Florida’s Principals’ Perceptions of Their Principal Preparation Program: A Study of How Preparation Programs Impact Efficacy as a School Principal

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Florida’s Principals’ Perceptions of Their Principal Preparation Program: A Study of How Preparation Programs Impact Efficacy as a School Principal

by

Justin Faulkner

A Dissertation submitted to the Department of Leadership, School Counseling, and Sport Management
In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education

UNIVERSITY OF NORTH FLORIDA
COLLEGE OF EDUCATION AND HUMAN SERVICES
June 8th, 2023

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This dissertation titled Florida's Principals’ Perceptions of Their Principal Preparation Program: A Study of How Preparation Programs Impact Efficacy as a School Principal is approved:

Dr. David Hoppey, Committee Chair

Dr. Amanda Kulp, Committee Member 1

Dr. Cathy Atria, Committee Member 2

Dr. Daniel Reyes-Guerra, Committee Member 3
DEDICATION

To Aunt Ruby and Aunt Delena:

Thank you for being the first educators who inspired me to learn, to teach, and to lead.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This study wouldn’t have been possible without the incredible guidance and support of my dissertation committee. Dr. David Hoppey, thank you for such thorough feedback and mentoring through the research and writing process and for trusting me that I was getting the work done! I can’t think of anyone else I would have rather served as my committee chair. Dr. Amanda Kulp, you are the epitome of what makes a great teacher great. Your inspiration to get out of my comfort zone with quantitative analysis has been tremendously challenging while also thoroughly rewarding. I can only hope to measure up to your caliber in the future. Dr. Cathy Atria, your influence in leadership not just on my committee but also in our work together has changed my trajectory and for that I will always be grateful. You push me to be a smarter thinker and to ensure that all students benefit from our ways of leadership. Lastly, Dr. Daniel Reyes-Guerra, you have included me in important work throughout our state and have inspired me to continue to seek ways to elevate not just my leadership but also to create stronger leadership in others. Our work is just beginning together and I’m excited to see more research develop alongside you.

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Abstract

In 2020, the National Association of Secondary School Principals revealed that a staggering 42 percent of principals plan on leaving the profession and that compounds the already alarming rate of teachers leaving the field (National Association of Secondary School Principals, 2020). More locally in Florida, the landscape of educational leadership has changed quickly also adding to this problematic exodus of principals. In order to better understand the principal experience in Florida, particularly with principal preparation, this study seeks to understand how principal preparation, specifically Level II certification preparation, influences efficacy once at the helm of a school. This research uses a modified version of Megan Tschannen-Moran’s Principal Sense of Efficacy Scale survey to gauge the perceptions of current principals to inform practice of preparation for leaders of tomorrow. Results reveal that descriptive statistics provided valuable insights into how principals across Florida perceive the impact of their preparation program on their effectiveness. Notably, the utilization of independent-samples t-tests uncovered a significant correlation between gender, particularly female gender, and principal perception. However, when examining the relationship between race and years of service through one-way ANOVA statistics, no significant connections were found, suggesting that these factors did not strongly influence principal perception of their preparation. In a conclusive manner, regression analysis indicated that gender, race, and years of service did not serve as significant influencers on principals' perceptions of their preparation program's efficacy impact. Overall, findings from this study indicate additional research is needed to better understand how efficacy can increase in not just all principals as the result of preparation but also specifically with female principals. Research consistently indicates that principals have the second greatest impact on student outcomes, just behind teachers. When
Florida principals express only moderate confidence in their leadership abilities, it raises concerns about their performance in schools. This gap between theoretical knowledge and practical implementation negatively affects students, who deserve better. To address this issue, more attention should be given to developing robust preparation programs that are meaningful and impactful in shaping and sustaining effective principals. By doing so, we can ensure that students receive the best possible educational leadership and support for their academic journey.
Chapter 1: Introduction

School-based leadership and the demands placed upon school leaders have drastically changed over the years. Formerly known to be building managers, school principals today need to be leaders of instruction and people (Grissom et al., 2021). As accountability measures update over time, principals are increasingly more responsible for teacher and student success. Students learn differently now than they have in the past largely due to advancements in technology. With technology everchanging, the learning environment has quickly changed allowing for increased collaboration, wider access to information, and students are coming to school with far more experience in technology than prior generations which has altered the way they learn at a neurological level (Ezhova, 2021; Murray, 2021; Noelle, 2019). As students now learn differently, teachers must teach differently which consequently, drives the significance of improving the way principals lead. In order for such improvement to take place, the principal preparation process must be examined. No longer are principal candidates being prepared solely as building managers; the role of principal has become far more complex which requires more complex preparation.

Rather than seen as a barrier, such complexity should be of significant focus, as principals influence much across the school community. Grissom et al. (2021) suggest that principal preparation, with its “high ceiling of return” is something worthy of thoughtful investment. Principals “need to be educational visionaries, instructional and curriculum leaders, assessment experts, disciplinarians, community builders, public relations experts, budget analysts, facility managers, special programs administrators, and expert overseers of legal, contractual, and policy mandates and initiatives” (Davis et al., 2005. p 3). Clearly the role has expanded for principals to lead teachers and students effectively – as should the programs that
prepare them to do so. To better understand the complexities of principalship, and more importantly, to better staff schools with strong principals, principal preparation needs further study.

**The Current Context of Principal Preparation**

In a recent study, the National Association of Secondary School Principals discovered that “42 percent of surveyed principals indicated they were considering leaving their profession” (National Association of Secondary School Principals, 2020, para. 5). One of the leading contributing factors to this potential exodus is a lack of access to quality professional development. Principals need, and look for, additional professional development that they either did not receive from initial preparation or to enhance their current practice but have come up short. Once principals are given keys to the building, they should also be entering with the adequate skillset to lead such a complex environment.

Research compiled by The Wallace Foundation (2013) suggests that there are five key practices that when performed well, build efficacy in the principal. Effective leaders “[shape] a vision of academic success for all students, [create] a climate hospitable to education, [cultivate] leadership in others, [improve] instruction, and [manage] people, data and processes to foster school improvement” (The Wallace Foundation, 2013, p. 4). When leaders aren’t prepared adequately in these areas, principals leave. Johnson (2005) as cited in NAESP article: discovered one of the main contributing factors in principals leaving the profession was “preservice (leadership) training that left them feeling unprepared for the challenges of the job” (National Association of Secondary School Principals; National Association of Elementary School Principals, 2013, p. 6). Further, Johnson (2005) suggests principals face hurdles in accessing professional development that include lack of time and money.
To strengthen the practice of principals already on the job, district support could be offered in tandem with their authentic problems of practice experienced in real time. Such ways might include covering time to allow principals the opportunity to learn or embed learning into cycles of coaching, mentoring, and feedback systems (National Association of Secondary School Principals, 2020). To create more sustainable principal careers that greatly impact teacher and student outcomes, highly efficacious training such as relevant experiences through shadowing, interning, residencies, etc., that does not come as a cost burden to emerging leaders should be provided. Funding for more innovative job embedded training can be provided using funds under such as Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), Florida entitlement grants for leadership development, and Title II. Title II funds function as support to increase instructional quality and improve principal leadership. Such supported activities include, “teacher, principal and school leader recruitment; training; induction and mentoring; professional development; retention; and class size reduction” (Florida Department of Education, n.d., p. 1).

**Problem Statement**

Regardless of barriers and lack of time for professional development, there remains a problematic reality: given the demands, compensation, and the recent highly politicized and negative perceptions of various aspects of public schools highly qualified leaders are more difficult to recruit and retain (Deliberti and Schwartz, 2023; Townsend, 2023, Ward, 2022). Furthermore, because their jobs are tremendously multi-faceted, principals are under-prepared to impact student learning (Knapp et al., 2003; Levine, 2005; Young, 2002). Correcting this reality requires a positive shift in a principal’s self-perception as a leader and how well they feel they can perform in the duties required as a principal. As such, a principal’s perspective on
preparation is worth investigation to determine how best to prepare, recruit, and retain effective school leaders.

**Purpose Statement**

The purpose of this study is to examine Florida’s principals’ perception of their Level II principal preparation program to determine if there is a relationship that exists between their preparation experience and their self-perceived efficacy as a building principal.

**Research Questions**

- How do principals feel their Level II preparation programs equipped them to be able to fulfill their duties as a school building principal?
- How do years of experience, race, and gender influence overall perceptions of principal preparation?

Quantitative data were collected using the Principal Sense of Efficacy Scale from a statewide distribution through Qualtrics. The survey was sent to principals throughout the state who currently possess Level II principal certification and are sitting principals. In order to assess principals’ perception of their preparedness for principalship, their level of self-efficacy was gauged. The survey comprised three sections, each consisting of six questions, which were categorized into management, instructional leadership, and moral leadership. Descriptive statistics and frequencies were employed to analyze each subsection as well as the combined results of all sections, providing an overview of principals’ overall sense of self-efficacy and preparation. To examine the impact of race, gender, and years of service on the perceived efficacy derived from preparation programs, various statistical analyses were employed. Firstly, an independent-samples t-test was conducted to investigate whether gender influences the overall perception of principal preparation. Secondly, one-way ANOVAs were utilized to assess the
significance of race and years of service as factors influencing the efficacy resulting from preparation. Subsequently, bivariate correlation was performed to determine the level of agreement between the variables of Management, Instructional Leadership, and Moral Leadership. Finally, all 18 questions were consolidated into a single variable referred to as Overall Preparation.

**Rationale for the Study**

Increasing efficacy in school leadership, particularly the principal, has been a nationwide focus, or embedded in a larger educational focus, since the Improving America’s Schools Act (IASA) in 1994 which began the shift towards a new era of accountability in that schools and districts would be held accountable for student performance (Goertz, 2005). From this legislation, states began to implement policy that directed school districts and schools to respond accordingly with measuring student success however the standard of success varied from state to state (Goertz & Duffy, 2001). To remedy this inconsistency from state to state, the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act was passed in 2001. The NCLB Act aimed at increasing student performance and progress for every student and failure to do so would lead to sanctions. These sanctions, and often times public criticism, were to be the driving factors in the attempt to shift practice in school leaders and teachers however, there is “strong evidence that NCLB sanctions are associated with a higher level of principals’ job stress and a higher turnover rate” (Mitani, 2018, p. 822). These levels of stress continued under the follow-up policy in Race to the Top which reinforced a system of accountability with a competitive approach designed for states to apply for funding based on a set of criteria from which comprised additional accountability measures (Brown, 2015).
The most recent shift in federal education policy comes with Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) which officially replaces NCLB and allows for more state flexibility that paves the way for additional school-choice programs and parent rights. This law also provides additional funding and support in the development of principals and principal supervisors (Minnich, 2022). With a specified focus on improving school leadership to increase student achievement, now is the time to revisit principal preparation programs and investigate what is needed to better equip schools with highly efficacious leadership. Seashore et al. (2010) captures this necessity: “To date we have not found a single case of a school improving its student achievement record in the absence of talented leadership” (p. 9).

Most states have standards by which to prepare leaders but programs can differ greatly from state-to-state and even district-by-district. With support from The Wallace Foundation, researcher Deven Scott (2018) discovered that every state shapes their leadership policy around state standards. Further, over 70% of states have alternate certification pathways for leaders, embed experiential learning into their programs as a requirement, and candidates must have at least three years of instructional experience and a master’s degree.

Florida, which is the setting for participants in this study, has established leadership certification pathways that stem from two levels of certification—Level I (assistant principalship) and Level II (principalship) although it should be noted that principals can still serve as principals with only a Level I certification. Level I and II programs are defined by the FLDOE as follows: “Level I programs lead to initial certification in educational leadership for the purpose of preparing individuals to serve as school administrators. Level II programs build upon Level I training and lead to renewal certification as a school principal” (The Florida Senate, 2021, para. 1). Level I programs are typically a part of a Masters in Educational Leadership
program leading to the role of assistant principal, whereas Level II can come from universities, school districts, and third-party providers. As the state of Florida revised leadership standards and begins to revise program approval standards for Level I and Level II preparation programs, principal perceptions of previous preparation experience will be helpful to influence and shape the program approval standards as well as Level I and II program designs. Finally, understanding how principals perceive their preparation influences their efficacy as a principal contributes to not only the existing breadth of research around preparation but it will serve as a bridge that connects theory and practice, with the goal to strengthen current and future programs and ultimately, refining school leadership so that teaching and learning outcomes are maximized at the highest, sustaining levels.

**Theoretical Framework**

Albert Bandura’s Self-Efficacy Theory served as the theoretical framework to examine the relationship between standards-based principal preparation programs, principal effectiveness, and principals’ perception of the impact of these programs on their effectiveness. Bandura’s Self-Efficacy Theory is derived from his broader Social Cognitive Theory, originally known as Social Learning Theory, which centers on the belief that individuals possess the capacity and resources to accomplish tasks, leading to enhanced performance. Using Bandura’s four criteria for self-efficacy (Mastery Experiences, Vicarious Experiences, Persuasion, and Emotional and Physiological States), the connection between self-efficacy and leadership, specifically in the context of school principals, becomes evident. Effective principal preparation programs should incorporate realistic experiences that build upon mastery. By engaging in authentic experiential learning, aspiring principals can develop confidence in the essential leadership skills necessary
for success. Additionally, fostering a social learning environment, such as through a cohort model, can greatly enhance the efficacy of principal preparation programs.

**Limitations and Delimitations**

Several limitations impacted this study, particularly with who responded to the survey. Because not every principal is required to hold a Level II certification, not every principal had access to the survey. Level II programs were selected as a qualifier to provide an opportunity for districts to review their Level II preparation programs as informed by the potential outcomes of this research. Further research would need to capture perspectives of every type of principal beyond just Level II certification bearers. Further, due to time constraints, the survey was sent statewide without consideration of individual district research guidelines; instead, publicly recorded email addresses were utilized. With this nuance, some districts prevented their principals from accessing the survey. To gain deeper perspective in the future, it would require district-by-district surveys to be vetted by each respective research process guidelines.

