of 21 positions. While the authors suggested all 21 responsibilities are important and therefore the degree of rating is not as critical when interpreting data, it is interesting to note that early childhood practitioners placed affirmation close to the top with a rating of 0.7, the fourth degree of rating for this study.

Table 11 shows the 21 responsibilities closely related to the premise of principals' need to foster positive relationships with effective communication. Theme 4 housed six of the 21 responsibilities. They include: (a) affirmation, (b) contingent rewards, (c) communication, (d) input, (e) order, and (f) relationships. While this theme paired two of the highest correlated responsibilities - communication and relationships, it also contained the responsibility with the greatest spread in rating among teacher participants - contingent rewards.

Table 11

*Twenty-one Responsibilities of Effective Leaders: Theme 4*

Responsibility	Definition of Responsibility	Desired Rating
Affirmation	Recognizes and celebrates accomplishments and acknowledges failures	.7
Contingent Rewards	Recognizes and rewards individual accomplishments	.4
Communication	Establishes strong lines of communication with and among teachers and students	1.0
Input	Involves teachers in the design and implementation of important decisions and policies	.6
Order	Establishes a set of standard operating procedures and routines	.6
Relationships	Demonstrates and awareness of the personal aspects of teachers and staff	.9

One of the preschool teacher participants shared an experience with her principal related to affirmation. In teaching preschool under the Statewide Voluntary Preschool Program Grant, preschool teachers are required to participate in performance evaluations each year. As a result, the principal asked

when she preferred her evaluation take place. She indicated a date and time, and the principal visited her classroom on the date and time to complete the evaluation. The teacher shared with me how her principal brought other items to work on while he conducted her 60-minute observation, as well as how he completed her written evaluation. Upon completion of the evaluation, the principal provided written documentation of the evaluation, and it included copied and pasted items and examples from a co-worker's evaluation. Not only did the principal not complete the formal evaluation appropriately, he offered no items of support or affirmation to the preschool teacher. Moreover, this experience demonstrated a need for principals to know and understand what takes place in early childhood classrooms in terms of teaching and learning and how they differ from upper grades. In addition, this experience indicated a lack of positive relationships and effective communication between the teacher and the principal.

While the affirmation and contingent rewards responsibilities shared similar characteristics, the rating between them did not. Early childhood practitioners noted a desired rating of 0.4 in terms of contingent rewards, whereas the actual ratings ranged from 0.1 for those without early childhood backgrounds to 0.3 for those who had experience in the early grades. As noted, the difference between these ratings is minimal, and that may be due to early childhood practitioners' desire to teach for the sake of teaching and not for

recognition. What does differ, however, was the range in rating of affirmation. In fact, the rating for affirmation was the widest spread based on the data received from participants. The teacher participants reported that principals with elementary or early childhood backgrounds offered affirmation seven times out of 10; principals with secondary backgrounds offered affirmation one time out of 10. A 60% difference in rate of affirming messages from the principal was significant, especially when it related to student achievement.

Another responsibility prevalent in this theme was input. One of the third grade teacher participants noted how her building principal lacked early childhood knowledge and therefore made decisions on his own versus that of involving the early childhood faculty and staff. She stated, "He can't help." This means, he was unable to offer input to his staff and likewise alienated them from decision-making practices due to the lack of understanding of early childhood education. Upon analysis, the data indicated a desired outcome of 0.6 in regard to input. Participants' data suggested the actual rating was 0.5 for those principals with a background in elementary or early childhood education versus that of 0.2 for those with a secondary background.

The last of the responsibilities for this theme related to a principal's ability to maintain order in the building. Order had a desired rating of 0.6 when in actuality the rating was 0.2 for principals from differing backgrounds in education and 0.4 for principals with like educational backgrounds. While the

ratings are low for each type of principal, teachers wished for a greater focus on order. The reason for this may be attributed to a variety of reasons such as order's relationship with discipline, or the reality that protocol (order) strengthens the policies and practices within the building. Simply, reasons may be based on a teacher's particular style of teaching.