**Chapter Summary**

The role of the principal has evolved into a complex one, involving much more than managing the school. Principals must be fiscally responsible, recruit, hire, and rehire teachers (despite the challenges of teacher shortages), create strong cultures, engage community stakeholders, grow leadership in others, and most importantly, create conditions to positively impact student achievement! In order to meet each of these needs and more, principals must be adequately prepared to do so. Through a quantitative survey, this study explored how principals in the state of Florida perceived their principal preparation program and how it impacted their self-perceived efficacy in their current role as a principal as well as to determine if demographic background information such as years of experience, race, and gender influence overall
perceptions of principal preparation programs. It is the intent to better understand, through participants’ perspectives, how to prepare principals more adequately so that we see more schools contain evidence of strong teaching and learning along with fewer principals vacating the position. Four additional chapters will comprise this study. Chapter Two examines existing literature around principal preparation programs and what is needed to be successful in the principalship. Further, the theoretical framework using Alex Bandura’s Self-Efficacy Theory will be explained in connection with principal sense of efficacy in leadership. Chapter Three explains the research design, data collection procedures, instrumentation, and analysis of data collected. Chapters Four and Five delineate findings from the survey data analysis and discuss future research on what is needed to successfully prepare principals for leading schools.
Chapter 2: Review of Relevant Literature

This literature review explores the impact principal preparation programs have on the success of the principalship. Examples of past and current models reflect the necessity to not only pay attention to leadership preparation but to also work towards improving how we are preparing stronger, more effective leaders. “Leaders incorporate the ideas, values, and experiences reflective of a pluralistic society and promote continual learning” (Barnett, et al., 1992, p. 72). The significance of examining leadership preparation programs and understanding their impact cannot be understated. “The public demands for more effective schools have placed growing attention on the crucial role of school leaders — a professional group largely overlooked by the various educational reform movements of the past two decades” (Davis, et al., 2005, p. 3). To best understand how principal preparation programs impact school principals, this literature review examines types of principal leadership, models of principal preparation programs, state principal leadership standards, types of leadership for principals, and Alex Bandura’s Self-Efficacy Theory, to understand how principals feel prepared as a result of their program completion.

Types of Principal Leadership

No longer are principal candidates solely being prepared as building managers; the role of principal has become far more complex. School principals must be aware of how each stakeholder in a school community interacts – self, others, organizations, and society – and marshal them around a central vision that moves a school forward for the sake of student achievement (Barnett, et al., 1992). Furthermore, “They need to be educational visionaries, instructional and curriculum leaders, assessment experts, disciplinarians, community builders, public relations experts, budget analysts, facility managers, special programs administrators, and
expert overseers of legal, contractual, and policy mandates and initiatives” (Davis et al., 2005, p 3). These multiple facets of principal leadership can be segregated into three major subtypes of leadership skillsets: Management, Instructional Leadership, and Moral Leadership.

**Management**

A principal’s day can look vastly different from one day to the next when it pertains to their varying responsibilities in the role. Principals have long served as managers of school buildings where they are tasked with operational duties that are necessary to not only maintain a healthy and safe school but to continuously improve it as well. And while there has been a shift toward a principal being more of an instructional leader over time, “make no mistake, the increasing emphasis on instructional leadership does not mean the more traditional managerial concerns of school administration have disappeared. Indeed, principals are still expected to be effective building managers, disciplinarians, and public relations experts” (Alvoid & Black, 2014, p.1). One thing is for certain: the complexities that make up the roles of a principal take time and for a school to run most effectively, it requires strong time management.

Principals are tasked with maintaining and overseeing all aspects of school management: scheduling, organizational management, district and state compliance, student data reporting, building work orders, human resources, community involvement. How principals manage their time is incredibly important and researchers Grissom, et al. (2015) found a correlation between time management and performance. “Differences in time allocation and stress for principals with strong time management skills suggests that time management can play a role in how the principal runs the school” (p. 10). DiPaola and Tschannen-Moran (2003) also found significance in time management and include it as a measure for how principals perceive their effectiveness in the Principal Sense of Efficacy Scale survey along with shaping operational policies,
managing change, and prioritization of duties. Ultimately, time management leads to more productive output by principals which leads to higher sense of efficacy in their overall job performance (Grissom et al., 2015).

While there have been little changes to the normal managerial duties of principals such as discipline, fiscal management, state reporting, etc., other managerial duties have grown such as school safety and increased presence with managing communication with stakeholders through email and social media (DiPaola & Tschannen-Moran, 2003; Louis & Gordon, 2006). Alvoid and Black (2014, p. 1) suggest that the “concept of the principal as a building manager has given way to a model where the principal is an aspirational leader, a team builder, a coach, and an agent of visionary change.” To add to the growing complexity of the role as a school principal, instructional leadership has also taken a front seat to the daily responsibilities, often competing for the already lack of time in the principal’s day (DiPaola & Tschannen-Moran, 2003). “These changes have rightly put student performance at the forefront, and principals are being asked to develop new competencies largely centered around data, curriculum, pedagogy, and human capital development in order to meet the new expectations” (Alvoid & Black, 2014, p.1).

**Instructional Leadership**

Student achievement has never been more important in the roles that each stakeholder plays in the school community, including the instructional leader of the building – the principal. “There is a general belief that good school principals are the cornerstones of good schools and that without a principal’s leadership, efforts to raise student achievement cannot succeed” (DiPaola & Tschannen-Moran, 2003, p. 43). Davis, et al. (2005) suggest that successful learning outcomes are more likely when the principal provides strong development and support for teachers and the focus on strong organizational systems. While “state legislatures have mandated
that principals serve as instructional leaders, and school districts have written their job
descriptions for principals to include a reference to instructional leadership” (Dufour, 2002, p. 12), the shift isn’t as direct but rather “a combination of a transformational role and a shared
instructional role that can impact school and student performance” (Braun, et al., 2011, p. 3).
Lastly, “evidence suggests that, second only to the influences of classroom instruction, school
leadership strongly affects student learning. Principals’ abilities are central to the task of building
schools that promote powerful teaching and learning for all students” (Davis, et al., 2005, p. 13).
From this understanding of the shifting roles of principals, schools need strong, well-prepared
leaders who effectively empower teachers and create strong systems for learning to thrive.

**Leveraging Principal Impact on Teachers**

As we know that teachers are the top influencing agent in students’ academic growth (Hattie, 2003), the role of the principal in the development of teachers becomes paramount. “One
study found that one standard deviation of improvement in principal quality was associated with
increased student achievement equivalent to more than four weeks of additional learning in
reading and over six weeks in mathematics” (Espinoza & Cardichon, 2017, p. 1). To arrive at
these outcomes, effective teaching “must be continuously developed, coached, and assessed for
improvement. It is the responsibility of school leadership to do this as a primary function (School
Educational Leadership Enhancement Committee Task Force, 2018, p. 12). With strong
emphasis on the role of the principal in student learning, there have been several studies about
what the recommended behaviors of successful leadership consist of. Waters et al. (2003)
discovered a correlation between principal behaviors and student achievement that includes,
intellectual stimulation of faculty and staff; change agent; monitor and evaluate practice; operate
with ideas and beliefs; knowledgeable of curriculum, instruction, and assessment; flexibility; and
optimizer. In another study, Seashore et al. (2010) associates successful leadership with key practices that include, “setting directions, developing people, redesigning the organization, and managing the instructional program” (p. 56). Alvoid and Black (2014) cement this in their own research as they suggest that if a principal is going to “improve instruction at scale, the principal must be able to coach, communicate, and motivate teachers to change and improve their practices (p. 7). Through this professional development approach and relationship building, principals are able to impact instruction with teachers as they collaboratively set high expectations, improve feedback systems, discuss and analyze student data to drive instructional practice, and overall, create a collegial, safe space for principals and teachers to co-construction a highly impactful learning environment (Sutcher, et al., 2017).

With such a strong focus on building productive relationships between principals and teachers, it is important that principals understand how to diagnose the varying levels of quality of instruction in each classroom. Beginning with state standards, principals must develop a comprehensive understanding as to how to link what is expected for standards mastery and teacher practice. “Talented principals lead instruction by helping teachers learn how to implement increasingly rigorous academic standards that emphasize higher-order thinking skills (Sutcher, et al., 2017, p. 1). Obviously, it is nearly impossible for a school principal to become knowledgeable in every discipline of content which is why it is pertinent that principals foster strong relationships with teachers and identify areas of teacher leadership that can abet in lifting instructional practices school-wide (Alvoid & Black, 2014). Sutcher, et. Al (2017) also suggest that preparation programs should attract these strong teacher leaders to advance in leadership to eventually lead in the efforts of raising instructional outcomes at scale which would require a strengthening of how principals are prepared.
Problematic Preparation of Principals as Instructional Leaders

Mitgang (2008) posits that the principal is the flashpoint when it comes to scaling strong instruction across the campus. Grissom et al. (2021) add that while teachers are the strongest lever in student achievement impact, the principal impacts more than just that one classroom of the teacher. The principal affects learning across every classroom, in effect, magnifying the imprint a principal has on the development of teaching and learning in a school which can present challenges depending on the quality of the principal, and thus, the quality of available principal preparation programs. This responsibility and proven relationship to instruction and student achievement necessitates that principal preparation programs must evolve to meet these challenges.

With “the current policy environment demand[ing] that school leadership center their focus on instructional improvement as a means to increase student achievement” (Vanderhaar, et al., 2006, p. 18), “more research is needed on the relationships among essential preparation practices and the outcomes for school leaders, the school learning environment and student achievement” (Smylie, et al., 2005 as cited in Braun, et al., 2011, p. 2). Davis et al. (2005) add that the way programs select candidates lacks a streamlined process that centers on leadership standards and clearly defined processes, resulting in program completers that lack the skillset to bring about the necessary instructional influence mentioned above. One area of concern is that there lacks a general consensus as to how programs should be created and what criteria should serve as the basis for learning in leadership. “Despite the general consensus that the role of the school principal as both a manager and a leader matter and that preparation is important, there are considerable disagreements, often philosophical and political, about what kinds of principals...
are needed, what skills and attributes are needed and how they should be trained” (Cowie & Crawford, 2007, p. 132).

Formerly, an area of concern with principal preparation programs as vehicles to emerge principals as instructional leaders was that instruction lagged behind as a central focus of the role. Even with such shifts in perspective as to how school principals’ function, “direct involvement in instruction is among the least frequent activities performed by administrators of any kind at any level, and those who do engage in instructional leadership activities on a consistent basis are a relatively small proportion of the total administrative force” (Elmore, 2000, p. 7). Perhaps such a disparity exists in the actual involvement of principals in instructional leadership is because “a large body of research suggests [principals] do not feel prepared by preservice preparation programs or professional development to enact the new role [of instructional leadership] …” (Archer, 2004; Brown, 2005; Elmore, 2006a, as cited in Braun, et al., 2011, p. 3). A shift in this focus of instruction serving as a primary function of principalship occurred with federal policies, No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB), Race to the Top (RTTT), and most recently, Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). What began with an accountability approach of public scrutiny and sanctions for poor performance of students by ineffective principals and teachers under NCLB (Mitani, 2018), continued with high-stakes testing under the competitive RTTT initiative and Common Core implementation, requiring principals to be more involved in instructional development and practices of teachers (Brown, 2015). Lastly, ESSA has shifted the focus directly to school principals serving as instructional leaders with a focus on funding towards school leadership – both in preparation and development (Minnich, 2022). With such policy shifts, states are autonomously able to develop preparation programs that heavily root
themselves in how instructional leadership impacts student learning to begin to address the deficits in preparation.

The question then becomes who is responsible for this perception of a lack in preparation? Even through disagreement, there should be a consensus that instructional focus needs to be a fulcrum on which preparation rests. Research suggests that principals with certain traits or behaviors (resource provider, instructional resource, communicator, and visible presence) can impact student achievement – those traits that link to achievement successfully should be a part of principal preparation programs (Andrews & Soder, 1987). Further, if these traits are connected to student learning, for a program to be effective, not only do those traits need to be a strong focus in preparation but they also serve as indicators of success that when measured, can reveal effectiveness of program components (Davis & Darling-Hammond, 2012). This is significant because, “At both national and state policy levels, principals are being held accountable for the continuous growth in student achievement, closing achievement gaps, decreasing dropout rates, and increasing college or workplace readiness among disadvantaged students” (Davis & Darling-Hammond, 2012, p. 26).

With various viewpoints and nuances in instructional impact of leaders, it becomes increasingly challenging to narrow down precisely the direct impact. Davis and Darling-Hammond (2012) argue that it is difficult to calculate such a clear measurement of program effectiveness because a principal’s direct impact on instruction and student learning is challenging to measure precisely. Alvoid and Black (2014) argue that despite the gap in metrics, if student achievement and school improvement are to happen, principals must have a shared understanding of how to diagnose both strong and weak levels of instruction. Sutcher et. al (2017) add that “developing excellent principals who can set direction, develop people, redesign
organizations, and lead instruction requires a system of high-quality preparation and professional development” (p. 2).

**Moral Leadership**

While certain behaviors are measured under moral leadership, the symbiotic nature of moral leadership and instructional leadership is important to understand. “Principals’ responsibilities now extend beyond academics. Social and policy changes, such as developing equitable conditions for learning and fostering social and emotional skills, are playing out in schools under the direction of school leaders” (Herman, et al., 2022, p. 2). Beatty (2002) and Saunders (2013) both discovered that instructional leadership that impacts student achievement can stem from the influence of moral leadership or sometimes understood as social and emotional components of leadership. Even if the direct correlation cannot be specifically defined, the relationship between principal and teacher is important and has significant impact on student learning, especially when leaders adopt a stance that operates out of learning – for all teachers. “Principals influence student achievement by influencing teachers and staff, which in turn shapes the student learning outcomes” (Vanderhaar, Muñoz, & Rodosky, 2006, p. 31). To take it one step further, “Principals foster [a] structural and cultural transformation when they shift their emphasis from helping individual teachers improve instruction to helping teams of teachers ensure that students achieve the intended outcomes of their schooling. More succinctly, teachers and students benefit when principals function as *learning leaders* rather than *instructional leaders*” (Dufour, 2002, p. 13). And while it may seem that this is a lesson in instructional leadership, it tends more towards the social and emotional (or moral) leadership of principals. Learning leaders understand how to build relationships and leverage the emotional wellbeing of themselves and teachers. “Principals have expressed the need to develop emotional coping
strategies and to embrace leading with emotion, using distributed leadership and collaborative processes to strengthen relationships with others in their schools” (Wieczorek & Theoharis, 2015, p. 284). Leaders should be the instigators in creating and fostering relationships: “But if learning, individual and collective, is the central responsibility of leaders, then they must be able to model the learning they expect of others. Leaders should be doing, and should be seen to be doing, that which they expect or require others to do” (Elmore, 2000, p. 21). Finally, “if the purpose of leadership is the improvement of teaching practice and performance, then the skills and knowledge that matter are those that bear on the creation of settings for learning focused on clear expectations for instruction” (Elmore, 2000, p. 20). Barnett et al. (1992) add that to retain a leader’s purpose for the work and to understand how to foster collegial relationships, leaders must “develop moral and ethical consciousness” and that “collaboration and collegiality are crucial to the growth of all individuals in an organization” (p. 73).

**Principal Leadership Standards**

Principals are encumbered with complex responsibilities ranging from student safety to raising achievement levels in all students. Their leadership stance includes the expectation that they will increase outcomes for students instructionally, tend to maintaining their respective buildings operationally as a manager, and they are charged with building a strong climate and culture. “Mounting demands are rewriting administrators’ job descriptions every year, making them more complex than ever” (Council of Chief State School Officers, 2008a, p. 3). The Council of Chief State School Officers (2012) articulate the multitude of nuances and thus, the significant need for leadership standards:

A school-ready principal is ready on day one to blend their energy, knowledge, and professional skills to collaborate and motivate others to transform school learning
environments in ways that ensure all students will graduate college and career ready.

With other stakeholders, they craft the school’s vision, mission, and strategic goals to focus on and support high levels of learning for all students and high expectations for all members of the school community.

To help transform schools, they lead others in using performance outcomes and other data to strategically align people, time funding, and school processes to continually improve student achievement and growth, and to nurture and sustain a positive climate and safe school environment for all stakeholders. They work with others to develop, implement, and refine processes to select, induct, support, evaluate, and retain quality personnel to serve in instructional and support roles.

They nurture and support professional growth in others and appropriately share leadership responsibilities. Recognizing that schools are an integral part of the community, they lead and support outreach to students’ families and the wider community to respond to community needs and interests and to integrate community resources to into the school. (p. iv)

With such an array of responsibility, principals need standards from which to ground their work at scale to meet the level of expectation put forth by all stakeholders and most importantly, to ensure successful outcomes for all students.

National Standards

Standards for educational leaders have been in place for decades and in that time, they have undergone several revisions dating back to 1996 when The Council of Chief State School Officers published the first version, the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) standards. Just as the landscape for educational leaders has changed over the years, so has the
need for updated standards for leaders. In 2008, national standards were again revised to address gaps that existed in the original standards, naming the standards, Educational Leadership Policy Standards: ISLLC 2008. “The ISLLC standards, which placed great emphasis on the instructional leadership responsibilities of administrators, have provided a common vision for effective educational leadership” (Canole & Young, 2013, p. 5). Despite this refreshed update, critics still felt the standards existed largely apart from the role of the principal and actual student achievement gains (Davis et al., 2005). In 2015, the standards were again revisited to account for the quick and vast changes to educational leadership, particularly with increased accountability stemming from Race to the Top and Common Core Standards (Canole & Young, 2013). The Professional Standards for Educational Leaders (PSEL), “grounded in current research and the real-life experiences of educational leaders…articulate the leadership that our schools need and our students deserve” (National Policy Board for Educational Administration, 2015, p. 1). This current update to national standards has served as the foundation for Florida’s Principal Leadership Standards to guide and impact the role of Florida’s principals and achievement outcomes of Florida’s students.

**Florida Principal Leadership Standards**

“The mission of Florida’s Early Learning-20 education system shall be to increase the proficiency of all students within one seamless, efficient system, by allowing them the opportunity to expand their knowledge and skills through learning opportunities and research valued by students, parents, and communities” (Florida Department of Education, 2022, para. 1). The Florida Principal Leadership Standards serve as “core expectations” for principals and represent the necessary skillset to be effective in the role. Lastly, they serve as the foundation for professional development systems, certification requirements, principal evaluations, and
principal preparation programs (Florida Department of Education, 2022). The Florida Leadership Standards organize ten standards into four domains: Student Achievement, Instructional Leadership, Organizational Leadership, and Professional and Ethical Behavior. For full list of Florida Principal Leadership Standards, see Appendix A.

With the last revision written into law in 2011, in 2018, the Florida Department of Education and a committee of leaders across the state reviewed the standards and found that they “are not comprehensively aligned with current literature, national trends, and national standards” and revised the state standards to include a continuum approach which are now titled, “Florida’s Educational Leadership Standards” (School Educational Leadership Enhancement Committee Task Force, 2018, p. 4). One major update to the standards is the explicit standard segregation for principals and assistant principals, rather than the one-size-fits-all approach in the Florida Principal Leadership Standards. “The roles and responsibilities of a school principal are complex in a way that is distinct from general roles of teachers and others within a distributed leadership model, and the roles and responsibilities of an assistant principal are complex in a way distinct and separate from those of principal” (School Educational Leadership Enhancement Committee Task Force, 2018, p. 22). In the newly adopted Florida Educational Leadership Standards, see Appendix B, six of the eight (leaders at all levels adhere to the same criteria in Standard 1: Professional and Ethical Norms and Standard 8: Meaningful Parent, Family, and Community Engagement) standards delineate each role differently as they align with the standard. For example, Standard 4: Student Learning and Continuous School Improvement states that principals “Manage uncertainty, risk, competing initiatives, and the dynamics of change by providing support and encouragement, and openly communicating the need for, process for, and outcomes of improvement efforts,” whereas assistant principals “Collaborate with teachers and
the school leadership team to create an evidence-based intervention, acceleration, and enrichment plan focused on learning” (Florida Department of State, 2022, p. 3). Standards 2 through 7 each have similar differentiation in the roles of principal and assistant principal. It is from these outlined expectations that an assistant principal would experience learning opportunities that align with the specified indicators and demonstrate readiness to learn deeper contexts of the principal level of those same standards. Principal preparation programs throughout the state will need to adjust to the revised standards to meet the specific demands of principals in schools today.

**Principal Preparation Programs**

While most states have standards by which to prepare leaders, programs can differ greatly from state-to-state and even district-by-district such as varying levels of certification requirements (e.g., Level I and Level II in Florida) and differing program offerings from universities or individual school districts. “Many states are pressing universities to redesign their leadership preparation programs by applying new accreditation guidelines and more rigorous standards and are also taking steps to spread effective training practices statewide” (Mitgang, 2008, p. 3). While Florida has maintained alignment in both its Level I and Level II programs and certification requirements, there still exists a necessity to strengthen principal preparation within those already-established contexts.

**Levels of Principal Preparation Programs**

The Florida Department of Education (FLDOE) defines Level I and II programs as follows: Level I programs aim to provide initial certification in educational leadership, preparing individuals for roles as school administrators. Level II programs, on the other hand, build upon Level I training and lead to the renewal certification required for the position of a school
principal (The Florida Senate, 2021). Typically, Level I programs are integrated into a Masters in Educational Leadership curriculum, leading individuals to become assistant principals. Conversely, Level II programs can be offered by universities, school districts, and third-party vendors such as various education consortiums across the state. As Florida embarks on the process of revising program approval standards for Level I and Level II preparation programs, it is crucial to consider the perceptions of principals regarding their previous preparation experiences. These insights will play a significant role in influencing and shaping the program approval standards, as well as the design of Level I and II programs.

Universities and colleges typically create and provide Level I programs, with the exception of two school districts – Duval County Public Schools and Sumter County School District with their own approved programs to graduate candidates prepared for the assistant principalship – often with a Master’s degree in Educational Leadership, however completion of a program specifically in Educational Leadership is not required by statute as alternative pathways are considered according to Rule 6a-4.082 (Florida Department of Education, 2022). While not all Level I programs are created equal, they must adhere to state approval standards which include the provision of “competency-based training aligned to the principal leadership standards” (Florida Department of Education, 2022, para. 1). However current research suggests otherwise in that “Level I programs are disparate in the substance and structure of their partnerships and field experiences, as well as their attentiveness to context in the design and delivery of courses” (School Educational Leadership Enhancement Committee Task Force, 2018, p. 22). Despite this gap in preparation and alignment with standards outcomes, to be an assistant principal or principal in the state of Florida requires the Level I certification which, if as a result of the program, the candidate achieves less than highly effective or effective in their
evaluation, the Level I program must provide additional professional development to increase the capacity of the school leader at no additional cost (Florida Department of Education, 2022).

To serve as a school principal in the state of Florida, candidates need to possess certification in Educational Leadership however they are not necessarily required to possess Level II certification which remains a local school district decision. However, if it is decided to require Level II, the program must be approved by the Florida Department of Education. In Florida, candidates must demonstrate successful completion of the Florida Educational Leadership Core Curriculum that align with the principal leadership standards which can include completion of a Level II program, or coursework in another completed degree that adheres to these standards requirements. Researchers argue that in the existing Level II programs throughout the state, there is an inconsistency and malignment to quality measures designed to optimize preparation programs and graduate competent principals (School Educational Leadership Enhancement Committee Task Force, 2018).

Research on Principal Preparation Programs

“A range of critics, including principals themselves, raise a litany of concerns about the quality and effectiveness of the leadership preparation typically provided at university-based programs and elsewhere” (Davis, et al., 2005, para. 3). Programs that are constructed in isolation of real-world experiences are far less prepared to empower leaders for today’s schools (Darling-Hammond, et al., 2022). Further, the curriculum may use outdated material and not provide ample exposure as to how to effectively impact instruction. Essentially, many programs are still rooted in manager preparation. The urgency here is that leaders are becoming “qualified” but not prepared to lead schools. Barnett et al. (1992) agree and suggest that preparation programs are fragmented and true integration into applicable work is nearly nonexistent. More recent research
also suggests that preparation programs involve content and coursework that is detached from real-world application and those who completed such programs were far less inclined to apply for principal roles upon completion (Darling-Hammond, et al., 2022). “Evidence indicates that effective programs are research-based, have curricular coherence, provide experience in authentic contexts, use cohort groupings and mentors, and are structured to enable collaborative activity between the program and area schools” (Davis, et al., 2005, p. 2). This integration of real-world application is paramount to long term success of both the principal and the school community. “But the related challenge is to ensure that both aspiring and sitting principals get the right preparation and support for this type of leadership” (Mitgang, 2008, p. 3). This access and provision of high-quality educational leadership development creates strong impacts in the learning environment but that also comes at a cost which “resources…should be directed at quality programs with proven benefits” (Mitgang, 2008, p. 8).

Further, “School districts and universities need to define a curriculum in leadership programs that is positively related to academic outcomes and sustainable over time. Principal preparation programs must ensure that leaders develop the knowledge and skills necessary to increase achievement in various school contexts” (Marzano et al. 2005, as cited in Vanderhaar, et al., 2006, p. 31). Years later, the research still suggests that principal preparation programs have not caught up. “Despite efforts to incorporate new practices into existing leadership preparation programs, many in the field continue to criticize the quality of current preparation programs as inadequate to prepare leaders for today’s schools” (Braun et al., 2011, p. 2). To add, there are many programs that remain lacking in alignment to professional leadership standards, evaluation instruments, and certification requirements (Davis & Darling-Hammond, 2012). Lastly, Shaddish et al. (2002) contend that because principal preparation programs are continuously being
developed, there lacks a standardized, standards-based approach which results in a lack of consistency in the capacity of strong school leaders. In order to gauge impact on student learning, preparation program curriculum should not only sustain but also be regularly assessed (Vanderhaar et al., 2006). Herman, et al. (2022) describe the Wallace Foundation’s vision as a system approach that includes the five following features (p. 5):

1. Active recruitment and selection of high-potential principal candidates with successful teaching experience and a focus on instructional improvement
2. A coherent curriculum integrating theory and practice through active learning
3. Supervised clinical experiences using realistic leadership activities that are linked to coursework
4. A cohort structure to support principal candidates
5. A leader-tracking system providing continuous feedback for program improvement across the trajectory of principals ‘careers.

With extensive research existing to support what preparation programs should contain for developing strong principals, limited research exists with a direct study of the perceptions of principals and their preparation programs. Duncan et al. (2011) surveyed principals in Wyoming on their perception of their preparation and found that there was quite a variety in participant perceptions when it came to strengths and deficits. Further, “while districts provide adequate professional development in instructional leadership and using data to inform decisions for beginning principals, development needs in the areas of communication, relationship building, and conflict resolution were not provided by districts” (Duncan, et a., 2011, p. 1). Researcher, Richard Dodson (2014) discovered similar outcomes when Kentucky principals were surveyed about their perceptions. He found that participants felt that they needed more training in how “to
interact with upset parents, engage in comprehensive school improvement planning, handle personnel issues, and review school law” (p. 48). The role of field experiences or interships also shared similar findings from the two studies. In Kentucky, “most respondents (91%) believed field experiences helped prepare them for principalship” (Dodson, 2014, p. 47) with Wyoming principals in agreement. One principal remarked on his experiential preparation, “90% of my principal pedagogy was developed in my internship” (Duncan et al., 2011, p. 11). While it is clear that one successful component principals perceive to be effective is the inclusion of field experiences, additional research is needed to best understand additional shared principals’ perceptions across the nation.

**Theoretical Framework**

In order to research the connection between standards-based principal preparation programs, principal effectiveness, and principals’ perceived causation from the former to the latter, Albert Bandura’s Self-Efficacy Theory serves as the framework. “Successful leadership involves using social influence processes to organize, direct, and motivate the actions of others. It requires persistent task-directed effort, effective task strategies, and the artful application of various conceptual, technical, and interpersonal skills” (McCormick, 2001, p. 28). Principal preparation programs should, in theory, graduate principals who are ready to take on such tasks and instill a sense of confidence in order to do so.

Bandura’s Self-Efficacy Theory is a subset from his Social Cognitive Theory which began as Social Learning Theory. Urdan and Pajares (2006) explain Social Cognitive Theory as the approach to human understanding through the lens of reciprocity of interactions between self, others, and the surrounding environment which include influences both in and out of the individual’s control. Further, individuals can self-regulate thoughts, motivations, and behaviors
in those dynamic contexts. It is in these contexts where learning occurs and, if the individual is capable, he or she, while driven by goals, seeks to control and shape the environment around them. The goals set determine how well the task is performed. It is this notion that provides the basis for the subset of Social Cognitive Theory, Self-Efficacy Theory. Bandura (1986) summates self-efficacy as the belief that an individual possesses the capacity and resources to accomplish the task which leads to increased performance – in short, how a leader perceives their ability will determine how well they perform. McCormick (2001) adds further, “high self-efficacy will lead individuals to set challenging goals, persist in the face of obstacles, work harder on tasks, direct cognitive and behavioral resources toward goal relevant actions, and actively search for effective task strategies” (p. 26). Hoy and Miskel (2008) extend this definition to suggest self-efficacy as a motivating and influential factor in that “individuals will work hard when they believe they have the capabilities to be successful, the task is not too difficult, they have had success at completing similar tasks, and they have good models of success” (p. 168).

These beliefs about self-efficacy derive from four sources according to Bandura (1994). First, as individuals participate in activities that lead toward mastery, their sense of efficacy increases. Success in this mastery is the most influential way, according to Bandura, to build self-efficacy just as failure in this area negates one’s self-efficacy. The second way that efficacy is built in one’s own belief is through vicarious experiences. When individuals see others succeed, they too, believe that they can succeed just as well because they have similar abilities to do so. Third, persuasion is an influential factor in building self-efficacy. When people are “persuaded verbally that they possess the capabilities to master given activities are likely to mobilize greater effort and sustain it than if they harbor self-doubts and dwell on personal deficiencies when problems arise” (Bandura, 1994, para. 8). The final way of building self-
efficacy positively is to reshape how one responds to challenges emotionally by reducing the response of stress and reinterpret misinterpretations about a given situation – in essence, changing perspective and assumptions toward a positive stance. These four sources of efficacy building can lead to better understanding principal preparation and how to better serve teachers and students.