#### Theme 5: Visibility in Early Childhood Classrooms

The last theme the research discovered was the need for early childhood principals to be visible in early childhood classrooms. This theme housed three of the 21 responsibilities: (a) discipline, (b) situational awareness, and (c) visibility. In addition, this theme had two of the closest correlated responsibilities of the 21 when considering principals with and without elementary or early childhood backgrounds. Table 12 shows the 21 responsibilities closely related to the premise of principals' need to be visible in the early childhood classroom.

Table 12

*Twenty-one Responsibilities of Effective Leaders: Theme 5*

Responsibility	Definition of Responsibility	Desired Rating
Discipline	Protects teachers from issues and influences that would detract from their teaching time or focus	.8
Situational Awareness	Is aware of the details and undercurrents in the running of the school and uses this information to address current and potential problems	.7
Visibility	Has quality contact and interactions with teachers and students	.8

Throughout the 10 interviews, the idea of visibility came up a minimum of 12 times. Several respondents noted the effectiveness of principals' visibility in the classroom as well as in the building and outside at recess or arrival and dismissal times. One preschool teacher participant discussed the presence her principal had at arrival and dismissal. She stated her principal was outside to greet students each morning, regardless of weather, and knew the names of all the students, as well as their siblings' names. Further, the principal knew the parents and the vehicles they drove. This type of visibility provided a safe, caring culture, which may have led to enhanced student learning.

The concept of visibility, the quality interactions among teachers and students, ranked somewhat lower on Marzano et al.'s (2005) original meta-analysis; it was ranked 18<sup>th</sup> out of 21. Although the authors suggested the rating was not as relevant as the combined list of 21 responsibilities themselves, the idea that early childhood educators placed its importance as a desired rating of 0.8 was noteworthy. Further, the teacher participants noted that principals with and without elementary or early childhood training had room for improvement. The rating for those with and without similar background was 0.4 to 0.3 – tied for the closest rating of the 21 responsibilities. The other responsibility that shared the same tied rating was situational awareness.

A second grade teacher told of her story related to situational awareness. She shared her district's initiative of Reading First, an outcome of the *No Child Left Behind Act*, and her lessons related to the training she received. As she taught one day, her principal conducted a walkthrough and asked why students were doing what they were doing. She explained to him the rationale for her choices in activities. What she found, however, did not include his disliking or misunderstanding of the activities, but rather the timing of the activities. He did not know why "making words" took place when it did, when clearly the schedule indicated she would have moved on to guided reading at 9:20 a.m. This principal, as the teacher stated, had an unrealistic picture of early childhood classrooms. While he acted with situational awareness, he did so in a negative

connotation. A discussion followed between the principal and staff to keep to the schedule of the 90-minute block of reading and not stray from that schedule.

Although his intentions were good – implementing the program with fidelity – his actions and comments were not supportive of early childhood learning.

Another story from the same second grade teacher related to the discipline responsibility. She shared her thoughts on her principal's ability to positively affect students' lives by keeping them enrolled. The building and district in which this teacher works had a transient population. Therefore, the actions, or inactions, at times, of the faculty, staff, and principal, contributed to a family's decision to stay or to leave. This particular principal was noted as going out of his way to welcome students and families into the building, as well as encouraging them to attend school regularly. In addition, this principal was bilingual, and was therefore able to communicate effectively with the student population; this type of presence in the building had improved disciplinary practices in recent years.

As teachers contemplated the concept of discipline, they wished for a stronger rating than in other areas listed in the 21 responsibilities. In fact, early childhood teachers desired a rating of 0.8, the third highest rating in this study, in terms of discipline. Teachers suggested, however, that principals with elementary or early childhood experience tended to have a higher degree of discipline at 0.5. On the other hand, principals who had experience primarily in



the secondary grade levels had a rating of 0.2, or 30% lower than their peers with like experiences in elementary or early childhood settings.

### Results

Research Question 1: What are the lived experiences of PK-6 teachers with principals who have a background in early childhood or elementary?