It is from this paradigm that the link between self-efficacy and leadership, particularly school principals, becomes apparent. Principal preparation programs should include experiences that are realistic in nature and build upon mastery. This realistic experiential learning will bolster confidence in the leadership skillsets required to be effective as a principal. Second, learning should be a social activity and cohort models are a strong way principal preparation programs can utilize this efficacy-boosting influence. “People seek proficient models who possess the competencies to which they aspire” (Bandura, 1994, para. 7) and preparation programs should be led by such people who possess proven successful experience. Through the sharing of their previous experience, program providers are able to “transmit and teach observers effective skills and strategies for managing environmental demands” (Bandura, 1994, para. 7). Third, as efficacy is built through verbal persuasion, it is the most successful leaders that also seek to create conditions for success in others as well as conditions that prevent others from likely failure. Principals will perform in these areas regularly in the role and should have confidence in not only the way they handle it on their own but more importantly, how they lead others to do the same. Lastly, preparation programs should pay attention to how leaders respond to stress and internalize successes and shortcomings in a way that doesn’t necessarily focus on the reactions themselves but “how they are perceived and interpreted. People who have a high sense of efficacy are likely to view their state of affective arousal as an energizing facilitator or
performance, whereas those who are beset by self-doubts regard their arousal as a debilitator” (Bandura, 1994, para. 12). Understanding how to increase performance outcomes through the knowledge of the levers of self-efficacy will help understand how to strengthen principal preparation programs which in turn, create strong principals, stronger teachers, stronger schools, and most importantly, stronger outcomes by students (McCormick, 2001).

Schools are social communities that have their own sense of health. Some possess strong climates of collaboration with student-centered approach while others are weakened by leaders and teachers without a strong sense of self that leads to lesser competencies advantaged by students. Bandura (1994) describes the impact that leader and teacher efficacy can have on the entire school community:

The belief systems of staffs create school cultures that can have vitalizing or demoralizing effects on how well schools function as a school system. Schools in which the staff collectively judge themselves as powerless to get students to achieve academic success convey a group sense of academic futility that can pervade the entire life of the school. Schools in which staff members collectively judge themselves capable of promoting academic success imbue their schools with a positive atmosphere for development that promotes academic attainments regardless of whether they serve predominantly advantaged or disadvantaged students. (para. 56)

Urdan and Pajares (2006) write of the same sense of futility and describe how environmental factors can often beset a sense of dread and inability to accomplish the task resulting in giving up whereas those with higher efficacy remain resilient and tread on.

The impact of a strong leader who is confident in their ability to lead and influence others for productive change in a school is multi-faceted. Strong, efficacious principals positively shape
teacher practices, student outcomes, and overall school culture. Principals with a high sense of efficacy motivate their teachers and in turn, students are motivated and build efficacy though the modeling and influence of their teacher – the same is possible with the converse. The less efficacious the leader and teacher, the more likely the student will also have low sense of efficacy in their ability (Bandura, 1994; Hoy & Davis, 2006). The type of leader, teacher, and school matters in student learning as “students are likely to develop similarly high perceived self-efficacy in dissimilar academic subjects, such as language and mathematics in superior schools, but similarly low perceived efficacy in effective schools, which do not promote much academic learning in any subject matter” (Bandura, 2006, p. 308).

“Leadership is a complex cognitive and behavioral task that takes place in a dynamic social context. Successful leadership involves using social influence processes to organize, direct and motivate the actions of others. It requires persistent task-directed effort, effective task strategies, and the artful application of various conceptual, technical, and interpersonal skills” (McCormick, 2001, p. 28). Undeniably, leader self-efficacy and successful leadership are reciprocal concepts (Locke, 1991) that if acknowledged as a potential fulcrum for preparation programs for principals, positive school outcomes will arise.

**Chapter Summary**

Strengthening leadership preparation in order to create longer tenure as principals should remain a priority. “The national average tenure of principals in their schools was four years as of 2016–17. This number masks considerable variation, with 35 percent of principals being at their school for less than two years, and only 11 percent of principals being at their school for 10 years or more” (Bradley and Levin, 2019, p. 3). With so many factors contributing to the success, or lack thereof, of the building principal, so are the factors that drive away principals too soon.
Through the investigation of various types of leadership required to succeed as a principal and understanding self-efficacy of principals as a result of their preparation programs should inform decisions at the local and state level with regard to successful implementation of standards-driven preparation programs.
Chapter 3: Methodology

This chapter presents the methodology that determined the relationship between Florida’s principals’ preparation program experience and their sense of self-efficacy as a principal in Florida’s public schools. As the profession of principals continues to shift with more principals leaving the profession along with the state of Florida in the midst of updating their program approval standards for principal preparation programs, this relationship study is pertinent. Two research questions guided this study:

1. How do principals perceive their Level II preparation programs equipped them to be able to fulfill their duties as a school building principal?
2. Do years of experience, race, and gender influence overall perceptions of principal preparation?

This chapter segregates into several sections that explain the research design, data collection procedures, instrumentation, and analysis of data. Principals were surveyed to reflect upon their principal preparation which may have caused some to either not answer at all for fear of repercussions or they may not have been comfortable in fully transparent responses. To compensate for this, the survey responses were kept anonymous to remove the possibility of personal identification being attached to the survey. The list of principal email addresses was obtained from the Florida Department of Education that are reported each year from each district as public record. Approval as an expedited level of review was achieved with the Institutional Review Board (IRB). To further minimize risk, no identification measures were used other than email addresses (blind copied from each other) in the initial and follow-up solicitations of the survey instrument.
Context of the Research

In 2021, a pilot study was conducted with a medium-sized district to determine principals’ sense of efficacy based upon their principal preparation program. Utilizing Megan Tschannen-Moran’s Principal Self Efficacy Scale (PSES) survey (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2001), see Appendix C, 44 principals were surveyed to ascertain their sense of efficacy as a principal as a result of their Level II preparation program. Using the 9-point scale as a measurement, this particular district’s overall mean level of efficacy was 4.89, indicating a low level of confidence in the effectiveness of Level II preparation programs.

These findings set the stage for this research on surveying principals throughout the state of Florida. If each district’s approved Level II principal preparation program is designed using the Florida Principal Leadership Standards, then predictably, the outcomes of principals’ sense of efficacy would be similar. A lack of efficacy in perception should be taken into account so that future leaders’ sense of doubt decreases and their confidence in their ability to do their job well increases. Just as the state of Florida has recently revised principal leadership standards, the Department of Education is also revising its program approval standards for Level I and II preparation programs. The state of Florida is at a pivotal moment in revising statute and rule when it comes to principal preparation therefore, now is the time to add the voice of the principals to the discussion which has the potential to shaping programming to develop future leaders to be effective school principals.

Connection to the Theoretical Framework

In order to quantify this “voice” of the principal, the Principal Sense of Efficacy Scale (PSES) survey was used as it already included an established scale in conjunction with Bandura’s Self Efficacy Theory by Megan Tschannen-Moran’s design. The survey was used to
collect perceptions from Florida principals which were then quantified to measure preparation programs effectiveness as they pertain to principals’ experiences.

**Sample**

This research identified perceptions of self-efficacy among school principals in the state of Florida. Each year, schools must report to the Florida Department of Education demographic information about their individual schools which includes email addresses for each principal. Surveys were sent to 3,566 public district school principals (GreatSchools, 2022). Because it is not required by the Florida Department of Education to hold a Level II Principal Certification to be a principal in a district public or charter school, survey respondents’ data for analysis only included those that presently hold a valid Level II certification. This list was obtained from contacting the Division of K-12 Public Schools, Educator Quality. No personal identification information was collected from surveyed principals. Demographic information such as race, gender, years as a principal and district public school or charter school assignment was collected in the survey. The distribution list was obtained from the Florida Department of Education then it was narrowed down to only those with Level II certification. Each remaining principal on the list was sent an email with an invitation to complete the survey.

**Research Design**

The primary purpose of this study was to evaluate whether or not principals feel that they were adequately prepared for the role of principal as a result of their participation in a Level II principal preparation program in the state of Florida. A quantitative survey design using convenience sampling was utilized because of the ease of access to participants within the state and because of the time constraints that were present.
Instrumentation.

Principals responded to an existing survey known as the *Principal Sense of Efficacy Scale* (PSES) developed by (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2001). The 18-question survey (see Appendix C) was designed around the item specifications on the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium and measured efficacy on three leadership types: Efficacy for Management, Efficacy for Instructional Leadership, and Efficacy for Moral Leadership. Tschannen-Moran and Gareis, (2004) describe Efficacy for Management as the tasks that operationalize the job – paperwork, project management, shaping policies and procedures, etc. In a principal’s role this would include the school’s budget, handling contracts, employee documentation, etc. Efficacy for Instructional Leadership is how well a principal fosters a culture of learning in the school. Beginning with a strong vision, the principal ensures that high-quality instruction takes place in each classroom and is able to monitor and measure for success as a result. Lastly, Efficacy for Moral Leadership is how a principal leads the school ethically, creating a positive climate and culture. In this leadership domain, the principal fosters collegiality, community, and connection among all school stakeholders. To better gauge the connection between efficacy and preparation, the survey questions were amended to reflect, “To what extent did your Level II principal preparation program prepare you to…” and followed the remain sections with fidelity. The original nine-point Likert scale was used with a range from 1=None at all, 3=Very little, 5=Some degree, 7=Quite a bit, and 9=A great deal. Demographic questions were also added to the beginning of the survey to provide additional variables for study that included race, gender, and the number of years spent as a principal.
**Independent variables**

**Gender.** This variable was coded as 1 = Male, 2 = Female, 3 = Other, and 4 = Prefer not to say.

**Race.** This discrete variable is coded as 1 = White, 2 = Black, and 3 = Hispanic, 4 = American Indian/Alaska Native, 5 = Asian, 6 = Pacific Islander, and 7 = Other.

**Years.** This variable was coded as 1 = 1-3 years, 2 = 4-9 years, and 3 = 10 or more years.

**District Size.** This variable was coded by number of enrolled students as 1 = Very Small (<2500), 2 = Small (2,501-9,999), and 3 = Medium (10,000-29,999), 4 = Large (30,000-99,999), and 5 = Very Large (>100,00).

**Data Collection Procedures**

An application was submitted to the University of North Florida Institutional Research Board (IRB) for permission to proceed with survey distribution and research. Utilizing the Florida Department of Education reporting data which included email addresses of all public district and charter school principals, a survey distribution list was created. This list was used with Qualtrics to send out the survey to each of the 3,566 principals across the state. The use of Qualtrics’ “make anonymous” function allowed for the protection of anonymity of the survey, including all demographic information provided. The four-week survey window was open with ample time to complete. Participants were asked to complete the survey within 14 days. At that time, another email was sent to participants to remind them to complete the survey if they have yet to do so. With one week remaining, respondents were notified a third time that the survey is closing in seven days. Once the window closed, the data was imported from Qualtrics into SPSS for analysis.
Data Analysis

Research Question 1. “How do principals perceive their Level II preparation programs equipped them to be able to fulfill their duties as a school building principal?” Once survey responses were collected, descriptive statistics were used to identify participants of the study of whom are current principals to understand how different principals felt about their preparation. From this, responses were analyzed by distribution of race, gender, and years of service evidenced through mean, median, and mode. This allowed further investigation of how different principals, based on demographic information, may be impacted by that particular variable.

Next, descriptive statistics were utilized to understand how participants felt about their preparation. To do so, each of the survey items were described that make up each of the three subsections – Efficacy for Management, Efficacy for Instructional Leadership, and Efficacy for Moral Leadership and measures of central tendency such as mean, median, and mode were used. Participant responses were categorized and analyzed for each of the three subsections to determine if perceptions differ by subsection. Standard deviation was also utilized at this step to determine if any outliers existed that may have skewed the data. Survey items as a whole were also used to describe participants’ overall perceptions of their preparation.

Research Question 2. “Do years of experience, race, and gender influence overall perceptions of principal preparation?” Inferential statistics were used to detect significant relationships between demographic variables and the outcome variables of interest. In order to determine if there are significant relationships between each of the three subsections and race, gender, and years of experience, respectively. Further, independent variables such as the level of principalship – elementary, middle, and high school and type of district – urban, suburban, and rural were used. The same process was used to determine if there were significant relationships
between the overall perceptions of principals and their respective race, gender, and years of experience. To detect significant relationships between race and the three subsections, one-way ANOVAs were used. For gender and each subsection, independent-samples t-tests were utilized. Next, to determine significance between race and overall perceptions of preparation, again, one-way ANOVAs and independent-samples t-tests between gender and overall perceptions were used.

Lastly, inferential statistics were used to detect the unique contributions of race, gender, and years of experience in significantly influencing Efficacy for Management, Efficacy for Instructional Leadership, and Efficacy for Moral Leadership, as well as overall perceptions of principal preparation. For predicting the three subsections of the survey, there were three multiple linear regression models, one for each subsection and one additional multiple linear regression model for detection of the unique contributions’ influence on the overall perceptions of principal preparation. Each of these steps yielded results to fully respond to the second research question guiding this study.

**Validity and Reliability of the Survey and Scales**

The authors of this instrument tested for reliability and validity through three separate studies (Tshannen-Moran & Gareis, 2004). After an iterative approach, the third study using this survey tested both reliable and valid. “Construct validity was assessed using a measure of work alienation and principals’ trust in teachers and clients” (Tshannen-Moran & Gareis, 2004, p. 578). Further, it measures levers that allow for principals to be successful in their position (Tshannen-Moran & Gareis, 2004) of which, should also inform the structure of preparation programs. To better gauge the connection between efficacy and preparation, the question prompt was amended to reflect, “To what extent did your Level II principal preparation program prepare
you to…” and followed the remaining question language with fidelity. The original nine-point Likert scale was used with a range from 1= None at all, 3= Very little, 5= Some degree, 7= Quite a bit, and 9= A great deal. Demographic questions were also added to the beginning of the survey to provide additional variables for study that included race, gender, and the number of years spent as a principal. Additional survey questions to allow participants to share more details about their experience and share suggestions or recommendations about their level two programs were added as well as questions that gauge desire to remain in the profession:

1. Do you plan to leave the profession?
2. If so, when: within one year, two to three years, three years?
3. Add any details about your principal preparation program and how it impacted your role as a principal.

Inferential statistics were utilized to measure reliability. Survey item reliability as well as reliability in how each item functions across participants were measured next. Also in this step, inferential statistics were used to affirm both reliability and significance between survey items and variables as was seen in the pilot study of the same survey which was accomplished by using Cronbach’s alpha and inter-item correlations using Pearson’s product moment correlations. Lastly in this step, a composite variable representing each subsection of the survey was constructed and described to generalize how participants felt at the subsection level and overall, in their preparation. A composite variable was computed for each of the three subsections and from these composite variables, the variable means and standard deviations for each was calculated. Each of these steps yielded results to fully respond to the second research question guiding this study.
Chapter Summary

To respond to the research questions of this study, a survey research design to understand the perceptions of Florida’s principals with regard to their principal preparation programs was used. Data was collected from principals across the Florida who responded to the Principal Sense of Efficacy Scale survey. Descriptive statistics and inferential statistics were then used to analyze the data and respond to the two research questions. Chapter 4 will cover the results of the analysis as described in Chapter 3.
Chapter 4: Results

This chapter examines the results of the Principal Sense of Efficacy Scale (PSES) survey distributed to principals across the state of Florida that was used to answer the following research questions:

**RQ1:** How do principals feel their Level II preparation programs equipped them to be able to fulfill their duties as a school building principal?

**RQ2:** How do years of experience, race, and gender influence overall perceptions of principal preparation?

The intent of using this survey was to determine principal perception of their preparation program and how it has influenced their role as a principal to ultimately provide guidance in shaping preparation programs for future aspiring principals and development programs for current principals. Results of this survey include: descriptive statistics and frequency to delineate demographic information; independent-samples t-tests, ANOVA and linear regression to determine significance of independent variables of race, gender, and years of service to influence principal perception of preparation and efficacy as seen in Table 1.

Utilizing the data collected from the survey respondents, the following section examines demographic data through the use of descriptive statistics and frequency, providing characteristics of respondents to better understand the current population of principals throughout the state of Florida.
Table 1

Overview of Statistical Analyses to Answer the Research Questions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Question</th>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Statistical Analysis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. How do principals feel their Level II preparation programs equipped them to</td>
<td>Survey items for efficacy in management: MAN_Q1-MAN_Q6</td>
<td>Descriptive Statistics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>be able to fulfill their duties as a school building principal?</td>
<td>Survey items for efficacy in instructional leadership: INS_Q1-INS_Q6</td>
<td>Frequency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Survey items for efficacy in moral leadership: MOR_Q1-MOR_Q6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>MANGE = efficacy for management</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>INSTRUCT = efficacy for instructional leadership</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>MORAL = efficacy for moral leadership</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>OVERALL = aggregate of all variables</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. How do years of experience, race, and gender influence overall perceptions of</td>
<td>OVERALL = aggregate of all variables</td>
<td>Independent-Samples</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>principal preparation?</td>
<td>Control variables = Gender, Race, Years</td>
<td>T-Test</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>ANOVA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Bivariate Correlations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Linear Regression</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Descriptive Statistics: Demographic and Employment Characteristics

The survey was distributed to 3,123 principals across all 67 school districts in the state of Florida. An a priori power analysis (See Appendix B) was conducted using G*Power3 (Creswell & Creswell, 2018, pp. 151-152) to determine effect size. Results showed that a total sample of 146 participants would be necessary. Of those surveyed, 170 principals responded, exceeding the
minimum amount needed. Table 2 displays the demographic detail of respondents. A majority of respondents were White (78%) and Female (58%). Further, a majority of participants have been principals for less than 10 years with 47 within 1-3 years, 60 between 4-9, and 61 respondents have been a principal for 10 or more years. Nearly a quarter (28%) have been principal 3 years or less. Lastly, a majority of survey respondents work in Large and Very Large districts with nearly 80% of the survey sample, collectively.

Table 2

Demographics of Survey Participants (N=170)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>N</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Race</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>133</td>
<td>78.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black/African American</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>13.53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latino/Latina</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>5.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gender</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>57.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>41.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prefer not to say</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Years</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-3 years</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>27.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-9 years</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>35.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 or more years</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>35.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>District Size by Student Enrollment</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very Small (&lt;2500)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small (2,501-9,999)</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>6.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium (10,000-29,999)</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>13.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Large (30,000-99,999)</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>42.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very Large (&gt;100,000)</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>36.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.58</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The study is comprised of 170 respondents which represents 5% of the total principal population in the state of Florida. To further understand the types of participants, cross-
tabulation (Table 3) revealed that of the 71 males that responded, 57 (80%) identified as White, 8 (11%) identified as Black or African American, 3 (4%) Latino, and 3 (4%) as Other. Of the 98 females that responded, 76 (78%) identified as White, 15 (15%) Black or African American, 6 (6%) Latina, and 1 (1%) as Asian.

Table 3

Survey Respondents Race by Gender

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>White N (%)</th>
<th>Black or African American N (%)</th>
<th>Latino/Latina N (%)</th>
<th>Asian N (%)</th>
<th>Other N (%)</th>
<th>Total N (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>57 (80)</td>
<td>8 (11)</td>
<td>3 (4)</td>
<td>0 (0)</td>
<td>3 (4)</td>
<td>71 (42)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>76 (78)</td>
<td>15 (15)</td>
<td>6 (6)</td>
<td>1 (1)</td>
<td>0 (0)</td>
<td>98 (58)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>133 (79)</td>
<td>23 (14)</td>
<td>9 (5)</td>
<td>1 (0.59)</td>
<td>3 (1.77)</td>
<td>169</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Missing responses due to respondent leaving question blank

As seen in Table 4, in comparison with current principal demographic data statewide (Florida Department of Education, 2023), the sample size presents more male respondents than is the average of 33% with female representation slightly lower than the statewide average of 67%. White representation in respondents was higher at 79% than the state average of 61% and Black or African American representation was slightly lower than the state average of 23%. Latino and Latina resembled a similar trend with lower reporting than the state average of 14%.

Table 4

Florida Principals by Race and Gender

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>White N (%)</th>
<th>Black or African American N (%)</th>
<th>Latino/Latina N (%)</th>
<th>Asian N (%)</th>
<th>Other N (%)</th>
<th>Total N (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>767 (63)</td>
<td>275 (23)</td>
<td>151 (12)</td>
<td>5 (0.41)</td>
<td>17 (1.4)</td>
<td>1215 (33)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>1494 (61)</td>
<td>555 (23)</td>
<td>370 (15)</td>
<td>14 (0.56)</td>
<td>29 (1.17)</td>
<td>2462 (67)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4

*Florida Principals by Race and Gender*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>White N (%)</th>
<th>Black or African American N (%)</th>
<th>Latino/ Latina N (%)</th>
<th>Asian N (%)</th>
<th>Other N (%)</th>
<th>Total N (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>2261 (61)</td>
<td>830 (23)</td>
<td>521 (14)</td>
<td>19 (0.51)</td>
<td>46 (1.25)</td>
<td>3677</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Results of Research Question 1

**Internal Reliability and Composite Scale Construction**

To identify how principals feel their preparation program prepared them to lead as a principal, their sense of self-efficacy was measured. The survey used three sections of six questions each that categorized questions around the following categories: management, instructional leadership, and moral leadership. Descriptive statistics and frequencies were used for each sub-section as well as each section combined for a sense of self-efficacy to demonstrate overall preparation. Using the Likert scale of 1-9 as the scale to demonstrate preparedness with each odd number reflecting a different efficacy rating: 1 = None at all, 3 = Very Little, 5 = Some Degree, 7 = Quite a bit, and 9 = A Great Deal. Overall, principals felt that their preparation program prepared them “to some degree” for the job as principal ($M = 5.14$, $SD = 1.63$). Table 5 reports the mean scores for how participants answered each survey question. The results reveal how survey participants felt their preparation program prepared them for each aspect of the job – the higher the mean score, the more prepared they felt to handle that particular aspect. Each question revealed similar means and standard deviations with the exception of variable “cope with the stress of the job” which resulted in a lower ($M = 3.58$, $SD = 2.25$), demonstrating little confidence in preparation for stress management. Conversely, the highest mean revealed itself
with “facilitate student learning in your school” demonstrating principals felt the most prepared
to perform that particular responsibility ($M = 6.09$, $SD = 1.96$).

**Table 5**

Principal perception of self-efficacy on a scale of 1-9 answering, “To what extent did your Level 2 principal preparation program prepare you to...”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Management</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Handle the time demands of the job?</td>
<td>5.15</td>
<td>2.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Handle the paperwork required of the job?</td>
<td>5.21</td>
<td>2.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintain control of your daily schedule?</td>
<td>5.05</td>
<td>2.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prioritize among competing demands of the job?</td>
<td>5.46</td>
<td>2.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cope with the stress of the job?</td>
<td>3.58</td>
<td>2.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shape the operational policies and procedures</td>
<td>5.73</td>
<td>1.97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>that are necessary to manage your school?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instructional Leadership</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Motivate teachers?</td>
<td>5.00</td>
<td>2.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Generate enthusiasm for a shared vision of the</td>
<td>5.63</td>
<td>2.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>school?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manage change in your school?</td>
<td>5.45</td>
<td>2.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Create a positive learning environment in your</td>
<td>5.92</td>
<td>1.96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>school?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facilitate student learning in your school?</td>
<td>6.09</td>
<td>1.96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Raise student achievement on standardized tests?</td>
<td>5.54</td>
<td>2.12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Moral Leadership</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Promote acceptable behavior among students?</td>
<td>5.03</td>
<td>1.97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promote school spirit among a large majority of</td>
<td>4.64</td>
<td>2.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the student population?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Handle effectively the discipline of students</td>
<td>4.76</td>
<td>2.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in your school?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promote a positive image of your school with the</td>
<td>4.80</td>
<td>2.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>media?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promote the prevailing values of the community</td>
<td>4.91</td>
<td>2.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in your school?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promote ethical behavior among school personnel?</td>
<td>5.78</td>
<td>2.03</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To determine how principals felt overall for each of the three categories, a composite
variable was created for each subsection as the result of reliability statistics producing
Cronbach’s alpha scores and bivariate correlation detailing statistical significance and inter-item
correlation for accurate grouping. For each survey item under the three subsections, there was a strong correlation utilizing a threshold of 0.70 to evaluate a Cronbach’s alpha with each item revealing 0.96, with preferred significance ($p$-values) at the 0.001 level (two-tailed). As a result of the generation of each composite variable, the statistics to determine principal sense of efficacy as a result of preparation in each of the three subsections of the survey are shown in Table 6.

Table 6

*Principal perception of self-efficacy*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Composite</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Cronbach’s α</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Management</td>
<td>4.92</td>
<td>1.88</td>
<td>0.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instructional Leadership</td>
<td>5.55</td>
<td>1.76</td>
<td>0.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moral Leadership</td>
<td>4.93</td>
<td>1.81</td>
<td>0.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall Preparation</td>
<td>5.14</td>
<td>1.63</td>
<td>0.96</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Descriptive Statistics: Management

The first section of the Principal Sense of Efficacy Survey collected principals’ perceptions about their preparation and its impact on management. Table Y reports the means for each of the six survey items. Principals felt the most prepared to “shape the operational policies and procedures that are necessary to manage” their school ($M = 5.73, SD = 1.97$) while feeling the least confident in preparation to “cope with the stress of the job” ($M = 3.58, SD = 3.58$). With exception to “Cope with the stress of the job”, the remaining five questions each rated at “To some degree” with means reporting in the 5.00-5.99 range as seen in Table 7.
Table 7

Principal perception of self-efficacy for Management

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Management</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Handle the time demands of the job?</td>
<td>5.15</td>
<td>2.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Handle the paperwork required of the job?</td>
<td>5.21</td>
<td>2.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintain control of your daily schedule?</td>
<td>5.05</td>
<td>2.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prioritize among competing demands of the job?</td>
<td>5.46</td>
<td>2.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cope with the stress of the job?</td>
<td>3.58</td>
<td>2.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shape the operational policies and procedures that are necessary to manage your school?</td>
<td>5.73</td>
<td>1.97</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Descriptive Statistics: Instructional Leadership

The next section of the Principal Sense of Efficacy Scale (PSES) survey collected principals’ perceptions about their preparation and its impact on instructional leadership. Table 8 reports the means for each of the six survey items. Principals felt the most prepared to “facilitate student learning” in their school ($M = 6.09$, $SD = 1.96$) while feeling the least confident in preparation to “motivate teachers” ($M = 5.00$, $SD = 2.05$). With exception to “Facilitate student learning in your school”, the remaining five questions each rated at “To some degree” with means reporting in the 5.00-5.99 range as seen in Table 8. Of all three sections of the Principal Sense of Efficacy Survey, principals demonstrated the strongest sense of efficacy as result of their preparation in these six areas of instructional leadership as compared to those found in management and moral leadership.
Table 8

Principal perception of self-efficacy for Instructional Leadership

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instructional Leadership</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Motivate teachers?</td>
<td>5.00</td>
<td>2.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Generate enthusiasm for a shared vision of the school?</td>
<td>5.63</td>
<td>2.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manage change in your school?</td>
<td>5.45</td>
<td>2.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Create a positive learning environment in your school?</td>
<td>5.92</td>
<td>1.96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facilitate student learning in your school?</td>
<td>6.09</td>
<td>1.96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Raise student achievement on standardized tests?</td>
<td>5.54</td>
<td>2.12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Descriptive Statistics: Moral Leadership

The final section of the Principal Sense of Efficacy Survey collected principals’ perceptions about their preparation and its impact on moral leadership. Table 9 reports the means for each of the six survey items. Principals felt the most prepared to “promote ethical behavior among school personnel” in their school \((M = 5.78, \ SD = 2.03)\) while feeling the least confident in preparation to “promote school spirit among a large majority of the student population” \((M = 4.64, \ SD = 2.08)\). Unlike previous sections of the survey, principals reported feeling less prepared to lead in moral leadership as evidenced by four of the six indicators showing means less than 5.00. as seen in Table 9.
Table 9

Principal perception of self-efficacy for Moral Leadership

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Moral Leadership</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Promote acceptable behavior among students?</td>
<td>5.03</td>
<td>1.97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promote school spirit among a large majority of the student population?</td>
<td>4.64</td>
<td>2.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Handle effectively the discipline of students in your school?</td>
<td>4.76</td>
<td>2.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promote a positive image of your school with the media?</td>
<td>4.80</td>
<td>2.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promote the prevailing values of the community in your school?</td>
<td>4.91</td>
<td>2.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promote ethical behavior among school personnel?</td>
<td>5.78</td>
<td>2.03</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Results of Research Question 2

To determine if dependent variables of race, gender, and years of service influence sense of efficacy resulting from preparation programs, several statistical analyses were utilized. First, to determine if gender influences overall perception of principal preparation, an independent-samples t-test was utilized. To determine significance in race and years of service as influencers of preparation on efficacy, one-way ANOVAs were used. Next, to determine if Management, Instructional Leadership, and Moral Leadership as variables are in agreement, Bivariate Correlation was conducted. Finally, all of the 18 questions into one variable represented as Overall Preparation. Using Overall Preparation as my dependent variable, I used a linear regression to determine significance for each demographic variable as seen in Table 14. Significance was found with gender and race used singularly. When combined with an ANOVA, it also revealed that race and gender show significance as seen in Table 10.
Independent-samples t-test: How does gender influence overall perception of principal preparation?