Research Question 2: What are the lived experiences of PK-6 teachers with principals who have a background in middle school or secondary?

In each of the 21 responsibilities for effective leadership in relation to student achievement, principals in this study with elementary or early childhood backgrounds outperformed principals with middle level or secondary backgrounds. While some of the responsibilities showed close rating, other areas displayed findings of polar opposites. Table 13 shows the order in which Marzano et al.'s (2005) meta-analysis ranked the 21 responsibilities in terms of strongest rating to the weakest rating. In addition, Table 13 provides the same ranking of the 21 responsibilities from this research study as a means of comparison.

Table 13

*Rank Order of the 21 Responsibilities in terms of Highest to Lowest Rating*

Marzano, Waters, & McNulty's Meta-Analysis: K-12 Schools (2005)	Research Case Study: PK-3 Classrooms (2014)
Situational Awareness	Communication
Flexibility	Relationships
Outreach	Discipline
Monitoring / Evaluating	Focus
Discipline	Visibility
Resources	Affirmation
Order	Culture
Knowledge of Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment	Flexibility
Culture	Knowledge of Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment
Input	Situational Awareness
Change Agent	Ideals / Beliefs
Focus	Input
Intellectual Stimulation	Monitoring / Evaluating
Contingent Rewards	Optimizer
Communication	Order
Ideals / Beliefs	Outreach
Optimizer	Resources
Visibility	Change Agent
Involvement in Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment	Contingent Rewards
Affirmation	Involvement in Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment
Relationships	Intellectual Stimulation

When comparing the two ranked lists, certain responsibilities identified themselves as closely ranked, while others could not be further apart. For

example, communication ranked highest among early childhood practitioners in terms of leadership effectiveness and student achievement, whereas the original meta-analysis placed it 15<sup>th</sup>. An additional area that displayed complete ends of the spectrum was relationships. Marzano et al. (2005) found relationships to be the weakest rating in terms of student achievement, while this case study of early childhood educators suggested it was vastly more important.

Likewise, two areas ranked low in terms of student achievement from the original meta-analysis were visibility and affirmation. These responsibilities were listed as numbers 18 (visibility) and 20 (affirmation). However, when early childhood practitioners provided input, the rankings moved from the bottom one-third to the top one-third, indicating their importance in the early childhood classroom based on the participants' data.

Two areas closely ranked for the meta-analysis and the case study were: (1) knowledge of curriculum, instruction, and assessment; and (2) involvement in curriculum, instruction, and assessment. Identifying these two areas as closely related for each study indicated respondents have a sense of reality when it came to curriculum, instruction, and assessment. This means, the meta-analysis and the case study showed "knowledge of" those areas is more important than "involvement in." Additionally, that premise related closely with input, which also closely correlated on each ranked list. When the principal accepted input in terms of curriculum, instruction, and assessment he or she may not have needed

to be an active participant in the process of adopting curriculum or implementing new approaches to learning and assessment. Rather, the principal was able to trust the work of input from colleagues as a means of reliability.

While presenting at a national early childhood conference related to this research I heard a conferee state how the rank order seemed to be “completely opposite when thinking about K-12,” in comparing Marzano et al. data and this study. She continued by saying how the bottom seven areas from the meta-analysis, roughly, were the responsibilities, which early childhood educators identified as highly important, and therefore valued most; it led to an interesting conversation during the session. She indicated that the top seven areas identified throughout this case study were areas that early childhood practitioners valued and considered to be anchors in terms of early childhood educational practices: (a) communication, (b) relationships, (c) discipline, (d) focus, (e) visibility, (f) affirmation, and (g) focus. As a result, early childhood educators, in the study as well as conferees at an early childhood conference, believed as though these seven responsibilities directly influenced student achievement, not only on the principal’s part but also the teacher’s.