To determine if gender influences principals’ perceptions of their preparation program and efficacy as a principal, an independent-samples t-test was conducted using the gender variable and dependent variables of management, instructional leadership, moral leadership, and overall preparation. As seen in Table 10, there is significance as indicated by $p$-values less than 0.05 with Management ($p = 0.014$), Instructional Leadership ($p = 0.012$), and Overall Preparation ($p = 0.011$). While Moral Leadership demonstrates slightly above the 0.05 threshold ($p = 0.056$), it is marginally close to approaching significance. As such, the null hypothesis is rejected and therefore, gender, particularly female, is an influencer of preparation and efficacy as a principal. This is further demonstrated as seen by the Group Descriptives in Table 9 by comparing each mean between males and females for each category and overall. For each, male respondents answered questions with more confidence in their efficacy as a result of preparation than did females.

Table 10

*Independent-samples t-test and Group Descriptives for Gender as an influencer of efficacy*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>t</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>$p$</th>
<th>Cohen's d</th>
<th>SE Cohen's d</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Management</td>
<td>2.496</td>
<td>163</td>
<td>0.014</td>
<td>0.395</td>
<td>0.162</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instructional Leadership</td>
<td>2.530</td>
<td>163</td>
<td>0.012</td>
<td>0.400</td>
<td>0.162</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moral Leadership</td>
<td>1.927</td>
<td>163</td>
<td>0.056</td>
<td>0.305</td>
<td>0.160</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall Preparation</td>
<td>2.583</td>
<td>163</td>
<td>0.011</td>
<td>0.409</td>
<td>0.162</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: Student's t-test.*
One-Way ANOVA Analysis: How Principal Sense of Efficacy is Influenced by Race

To determine if race influences principals’ perceptions of their preparation program and efficacy as a principal, one-way ANOVA was conducted using the race variable and dependent variables of management, instructional leadership, moral leadership, and overall preparation. Because categories of race outside of White, African American, and Latino/a were less than five in participant count, they were not statistically analyzed. There was not a significant effect of race on the preparation perception of management leadership at the p<.05 level for the three conditions [F(2)=0.647, p = 0.525] as seen in Table 11. There was not a significant effect of race on the preparation perception of instructional leadership at the p<.05 level for the three conditions [F(2)=0.201, p = 0.201] as seen in Table 11. There was not a significant effect of race on the preparation perception of moral leadership at the p<.05 level for the three conditions [F(2)=2.174, p = 0.117] as seen in Table 11. There was not a significant effect of race on the preparation perception overall preparation at the p<.05 level for the three conditions [F(2)=0.723, p = 0.487] as seen in Table 11. Taken together, these results suggest that a survey participant’s race had little to no bearing on how they perceived their preparation program impacted their efficacy as a school principal.
Table 11

ANOVA results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Management</td>
<td>2.111</td>
<td>0.647</td>
<td>0.525</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residuals</td>
<td>3.261</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instructional Leadership</td>
<td>0.613</td>
<td>0.201</td>
<td>0.818</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residuals</td>
<td>3.049</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moral Leadership</td>
<td>4.707</td>
<td>1.453</td>
<td>0.237</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residuals</td>
<td>3.240</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall Preparation</td>
<td>1.861</td>
<td>0.723</td>
<td>0.487</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residuals</td>
<td>2.575</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Type III Sum of Squares

One-Way ANOVA Analysis: How Principal Sense of Efficacy is Influenced by Years of Service

To determine if years of service influences principals’ perceptions of their preparation program and efficacy as a principal, one-way ANOVA was conducted using the years of service variable and dependent variables of management, instructional leadership, moral leadership, and overall preparation. As seen in Table 12, there was not a significant effect of years of service on the preparation perception of management leadership at the p<.05 level for the three conditions [F(2)=0.344, p = 0.710], nor was there present a significant effect of years of service on the preparation perception of instructional leadership at the p<.05 level for the three conditions [F(2)=0.001, p = 0.999. Further, there was not a significant effect of years of service on the preparation perception of moral leadership at the p<.05 level for the three conditions [F(2)=2.174, p = 0.117] also seen in Table 12. Lastly, similarly to each of the three subsections of the survey, there was not a significant effect of years of service on the overall preparation at the p<.05 level for the three conditions [F(2)=0.609, p = 0.545]. Taken together, these results
suggest that a survey participant’s years of service had little to no bearing on how they perceived their preparation program impacted their efficacy as a school principal.

**Table 12**

*ANOVA results*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Cases</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Management</td>
<td>1.126</td>
<td>0.344</td>
<td>0.710</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residuals</td>
<td>3.277</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instructional Leadership</td>
<td>0.004</td>
<td>0.001</td>
<td>0.999</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residuals</td>
<td>3.071</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moral Leadership</td>
<td>6.980</td>
<td>2.174</td>
<td>0.117</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residuals</td>
<td>3.211</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall Preparation</td>
<td>1.573</td>
<td>0.609</td>
<td>0.545</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residuals</td>
<td>2.581</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* Type III Sum of Squares

**Correlation Analysis: How Management, Instructional Leadership, and Moral Leadership Relate to Each Other**

Bivariate data analysis was conducted using Pearson’s correlation coefficient to determine the strength of relationships between each variable category from the survey. As seen in Table 13, between the management and instructional leadership variables, there was a moderately strong positive linear relationship that was also statistically significant, \(r=0.659, p<0.001\). Similarly, between the management and moral leadership variables, there was a strong positive linear relationship \(r = 0.702, p <.001\), indicating that as one variable increased, the other variable tended to increase as well. The observed correlation was statistically significant. Lastly, with instructional leadership and moral leadership variables, a similarly strong relationship was found with statistical significance \(r = 0.778, p <.001\).
Table 13

Pearson's Correlations for Management, Instructional Leadership, and Moral Leadership Composite Variables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Management Pearson's r</th>
<th>Management p-value</th>
<th>Instructional Leadership Pearson's r</th>
<th>Instructional Leadership p-value</th>
<th>Moral Leadership Pearson's r</th>
<th>Moral Leadership p-value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Management</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Instructional Leadership</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0.659</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>&lt;.001</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Moral Leadership</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0.702</td>
<td>0.778</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>&lt;.001</td>
<td>&lt;.001</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Regression Analysis: How Principal Sense of Efficacy is Influenced by Gender, Race, and Years of Service

A linear regression analysis was conducted to investigate the relationship between the independent variables of gender, race, and years of service and the dependent variable of overall preparation. Results of the linear regression indicated that there was a collective significant effect between the gender, race, and years of service, \( F(5, 163) = 1.980, p = 0.084, R^2 = 0.059 \). The individual influencers were examined further and indicated that gender \( t = -2.594, p = 0.010 \) was a significant influencer in the model. As seen in Table 14, the analysis revealed the model was approaching significance \( p = 0.084 \), indicating that there was potentially a significant relationship found between gender, race, and years of service and overall preparation.
Table 14

*Linear Regression using overall preparation variable*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>R</th>
<th>R²</th>
<th>Adjusted R²</th>
<th>RMSE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>H₀</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>1.603</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H₁</td>
<td>0.243</td>
<td>0.059</td>
<td>0.029</td>
<td>1.579</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**ANOVA**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Sum of Squares</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>H₁</td>
<td>Regression</td>
<td>24.695</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4.939</td>
<td>1.980</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Residual</td>
<td>394.053</td>
<td>158</td>
<td>2.494</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>418.749</td>
<td>163</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* The intercept model is omitted, as no meaningful information can be shown.

**Coefficients**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Unstandardized</th>
<th>Standard Error</th>
<th>Standardized</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>H₀ (Intercept)</td>
<td>5.204</td>
<td>0.125</td>
<td></td>
<td>41.576</td>
<td>&lt; .001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H₁ (Intercept)</td>
<td>5.243</td>
<td>0.285</td>
<td></td>
<td>18.408</td>
<td>&lt; .001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>-0.652</td>
<td>0.251</td>
<td></td>
<td>-2.594</td>
<td>0.010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African American</td>
<td>0.542</td>
<td>0.359</td>
<td></td>
<td>1.509</td>
<td>0.133</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latino/a</td>
<td>0.235</td>
<td>0.549</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.427</td>
<td>0.670</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-9 Years</td>
<td>0.351</td>
<td>0.313</td>
<td></td>
<td>1.124</td>
<td>0.263</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10+ Years</td>
<td>0.363</td>
<td>0.313</td>
<td></td>
<td>1.162</td>
<td>0.247</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*a Standardized coefficients can only be computed for continuous influencers.*

**Additional Findings**

Two additional questions were added to the Principal Sense of Efficacy Scale (PSES) survey to discover intentions of current principals and whether or not they intended to leave the profession as a principal for the intent to potentially identify future research between preparation and principals sustaining in the role. The first question asked respondents if they plan to leave the profession with 85 responding with “yes” at 51% and the remaining 82 answered “no” at 49%; three respondents on the survey did not answer this question. Of the 85 who plan to leave, a second question asked respondents to identify a likely time frame of departure: within a year,
two to three years, or three years. Principals who plan to leave within a year to three years made up for 60% while those that plan to leave in three years accounted for 40%. Further breakdown of respondent data can be seen in Table 15.

**Table 15**

*Frequency of respondents planning to leave the profession*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Response</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Proportion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Do you plan to leave the profession?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>51%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>49%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If so, when do you plan to leave the profession as a principal?</td>
<td>Within a year</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Two to three years</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Three Years</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Chapter 4 Summary**

This chapter reported the results of the modified Principal Sense of Efficacy Scale (PSES) survey. Through descriptive statistics, there was a better understanding of how principals across the state of Florida perceive their preparation program as it impacts their efficacy as a principal. Through the use of independent-samples t-tests, it was revealed that there existed significance between gender and principal perception, specifically female gender. When analyzing for race and years of service using one-way ANOVA statistics, there was not significant relationships discovered, implicating that they did not have a strong impact on principal perception of preparation. Finally, through the use of regression analysis it was determined that gender, race, and years of service were not significant influencers of principals’ perceptions of their preparation program for impact of efficacy. The next chapter will provide interpretations of these results and offer implications and discussion for further research into how preparation programs prepare principals.
Chapter 5: Discussion

A recent national survey revealed that nearly half of current school principals plan to leave the profession as building leaders (National Association of Secondary School Principals, 2021). Principals cited that they are overwhelmed with stress, similar to teachers as well as a lack of resources employed to retain them in the position. With increased levels of accountability, stemming from as early as a Nation at Risk and Not Child Left Behind, leaders have become more instructional managers rather than leaders as they work tirelessly to ensure learning metrics are met as set forth by district and state expectations. Specifically for principals in the state of Florida, more recent issues such as those among 18 recent policy changes enacted that include the Stop the Wrongs to Our Kids and Employees (WOKE) Act, House Bill 1557 also dubbed the “Don’t Say Gay” bill, and changes in curriculum outlined in House Bill 1467 have added more stress to the role and there isn’t enough preparation or development aligned to respond to these changes, not to mention the involvement of the principal perspective in decision making. “Principals want policy makers to better recognize them for the hard work through increased efforts like school visits to understand what school leaders go through on a daily basis before they make policy decisions and enact new legislation (National Association of Elementary School Principals, 2022, p. 2). It is this need to solicit information about principals’ perceptions that informed this study.

The purpose of this study was to examine Florida’s principals’ perception of their Level II principal preparation program to determine if there is a relationship that exists between their preparation experience and their efficacy as a building principal. Two research questions guided this research: 1) How do principals feel their Level II preparation programs equipped them to be able to fulfill their duties as a school principal? And 2) How do years of experience, race, and
gender influence overall perceptions of principal preparation? This research assessed principals’ perceptions of their preparation through three main leadership lenses: Management, Instructional Leadership, and Moral Leadership to better understand how preparation programs align with self-efficacy as a principal. This study also informs policy makers, district leaders, and university personnel to better understand the experience of principals so that programs are not only strengthened to meet the increasing demands of the role but to also recruit and retain strong leaders so that schools are able to do more of what they are designed to do – increased positive learning outcomes for all students. As such, the final chapter of this study delineates the findings from the research, provides discussion of the findings, and recommends action for future decision making and continued research.

**Findings from First Research Question and Implications**

To answer the first research question of this study, descriptive statistics and frequencies were used for each sub-section of the Principal Sense of Efficacy Scale (PSES) survey to determine how respondents felt their preparation prepared them for the roles of management, instructional leadership, and moral leadership. Using the Likert scale of 1-9 as the scale to demonstrate preparedness with each odd number reflecting a different efficacy rating: 1 = None at all, 3 = Very Little, 5 = Some Degree, 7 = Quite a bit, and 9 = A Great Deal. Each section revealed a similar mean rating using variables management, instructional leadership, and moral leadership, indicating that principals feel underprepared for their roles. Management (M = 4.92, SD = 1.88), Instructional Leadership (M = 5.55, SD = 1.76), and Moral Leadership (M = 4.93, SD = 1.18) each demonstrate that there was little disagreement in how principals felt by examining the low standards of deviations and each mean hovering around the mid-point of the
nine-point scale. This is further cemented with the composite variable consisting of all three subsections (M = 5.14, SD = 1.63).

**Implications of Principal Perception of Management Preparation**

The first sub-section of the Principal Sense of Efficacy Scale (PSES) survey asked six questions around various aspects of management leadership. Questions specifically asked principals to reflect on how well they felt their preparation program prepared them to handle the time demands of the job, handle the paperwork required of the job, maintain control of your daily schedule, prioritize among competing demands of the job, cope with the stress of the job, and shape the operational policies and procedures that are necessary to manage your school. To encapsulate this version of leadership, Kotter (2013, para. 8) states that “management is a set of well-known processes, like planning, budgeting, structuring jobs, staffing jobs, measuring performance and problem-solving, which help an organization to predictably do what it knows how to do well.” With five of the six questions revealing a mean of approximately 5.0 (5.05-5.73) out of 9.0, it is clear that principals aren’t confident that their preparation cemented the skills necessary to manage the day-to-day functions of the school/organization throughout Florida.

The most concerning outcome of all 18 questions comes from the remaining question unaddressed above in this sub-section and that has to do with coping with the stress of the job (M = 3.58, SD = 2.25). Principals overwhelmingly agreed that this was the area that they felt least prepared to encounter in the role of the job. This also indicates that principals are highly stressed professionals in need of assistance in not only preparation for it but more importantly, development in how to respond to it once in the job role. Sogunro (2012) found that there are seven main contributors to the stress of principals: managing relationships, time constraints and
time management, school crises, rapidly changing legislative and district policies with increasing demands, financial management, school image, and fear of failure. When examining causes of principal’s stress, researchers Grissom et al. (2015) found that time management is often a leading cause which aligns with the perception of Florida’s principals when asked if they have been prepared to manage their time (M = 5.15, SD = 2.19) and maintain control of their daily schedule (M = 5.05, SD = 2.09). If these time management skills are prepared for and further developed, they would “lead to more effective time use and ultimately more positive outcomes, including reduced job stress and increased job performance” (Grissom et al., 2015).