In selecting teacher participants for this case study, I focused on teachers who had either a standard or master license in elementary education or early childhood education, as well as those who had taught grades PK-3 in public settings anywhere from 5 to 30+ years. I wondered if respondents, based on

amount of educational preparation (standard or master license) and experience (novice to veteran) had any effect on the data collected. Table 14 displays the teacher's grade level, license information, and rating in terms of how she ranked the 21 responsibilities. This rating is based on the 10 respondents and their overall rankings within the survey. A rank of 1.0 was the highest rating, which means the respondent ranked her principal high in all areas. Continuing, the participant who had a rating of 0.82 ranked her principal low in specific characteristics, resulting in a lower rating among the 10 respondents.

Table 14

*Teacher Participant Rank Order of Rating*

Teacher/Grade	Years Teaching	License	Rating
Third Grade #1	9	Standard	1.0
Second Grade #1	22	Master	0.98
First Grade #1	25	Standard	0.97
Preschool #1	10	Standard	0.94
Third Grade #2	28	Standard	0.93
Kindergarten #1	34	Standard	0.91
Second Grade #2	27	Master	0.89
Preschool #2	27	Master	0.87
First Grade #2	32	Master	0.87
Kindergarten #2	9	Standard	0.82

In looking at the data regarding teachers' experience in the classroom as well as amount of education, my original thought that these two characteristics

may show additional findings did not indicate experience or amount of education had a statistical impact. Further, the research indicated grades PK-3 generally considered the same responsibilities to be important, thus the rating of 0.82 or higher. Another area of interest was the rating of 0.87 listed in Table 14. The two respondents who had a rating of 0.87 taught in the same building, yet their answers throughout the survey differed greatly and resulted in the same rating.

Table 14 displays the degree to which the grade level participants aligned with one another. Same grade teachers differed from one another by a minimum of four positions and as many as six. Those grade level teachers with closest rating included preschool, kindergarten, and third. Grade levels with a spread of five positions included second, and first grade had the widest spread in positions with six degrees of separation.

The 10 participants in this study provided insights into the early childhood principalship. The principalship, as a whole, requires a principal to have both management and leadership knowledge as well as expertise in curriculum, instruction, and assessment. In addition to these skills, early childhood principals must also have a repertoire of personal characteristics that enable them to succeed in the social aspects of the principalship. These abilities, both social and political in nature, contribute to a principal's overall success as an early childhood principal.

As evidenced by this research, early childhood principals must be skillful at and have an awareness of the subtle nuances that create a school culture. School culture is affected by a multitude of external and internal forces, and it is the responsibility of the principal to coordinate the efforts of those in the school to provide quality programming to young students. Young students benefit from principals who: (a) have a background in early childhood education; (b) have an advanced understanding of child development and developmentally appropriate practices; (c) focus on early childhood education to close the achievement gap; (d) foster positive relationships with effective communication; and (e) are visible in early childhood classrooms.

## CHAPTER 5

### DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### Discussion

Early childhood leadership is an area that needs additional support. With the advancement of voluntary preschool efforts throughout the state of Iowa, as well as special education mandates such as Response to Intervention, early childhood principals find themselves in uncharted territory, at times. This uneasy feeling is due, in part, to the responsibilities, requirements, and characteristics of programming unique to early childhood.

Throughout the state of Iowa thousands of individuals hold administrative licensure. This licensure may be in a variety of areas that include, but are not limited to: (a) K-6, (b) 7-12, (c) K-8, (d) K-12, (e) PK-12, or (f) any grade level due to holding a Permanent Professional License. Recent graduates, since 2004, have been issued a PK-12 administrative license due to the Iowa Board of Educational Examiners' change in licensing. In addition, of these thousands who hold administrative licensure, roughly 230 of them hold an endorsement in early childhood or early childhood special education (Iowa BOEE, personal communication, 2013). In other words, a fraction of the administrative population in Iowa has any background in early childhood education or early childhood special education.



The purpose of this case study was to examine the lived experiences of early childhood teachers who teach under the direction of principals who either had backgrounds in early childhood/elementary or middle/secondary. The teachers provided insights into early childhood programming and the leadership of those programs. Additionally, the study sought to characterize the uniqueness of early childhood education.

The case study methodology applied to this research allowed for themes to produce themselves throughout analysis. Case study approaches to research provide opportunities to interview participants, observe interactions, and conduct surveys of participants in an effort to better understand the phenomena. For this case study, qualitative measures were utilized including interviewing (one-on-one) and surveying respondents. The survey was based on Marzano et al.'s (2005) 21 responsibilities of effective leadership in terms of student achievement. Further, the study, designed to gain understanding of the 21 responsibilities from an early childhood perspective, included public school teachers of grades preschool through third.

The exclusivity of this case study included the absence of previous research. No other scholarly data existed in terms of early childhood leadership in Iowa schools related to the Iowa Board of Educational Examiners' decision to move from two separate administrative licenses (K-6 and 7-12) to a combined

PK-12 license. As a result, this study provided newfound information related to otherwise separate topics of research – leadership and early childhood education.

### Conclusion

Grounded in the research findings, this study contributed to the knowledge base and overall understanding related to principal leadership in early childhood education. This study indicated a gap existed among PK-12 licensed principals in terms of best practices in early childhood education, and is supported by teacher interviews and survey data collected. This gap among early childhood principals includes the concepts of developmentally appropriate practices for young children and child development. Further, this case study presented unequivocal data related to leadership styles of principals with secondary experience versus those who identify with early childhood educators by sharing equal licensure, and the styles' impact on student achievement.

Prior to the change in administrative licensure in 2004, a study of this focus would not have been warranted. With the change in licensure, however, questions arose regarding principals' ability to lead effectively early childhood settings with a PK-12 license. These questions, rightly posed, had gone unanswered for a decade. Now, in 2014, this study addresses the concerns of early childhood practitioners one decade following the Iowa Board of Education Examiners' landmark decision to combine administrative licenses.

This study suggested a need for early childhood principals to have backgrounds, or experience, in early childhood education prior to leading it. Furthermore, the study discovered a parallel to Rodd's (2006) work, which suggested leadership is associated with experience. In order to lead effectively, a principal must have had experience in the area in which he or she intends to lead.

The study identified the need for early childhood principals to have an advanced understanding of child development and developmentally appropriate practices (DAP). Jorde-Bloom (1992, as cited in Rodd, 2006) stated "that the role [of the early childhood leader] is both critical and complex, requiring conceptual and practical skill in organizational theory and leadership, child development and early childhood programming, fiscal and legal issues, and committee, parent, and community relations" (p. 259). In addition, Kostelnik and Grady (2009) mentioned "Most important, DAP requires everyone responsible for educating young children to recognize that children are not miniature adults. Early childhood is a distinct time of life both qualitatively and quantitatively unlike later childhood or adolescence" (p. 77). The concept associated with leading early childhood has been stated as critical and complex; furthermore, it requires everyone responsible to acknowledge that young children learn differently and therefore need programming that suits their abilities.

The study also uncovered the need for early childhood principals to focus on quality early childhood education practices to close the achievement gap. One of these practices is the idea of a quality environment. Copple and Bredekamp (2009) suggested environments be based on the needs of children, be safe and welcoming, and be conducive to children's exploration. Creating environments with these characteristics in mind benefits young children's learning and development. The data indicated a need for early childhood principals to understand how early childhood classrooms look, feel, and operate differently from those of upper grade levels.

Another need the study unearthed is the need for early childhood principals to foster positive relationships and communicate effectively. Supportive of this notion is the National Association of Elementary School Principals, which stated "communication and relationships between home and schools helps to ease transitions and enable children to be comfortable with adults and peers at school" (p. 23). While communication and relationships between home and school are important, communication and relationships between principal and teacher are critical.

The last need identified by this research was the need for early childhood principals to be visible in early childhood classrooms. Marzano et al. (2005) noted the importance of any school leader in terms of visibility with its inclusion in the 21 responsibilities. Further, all respondents noted the need for administrative

presence in the classroom, not necessarily for purposes of discipline and order, but rather to foster relationships and to create a caring culture within the building.