**Implications of Principal Perception of Instructional Leadership Preparation**

Researchers have long agreed that principals serving in the role of instructional leadership demonstrate a strong, if not one of the strongest, impacts on student achievement outcomes (Leithwood, 2004). As such, it is would be expected that among the three sub-sections of the Principal Sense of Efficacy Scale survey, instructional leadership would score the highest (M = 5.55, SD = 1.76). While this is certainly noteworthy, it still reports relatively low on the 9-point Likert scale, suggesting that principals still remain less confident in their preparation to be an instructional leader. Consequently, while principals may make significant impact as instructional leaders, the impact potential isn’t being fully actualized at this confidence level.

Survey participants were asked to rate how confident they felt their preparation program prepared them in the six following areas of instructional leadership: motivate teachers, generate enthusiasm for a shared vision of the school, manage change in your school, create a positive learning environment for your school, facilitate student learning in your school, and raise student achievement on standardized tests. A promising finding here is that the highest scored item was that principals felt the most confident in their ability to facilitate student learning in their school.
(M = 6.09, SD = 1.96). In fact, this was the highest scoring question on the 18-question survey. This could suggest that there has been an increased focus in preparation programs around not just teaching practices but understanding how students learn and now to navigate the intersection between the two. Research has pointed in this direction for nearly twenty years and as such, there “has come a surge of investment in and scrutiny of programs that recruit, prepare, and develop principals” particularly with leaders who are “committed…and understand instruction and can develop the capacities of teachers” (Darling-Hammond et al., 2007, p. 143). Where principals lacked confidence in instructional leadership showed most significantly in how to motivate teachers (M = 5.00, SD = 2.05). Eyal and Roth (2011) noted that “vision building potentially offers the greatest capacity to influence teachers’ motivation because the vision provides personal goals for the teacher, as well as a desire to see a change in the future” (p. 261).

When surveyed on generating enthusiasm for a shared vision, participants responded fairly (M = 5.63, SD = 2.04). Several challenges could be present here as a result. First, principals may be ill-prepared in how to generate a strong vision that also empowers goal-centric teachers. A vision that centers on high expectations for student learning, appropriate curriculum with sufficient rigor, high-quality instruction with a culture of learning is one that will yield stronger results and gain the support of teachers (Porter, et al., 2010). A secondary challenge here might be that leaders are ill-equipped to connect a strong vision in ways that generate enthusiasm and motivation. Leithwood and Mascall (2008) suggest that a strong connection is created within a distributed leadership model that allows members of the organization at all levels to take part in the decision-making process, particularly with setting and maintaining a strong vision for the school that leads to increased teacher motivation. Eyal and Roth (2011) suggest further that these conditions of collective leadership – “personal goals, beliefs about
one’s capacities, and beliefs about one’s context or situation” create stronger impact on student learning (p. 261). Lastly, with increased focus on statewide accountability measures, principals may feel less urgent to adopt a local vision statement and instead align with district-created goals that support standards-aligned initiatives driven by the state response to Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) as ESSA “distributes responsibility for improvement among states, districts, and schools rather than focusing entirely on school-level actions directed by the state” (Jimenez & Sargrad, 2017, p. 1). It is this pressure placed on districts to perform that may diminish the perceived need for individual school vision statements which unfortunately supports a long-endured management-style of leadership around metrics rather than leading people through motivation toward change. Regardless, these factors overall aren’t ample substitutions for the power of an appropriately envisioned and written vision statement which would still aid in setting a course of commitment to all stakeholders as to how specifically schools will educate students (Jackson, 2021).

**Implications of Principal Perception of Moral Leadership Preparation**

The third sub-section of the Principal Sense of Efficacy Survey measured principals’ belief about their preparation and its impact on moral leadership which resulted in a nearly-identical mean found with management leadership (M = 4.93, SD = 1.81). Principals responded to six key areas of moral leadership: promote acceptable behavior among students, promote school spirit among a large majority of the student population, handle effectively the discipline of students in your school, promote a positive image of your school with the media, promote the prevailing values of the community in your school, and promote ethical behavior among school personnel. Of the six questions, principals felt most prepared to promote ethical behavior among school personnel (M = 5.78, SD = 2.03), despite the level of confidence resting at “to some
degree.” The lowest question performance in this section was how to promote school spirit among a majority of students (M = 4.64, SD = 2.08) followed by handling discipline effectively (M = 4.76, SD = 2.02). Researchers Craig and Martin (2023) found that there is a direct link between school discipline efforts that create school-wide trust and the health of a school culture. While harsh discipline by a principal may result in fewer disruptive behaviors in the short term, students who are excluded from the school environment become a greater risk of dropping out and potentially increase chances of incarceration later in life (Sorensen et al., 2020). Further, when both are synergistically aligned, student achievement results in positive outcomes.

As reviewed in the literature, it is paramount that principals develop strong relationships with teachers to maximize the opportunity to significantly impact student achievement. Vanderhaar et al. (2006) suggest that this influencing of teachers and staff is one of the strongest drivers of student outcomes as teachers, in turn, influence student outcomes. As the survey data shows, however, principals aren’t ultimately confident in the areas of promoting wellbeing of staff and students—from school culture to student discipline. Principals have a need to-and a desire to-lead with an emotional stance that leads to further collaboration with teachers and staff that leads to stronger attention and bolstering of wellness in all stakeholders. “In particular, the emotionally intelligent leader—principal is able to inspire and facilitate a self-conscious and organizational culture by adopting values of understanding, trust, prospect, achievement and effectiveness and combining emotions, beliefs, vision and values in a flexible manner” (Brinia, et al., 2014, p. 28). Preparation programs should consider experiences that move learning beyond isolation and toward experiences that provide hands-on opportunities in relationship building, team-led vision creation, motivation of others, etc. It is in those opportunities that aspiring principals will begin to garner the confidence in not only relating to others in the practice of
leadership but begin to lead others with empathy that builds a stronger foundation that can serve as a launching point for principalship that commits to moral leadership.

**Findings from Second Research Question and Implications**

In order to answer the second research question of “How do years of experience, race, and gender influence overall perceptions of principal preparation, an independent-samples t-test was first analyzed to determine if there was significance in the relationship between gender and principal preparation perception which did in fact reveal significance in gender, particularly females and their efficacy as a principal. To determine if race and years of service impacted perception of preparation, a one-way ANOVA was conducted for each and both determined that there was not a significance relationship between neither race or years of service and efficacy perception as a result of preparation. Lastly, a regression analysis revealed that there was a collective significant effect between the gender, race, and years of service and that the model is approaching significance (p = 0.084), indicating that there is potentially a significant relationship found between gender, race, and years of service and overall preparation.

**Implications of Gender and Principal Preparation Perception**

Through the independent-samples t-test, it was revealed that gender does in fact influence preparation perception, particularly with women with an overall $p$-value of .011. Across all 18 survey items, females responded with less confidence in their performance as a principal as a result of their preparation than males and were less likely to answer using “9-A great deal” for each question. Interestingly, females make up 67% of all principals in the state of Florida but feel less confident than their male counterparts. They were also more apt to respond to the survey than males with 58% participating as opposed to 42% of males. Further research would be
needed to better understand why there is a discrepancy in levels of efficacy in female principals and male principals. Scholars suggest there is a confidence gap between males and females and it is this self-confidence, not ability, that separates performance of each. “Compared with men, women don’t consider themselves as ready for promotions, they predict they’ll do worse on tests, and they generally underestimate their abilities” (Kay & Shipman, 2014, para. 11). However, other scholars disagree. Thomson (2018) argues that it is not confidence that separates leadership and ability in males and females, and in fact, her research suggests that women feel just as confident. The danger with the notion that there is a confidence gap is that it presupposes that in order to close that gap in self-efficacy, female leaders should act and respond more like males to “catch up” to their level of status and leadership. Koenig et al. (2011) echo this sentiment as they suggest that “Stereotypes often are a potent barrier to women’s advancement to positions of leadership” (p.616). Further, research has long suggested that as women are ascribed more traits that suit the greater good such as being nice and compassionate prevent them from rising to higher levels of leadership held by men who are more known to be competitive and aggressive—factors that are awarded and led to promotion (Eagly & Carli, 2007; Gallup News Service, 2001; Spence & Buckner, 2000). However, not all research suggests that it is about gender-specific traits of enactment but rather gender traits: “Much of what we think about in terms of leadership, usually falls in ‘masculine’ traits, whether it’s a man or a woman” (Wharton Staff, 2005, p. para. 6). In order to better understand why female principals feel less confident in their leadership and what principal preparation programs can do to strengthen this efficacy, further research, particularly qualitative studies seeking to understand the lived experiences of female leaders would serve well to better understand this disconnect to determine if these same principles of
gender roles and traits that affect overall leadership roles are also true in roles of school principalship.

**Additional Research Implications**

Two additional questions were included in the Principal Sense of Efficacy Scale (PSES) survey to determine if principals in the state of Florida are just as likely to leave the profession as indicated in a recent national study (National Association of Secondary School Principals, 2021). Principals were asked first if they plan to leave the profession to which 51% responded (N = 85) yes while 49% (N = 82) said no. In order to better understand those that plan to leave, a follow-up question asked approximately when they planned to leave: 25% (N = 12) stated that they planned to leave within a year, 35% (N = 17) plan to leave in two to three years, and 40% (N = 20) plan to leave in three years. A significant concern is revealed here in that 60% of principals who are planning to leave the profession plan to do so within one to three years. To put that into a statewide perspective, that would suggest that 1,875 principals, representing 51% of current principals, plan to leave the profession. Of that group, 469 plan to leave within a year and 656 in two to three years for a total of 1,125 principals exiting the profession in Florida within one to three years. To compare to the national trend as identified by the National Association of Secondary Principals (2021), Florida principals outpace principals nationwide in every identifier. Principals, nationally, who plan to leave the profession represent 42% of respondents compared to 51% in Florida. There exists just a 2% difference when asked if principals plan to leave within three years at 38% nationally and 40% in Florida. Lastly, there is approximately a 10% difference in how principals responded to leaving the profession in two-to-three years at 24% nationally and 35% for Florida’s principals and similarly when asked if they plan to leave within one year with 14% of principals nationally affirming that plan of departure while 25% agreed in
Florida. Further research could identify ways to better improve preparation programs to create for stronger, more sustaining principals to not only accommodate this drastic exodus but to create more effective pipelines to turn the tide. Furthermore, reasons why principals are leaving the profession need to be identified and understood beyond just the overall picture – how many are leaving as the result of retirement, relocation, and resignation are significant factors to delineate to better respond to these new statistics.

**Recommendations for Principal Preparation Programs**

A valuable starting point for beginning to revise preparation programs to build more efficacious leaders is to utilize research-based domains of a comprehensive, aligned principal pipeline as seen in Figure 1. By beginning with leadership standards as the foundation, the pipeline is built with collaborative efforts to ensure that what is being measured in performance becomes the framework for preparation. Researchers Aladjem et al. (2021) further point out that when districts outsource their preparation programs that they need to be in alignment with district expectations and standards when it comes to program content and experiences. While districts differ based on needs and resources, one thing remains clear that in any principal or leadership pipeline structure, high-quality preparation programs must be included in order to create pathways and opportunities to elevate efficacy in school principals.
For districts that aren’t yet ready to embark in creating a new pipeline program or are just beginning in the process, another way to begin to structure preparation programs is to align practice with research connected to Bandura’s Self-Efficacy Theory. Programs should build upon the progression toward mastery using the four criteria set forth by Bandura (1977): mastery
experiences, vicarious experiences, persuasion, and emotional/physiological states. As programs are developed and revised to better meet the need of creating more efficacious leaders through these four levers, the influence of strong leaders will leave a lasting impact on teachers and staff which will lead to maximized learning outcomes in students.

**Mastery Experiences**

Principal preparation programs should be constructed that allow for leaders to learn via turnkey experiences that lead not only to mastery but also to a foundation of confidence in the scope of work. “Mastery experiences are the most influential source of efficacy information because they provide the most authentic evidence of whether one can muster whatever it takes to succeed. Success builds a robust belief in one’s personal efficacy” (Bandura, 1977, p. 80). When preparation programs can move away from isolated classroom settings for learning and into real-world experiences that are trackable and benchmarks that identify success along the way, aspiring principals will be able to better identify developing competencies in their leadership and build a stronger sense of self efficacy. Opportunities toward mastery should be present in all three measured areas of leadership-management, instructional leadership, and moral leadership, to ensure for a successful completion of a preparation program. Aspiring principals should be provided ample opportunities to not only learn what these experiences are and how they impact the principalship but there should be repetitive practice just as learning any new skill and application would offer. This practice must take place in real-world school site environments for the most authentic impartation of mastery toward future principalship. One such way to include authentic experiences toward mastery are through internships. Aspiring principals can intern at with targeted experiences around specific competencies in their current school through micro internships as well as experience more broad opportunities that cover a range of learning
experiences for a longer duration that may also include presence at a different school or site for learning under a different leader through macro internships. In addition to internships, individualized coaching through applicable problems of practice would benefit the aspiring principal not only as they learn new skills and decision-making steps to provide solutions but also stakeholders involved in that problem of practice also benefit from that mastery learning. Regardless of the approach, there should be increased efforts in providing real-world experiences in school settings and minimal programming for leadership learning should exist in isolated, classroom spaces.

**Vicarious Experiences**

With nearly half of the principals surveyed planning to leave the profession and an overall sense of efficacy clocking in the mid-range, identifying strong role models and successful mentors will be likely a challenging effort in preparation program development. Nonetheless, it is paramount that aspiring principals be paired with and involved in a network of leaders who are succeeding in their role as principal. This exposure to strong elements of leadership shall infuse into the emerging practice of future principals. “When one has positive role models in their life (especially those who display a healthy level of self-efficacy) – one is more likely to absorb at least a few of those positive beliefs about the self” (Lopez-Garrido, 2023, para. 7). Conversely, if aspiring principals are exposed to leaders with low-efficacy, those same types of experiences could problematically be adopted. The selection of practitioners with demonstrated experience in management, instructional leadership, and moral leadership to lead aspiring principals should be a key focus when developing a preparation program. Through the implementation of a Leadership Tracking System (LTS) this partnering between principal mentor and aspiring principal mentee can become more intentional and lead to stronger learning outcomes for the
aspiring principal. The LTS is able to target documented experienced professional learning of existing principals to allow a stronger snapshot of where to place aspiring principals based on identified learning experience needs – also reflected in the LTS. “With substantial data on principals’ records of success in relation to their experiences in preparation, selection, and support, districts may be able to strengthen the components of their pipeline” (Anderson et al., 2017, p. 21). From these records of success and identified areas of need, coaching support that is differentiated based on mentor and mentee would add additional layers of support that will strengthen not only the exposure to those vicarious mastery experiences, but more importantly, strengthen the sustainability of the principal pipeline. Lastly, by implementing a cohort model where aspiring principals are able to learn with and learn from one another, the collective experiences provide an additional layer of efficacy building in each of the aspiring principal candidates.