The results of this study suggested that the requirements placed on an early childhood principal included a sense of understanding in terms of curriculum, instruction, assessment, child development, and programming. Further, the results indicated the duties of an early childhood principal extended beyond the building; in fact, the principal is ingrained in society writ large. With such discovery, the need to enhance early childhood leadership was evidenced.

#### Recommendations for Future Research

This study may be viewed as a starting point for educational leadership reform in the state of Iowa. Specifically, this study identified critical areas of concern wherein early childhood principals may wish to focus their efforts to improve early childhood programming that falls under their supervision. Indeed, additional studies may be necessary to gauge the areas that need additional support in terms of educational leadership preparation and programming is needed.

The evidence that revealed the themes, which surfaced throughout this study, is not only sound educational theory and practice, but also the voices of early childhood practitioners who work in the field on a daily basis. These voices supported the literature that early childhood is a unique time in a child's

development, and therefore must be afforded specific resources, modalities of learning, and specialized teachers and leaders in order to provide effective early childhood programming. These teachers and leaders are a handful of the first adults who set the child on his or her educational path.

Below is a list of recommendations revealed as a result of the study, which included 10 early childhood teacher participants throughout the state of Iowa during the spring of 2014:

1. The Iowa Board of Educational Examiners (BOEE) needs to examine its requirements of degree-issuing institutions regarding principal licensure. The BOEE, in its 2004 decision to offer a combined PK-12 endorsement, left programming decisions up to the institutions themselves. As a result, some principals in today's early childhood settings lack the appropriate training indicative of effective early childhood leadership. The BOEE may need to create one statewide program of principal leadership under which all principals are licensed in order to guarantee a candidate's understanding of the breadth of programming they will need.
2. The Iowa Board of Educational Examiners needs to return to the two separate endorsements related to educational leadership. The separate endorsements include one for K-6 and one for 7-12; preschool would likely be added to the K-6 endorsement. The need for this separation may be warranted if degree-issuing institutions continue current practices

related to their focus on preparing early childhood principals. In such separation, only those licensed in the area in which they teach could become principals. This means, a teacher who is licensed K-6 may only be a principal of grades K-6, and likewise for grades 7-12.

3. Degree-issuing institutions need to evaluate their programming related to educational leadership and principal preparation. With such evaluation, institutions may identify areas of strengths and weaknesses, providing an opportunity for improvement. One way of completing the evaluation process is to have various departments inform the educational leadership division as to what they teach or how they prepare their teachers. For example, the department of special education may provide requirements of their undergraduate and graduate programs to the educational leadership department in an effort to understand what may be needed for an opposite-area-licensed individual to excel.
4. Departments of educational leadership throughout the state of Iowa need to place a bigger emphasis on early childhood education in order to prepare principals appropriately. As a result of the BOEE's decision to offer a combined PK-12 administrative endorsement, higher education institutions provided the BOEE their plans for increasing candidate's knowledge base for the PK-6 or 7-12 area in which they were not licensed. It is possible that after a decade of research as well as changes in school

reform legislation, that Iowa and its institutions need to examine licensure practices.



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## APPENDIX A

## TEACHER INTERVIEW

Tell me about a time when you felt supported by your building principal. Do you feel as though their support was a result of understanding early childhood practices?

Tell me about a time when you felt alienated by your building principal. Do you feel as though their alienation was a result of a lack of understanding of early childhood practices?

To what extent do you feel your building principal understands early development and how it is a prerequisite for later learning?

Describe a situation where you felt your training in elementary/early childhood education was better suited for classroom practice versus that of the proscribed curricula/initiative of the district.

Explain a situation in which you voiced a concern about developmentally appropriate practices in your classroom when questioned by your building principal. Was the opposition/questioning related to the administrator's amount of understanding of early childhood education?

What do you feel are the roles and responsibilities of the elementary principal?



How visible is your building principal in your early childhood classroom compared to the upper grades? Is it comparative/disproportionate? If so, why do you believe so?

How relevant do you feel the need for elementary principals to have (a) taught in an elementary setting prior to leading it, and (b) acquired certification/endorsements in early childhood/elementary education?

Please share with me one word that describes your feeling about the relationship between you and your building principal. Explain.

If you have been part of the mentoring/coaching program, how effective do you feel it is for new teachers? Do you feel administrators new to the field of elementary and/or early childhood education would benefit from a similar program?

APPENDIX B

TEACHER BASIC INFORMATION FORM

Interviewee Name:	Date:
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How long have you taught?

\_\_\_\_\_ years

How long have you taught in early childhood, grades PK-3?

\_\_\_\_\_ years

In what grades have you taught?

A)

B)

C)

D)

What certification/endorsements do you hold?

Fill in the circle for all that apply:

- K-6 Classroom Teacher
- PK-K Pre-Kindergarten-Kindergarten
- PK-3 Early Childhood
- Rule of 1988 - By virtue of holding this license prior to 1988...

List other endorsements you hold

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Under how many building principals have you served?

Total Amount \_\_\_\_\_ Amount \_\_\_\_\_ male \_\_\_\_\_ female

To your knowledge, how many of the building principals under whom you've served have held early childhood and/or elementary education certification?

Total Amount \_\_\_\_\_

In how many buildings/districts have you taught?

Total Amount \_\_\_\_\_ (buildings) Total Amount \_\_\_\_\_ (districts)

## APPENDIX C

## TWENTY-ONE RESPONSIBILITIES FORM

McREL created a list of 21 responsibilities of highly effective principals. Please rank your building principal on a scale of 1-2-3 in terms of the responsibilities; 1 being rare or nonexistent, 2 being sometimes or somewhat, and 3 being most of the time or always. Please fill out two forms: one for a principal with 7-12 background in education, and one for a principal with PK-6 background in education.

Responsibility	Description of Responsibility	Scale		
Affirmation	Recognizes and celebrates accomplishments and acknowledges failures	1	2	3
Change Agent	Is willing to challenge and actively challenges the status quo	1	2	3
Contingent Awards	Recognizes and rewards individual accomplishments	1	2	3
Communication	Establishes strong lines of communication with and among teachers and students	1	2	3
Culture	Fosters shared beliefs and a sense of community and cooperation	1	2	3
Discipline	Protects teachers from issues and influences that would detract from their teaching time or focus	1	2	3
Flexibility	Adapts his or her leadership behavior to the needs of the current situation and is comfortable with dissent	1	2	3
Focus	Establishes clear goals and keeps those goals in the forefront of the school's attention	1	2	3
Ideas/Beliefs	Communicates and operates from strong ideals and beliefs about schooling	1	2	3
Input	Involves teachers in the design and implementation of important decisions and policies	1	2	3
Intellectual Stimulation	Ensures faculty and staff are aware of the most current theories and practices and makes the discussion of these a regular aspect of the school's culture	1	2	3
Involvement in Curriculum, Instruction, & Assessment	Is directly involved in the design and implementation of curriculum, instruction, and assessment practices	1	2	3
Knowledge of Curriculum, Instruction, & Assessment	Is knowledgeable about current curriculum, instruction, and assessment practices	1	2	3
Monitoring / Evaluating	Monitors the effectiveness of school practices and their impact on student learning	1	2	3
Optimizer	Inspires and leads new and challenging innovations	1	2	3
Order	Establishes a set of standard operating procedures and routines	1	2	3

*Table continues*

Responsibility	Description of Responsibility	Scale		
Outreach	Is an advocate and spokesperson for the school to all stakeholders	1	2	3
Relationships	Demonstrates and awareness of the personal aspects of teachers and staff	1	2	3
Resources	Provides teachers with materials and professional development necessary for the successful execution of their jobs	1	2	3
Situational Awareness	Is aware of the details and undercurrents in the running of the school and uses this information to address current and potential problems	1	2	3
Visibility	Has quality contact and interactions with teachers and students	1	2	3