**Persuasion**

Just as important as learning from the experiences of others, receiving quality feedback and praise in experiences as a form of persuasion greatly impacts efficacy in leadership. Regularly scheduled coaching and feedback sessions should be embedded in to a preparation program to not only serve as a mechanism to track mastery experiences, but to also provide support in developing a leader’s self-perception. Additionally, these coaching cycles should be differentiated based on specific indicators the aspiring principal is attempting to master which should include how the aspiring principals provides coaching and feedback to others. This practice of delivering and receiving positive feedback becomes a cemented way of practice and should translate into a principal’s way of work with teachers and staff, further perpetuating effective leadership. This is particularly important when accounting for low perceived efficacy in
moral leadership and promoting wellness with teachers, staff, and students. Coaching conversations should also take place through strengthened evaluation systems as authentic mechanisms for feedback which also serve as tools to build efficacy in the aspiring principal while also ensuring alignment between learning experiences and expectations of performance. Lastly, continuous authentic recognition that demonstrates belief in the aspiring leader’s ability reinforces efficacy and builds toward strengthened outcomes (Yan, et al., 2022).

**Emotional and Physiological States**

As evidenced in the survey results, one key area of attention is needed with leaders and how they are prepared to cope with the stress of principalship. Principals overwhelmingly agreed that this is the most needed area of development. How one feels about their leadership ability is influenced by their own well-being—emotional, physical, and psychological (Bandura, 1977). Developing strategies in preparation to cope with stress and manage one’s emotions is critical if principals are to become more actualized in their leadership efficacy. Beyond the preparation program, further development and support can aide in the strengthening of governance of self. Through mentorship and a supportive cohort model, leaders are able to process job stressors and in turn, enact appropriate responses that lead to higher efficacy and support for teachers, staff, and students. Embedded in this model should exists opportunities to roleplay experiences that while may not identically mirror real-life experiences, particularly with stress, they do begin to build confidence in using body language and communication to better manage decision-making under various emotional states (Guenthner & Moore, 2005). Finally, when assigning a mentor with the responsibility of gauging the emotional and physiological states of the aspiring leader, whether from true problems of practice presented from their school site or through coaching or role-playing, the aspiring principal is able to gain efficacy through not only learning how to
make decisions effectively under various states but also allows for the skill to be developed when the aspiring principal would perform the same responsibility with future leaders.

**Limitations and Recommendations for Future Research**

While there were little limitations in conducting this research, there were initial challenges in obtaining participation in the survey by principals across the state. Despite using publicly-accessed email identification, several districts prevented the distribution to its principals citing a need to undergo the research protocols set forth by their respective district policy guidelines. To counter this, several principal associations as well as the Florida Association of School Administrators distributed the survey to its members that included principals in those (and all) school districts, thus nearly every principal in the state had access the survey. As such, there still exists an under-represented population of subgroups in the survey as compared with the proportion of demographics statewide. Further, because not every principal in the state of Florida has a Level II certification, research should include all principals, particularly in smaller, rural districts that don’t have access to well-suited preparation programs. For future research, a study that surveys principals district-by-district will not only capture more participants but it would also highlight districts and programs that are implementing preparation programs with strong success in order to share work statewide. Additionally, districts with areas of opportunity to improve their preparation programs would have more research available to inform decision-making for revision of such programs.

Future research needs to be conducted to better understand why females feel less prepared than males to identify if it is truly a preparation gap or something different that exists outside of the control of preparation programs. With schools being led by more females than males, it is critical to their success and the success of their students that their efficacy be as
strong as possible. Additionally, continued research in how to prepare leaders with stronger stress coping strategies is presently important. Beyond instructional leadership, research needs to continue as to how to create more well-rounded leaders that impact performance of self and others so that there is the strongest sense of efficacy possible.

**Conclusion**

Successful schools simply do not exist without successful principals. In the state of Florida, principals feel overwhelming underprepared to enact their leadership in ways that allow for the maximum potential in their school community. More attention must be given as to how we prepare principals and programs must adjust beyond aligning to standards on paper. Aspiring principals need to undergo intensive training that provides real experiences that develop them into strong leaders who possess high levels of self-efficacy. Research continuously suggests that principals are the second greatest impact on student outcomes behind that of a teacher. If our principals in the state of Florida present themselves as leaders who feel confident “to some degree”, what does that say about their performance in schools? There clearly exists a gap between theory and practice and our students suffer because of it. Students deserve more attention to the implementation of stronger preparation programs that are meaningful and impactful in creating and sustaining the strongest practitioners of principalship as possible.
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Appendix A

Florida Principal Leadership Standards

Purpose and Structure of the Standards

**Purpose**: The Standards are set forth in rule as Florida’s core expectations for effective school administrators. The Standards are based on contemporary research on multi-dimensional school leadership, and represent skill sets and knowledge bases needed in effective schools. The Standards form the foundation for school leader personnel evaluations and professional development systems, school leadership preparation programs, and educator certification requirements.

**Structure**: There are ten Standards grouped into categories, which can be considered domains of effective leadership. Each Standard has a title and includes, as necessary, descriptors that further clarify or define the Standard, so that the Standards may be developed further into leadership curricula and proficiency assessments in fulfillment of their purposes.

**Domain 1: Student Achievement**:

**Standard 1: Student Learning Results.**

*Effective school leaders achieve results on the school’s student learning goals.*

a. The school’s learning goals are based on the state’s adopted student academic standards and the district’s adopted curricula; and
b. Student learning results are evidenced by the student performance and growth on statewide assessments; district-determined assessments that are implemented by the district under Section 1008.22, F.S.; international assessments; and other indicators of student success adopted by the district and state.

**Standard 2: Student Learning as a Priority.**

*Effective school leaders demonstrate that student learning is their top priority through leadership actions that build and support a learning organization focused on student success.* The leader:

a. Enables faculty and staff to work as a system focused on student learning;
b. Maintains a school climate that supports student engagement in learning;
c. Generates high expectations for learning growth by all students; and
d. Engages faculty and staff in efforts to close learning performance gaps among student subgroups within the school.
Appendix A (continued)

Domain 2: Instructional Leadership:

**Standard 3: Instructional Plan Implementation.**
Effective school leaders work collaboratively to develop and implement an instructional framework that aligns curriculum with state standards, effective instructional practices, student learning needs and assessments. The leader:

a. Implements the Florida Educator Accomplished Practices as described in Rule 6A-5.065, F.A.C. through a common language of instruction;

b. Engages in data analysis for instructional planning and improvement;

c. Communicates the relationships among academic standards, effective instruction, and student performance;

d. Implements the district’s adopted curricula and state’s adopted academic standards in a manner that is rigorous and culturally relevant to the students and school; and

e. Ensures the appropriate use of high-quality formative and interim assessments aligned with the adopted standards and curricula.

**Standard 4: Faculty Development.**
Effective school leaders recruit, retain and develop an effective and diverse faculty and staff. The leader:

a. Generates a focus on student and professional learning in the school that is clearly linked to the systemwide strategic objectives and the school improvement plan;

b. Evaluates, monitors, and provides timely feedback to faculty on the effectiveness of instruction;

c. Employs a faculty with the instructional proficiencies needed for the school population served;

d. Identifies faculty instructional proficiency needs, including standards-based content, research-based pedagogy, data analysis for instructional planning and improvement, and the use of instructional technology;

e. Implements professional learning that enables faculty to deliver culturally relevant and differentiated instruction; and

f. Provides resources and time and engages faculty in effective individual and collaborative professional learning throughout the school year.

**Standard 5: Learning Environment.**
Effective school leaders structure and monitor a school learning environment that improves learning for all of Florida’s diverse student population. The leader:

a. Maintains a safe, respectful and inclusive student-centered learning environment that is focused on equitable opportunities for learning and building a foundation for a fulfilling life in a democratic society and global economy;
Appendix A (continued)

b. Recognizes and uses diversity as an asset in the development and implementation of procedures and practices that motivate all students and improve student learning;
c. Promotes school and classroom practices that validate and value similarities and differences among students;
d. Provides recurring monitoring and feedback on the quality of the learning environment;
e. Initiates and supports continuous improvement processes focused on the students’ opportunities for success and well-being.
f. Engages faculty in recognizing and understanding cultural and developmental issues related to student learning by identifying and addressing strategies to minimize and/or eliminate achievement gaps.

Domain 3: Organizational Leadership

**Standard 6: Decision Making.**

Effective school leaders employ and monitor a decision-making process that is based on vision, mission and improvement priorities using facts and data. The leader:

a. Gives priority attention to decisions that impact the quality of student learning and teacher proficiency;
b. Uses critical thinking and problem solving techniques to define problems and identify solutions;
c. Evaluates decisions for effectiveness, equity, intended and actual outcome; implements follow-up actions; and revises as needed;
d. Empowers others and distributes leadership when appropriate; and
e. Uses effective technology integration to enhance decision making and efficiency throughout the school.

**Standard 7: Leadership Development.**

Effective school leaders actively cultivate, support, and develop other leaders within the organization. The leader:

a. Identifies and cultivates potential and emerging leaders;
b. Provides evidence of delegation and trust in subordinate leaders;
c. Plans for succession management in key positions;
d. Promotes teacher–leadership functions focused on instructional proficiency and student learning; and
e. Develops sustainable and supportive relationships between school leaders, parents, community, higher education and business leaders.
Appendix A (continued)

Standard 8: School Management.

Effective school leaders manage the organization, operations, and facilities in ways that maximize the use of resources to promote a safe, efficient, legal, and effective learning environment. The leader:

a. Organizes time, tasks and projects effectively with clear objectives and coherent plans;
b. Establishes appropriate deadlines for him/herself and the entire organization;
c. Manages schedules, delegates, and allocates resources to promote collegial efforts in school improvement and faculty development; and
d. Is fiscally responsible and maximizes the impact of fiscal resources on instructional priorities.

Standard 9: Communication.

Effective school leaders practice two-way communications and use appropriate oral, written, and electronic communication and collaboration skills to accomplish school and system goals by building and maintaining relationships with students, faculty, parents, and community. The leader:

a. Actively listens to and learns from students, staff, parents, and community stakeholders;
b. Recognizes individuals for effective performance;
c. Communicates student expectations and performance information to students, parents, and community;
d. Maintains high visibility at school and in the community and regularly engages stakeholders in the work of the school;
e. Creates opportunities within the school to engage students, faculty, parents, and community stakeholders in constructive conversations about important school issues.
f. Utilizes appropriate technologies for communication and collaboration; and
g. Ensures faculty receives timely information about student learning requirements, academic standards, and all other local state and federal administrative requirements and decisions.

Domain 4: Professional and Ethical Behavior:

Standard 10: Professional and Ethical Behaviors.

Effective school leaders demonstrate personal and professional behaviors consistent with quality practices in education and as a community leader. The leader:

a. Adheres to the Code of Ethics and the Principles of Professional Conduct for the Education Profession in Florida, pursuant to Rules 6B-1.001 and 6B-1.006, F.A.C.
b. Demonstrates resiliency by staying focused on the school vision and reacting constructively to the barriers to success that include disagreement and dissent with leadership;
c. Demonstrates a commitment to the success of all students, identifying barriers and their impact on the well-being of the school, families, and local community;

Appendix A (continued)
d. Engages in professional learning that improves professional practice in alignment with the needs of the school system; and
e. Demonstrates willingness to admit error and learn from it;
f. Demonstrates explicit improvement in specific performance areas based on previous evaluations and formative feedback.

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Appendix B

Florida Educational Leadership Standards

Purpose and Structure of the Standards

Purpose. The purpose of these standards is to establish Florida’s expectations for effective school administrators. These evidence-based standards form the foundation for school leadership preparation programs, educator certification requirements, professional learning for school administrators, and school administrator evaluation systems. In this rule, school administrators means those persons described in Section 1012.01(3)(c), F.S.

Structure. There are eight (8) standards, each comprised of a title, description, and role-based descriptors that further clarify and define the work required to demonstrate mastery of the standard.

Standard 1: Professional and Ethical Norms.

Effective educational leaders act ethically and according to professional norms to promote the academic success and well-being of all students. All school administrators:

1. Hold self and others accountable to the Principles of Professional Conduct for the Education Profession in Florida, pursuant to Rule 6A-10.081, Florida Administrative Code (F.A.C.), and adhere to guidelines for student welfare pursuant to Section 1001.42(8), F.S., the rights of students and parents enumerated in Sections 1002.20 and 1014.04, F.S., and state, local school, and governing board policies;
2. Acknowledge that all persons are equal before the law and have inalienable rights, and provide leadership that is consistent with the principles of individual freedom outlined in Section 1003.42(3), F.S.;
3. Accept accountability for all students by identifying and recognizing barriers and their impact on the academic success of students and the well-being of the school, families, and local community; and
4. Act ethically and professionally in personal conduct, relationships with others, decision making, stewardship of the school’s resources, and all other aspects of leadership set forth in this rule.


Effective educational leaders collaborate with parents, students, and other stakeholders to develop, communicate, and enact a shared vision, mission, and core values to promote the academic success and well-being of all students.

1. Assistant Principals:

a. Assist and support the alignment of the school vision and mission with district initiatives, State Board of Education priorities, and current educational policies.
Appendix B (continued)

b. Collaborate in the collection, analysis, and utilization of student academic data to help drive decisions that support effective and rigorous classroom instruction focused on the academic development of all students;
c. Collaborate, support, and model the development and implementation of a shared educational vision, mission, and core values within the school community to promote the academic success and well-being of all students;
d. Assist and support the development and implementation of systems to achieve the vision and mission of the school – reflecting and adjusting when applicable; and
e. Recognize individuals for contributions toward the school vision and mission.

2. School Principals:

a. Collaborate with district and school leaders in the alignment of the school vision and mission with district initiatives, State Board of Education priorities, and current educational policies.
b. Collaborate with members of the school and community using academic data to develop and promote a vision focused on successful learning and the academic development of all students;
c. Collaborate to develop, implement, and model a shared educational vision, mission, and core values within the school community to promote the academic success and well-being of all students;
d. Strategically develop and implement systems to achieve the vision and mission of the school – reflecting and adjusting when applicable; and
e. Recognize individuals for contributions toward the school vision and mission.

Effective educational leaders manage school operations and resources to cultivate a safe school environment and promote the academic success and well-being of all students.

1. Assistant Principals:

a. Collaborate with the school principal to manage the school’s fiscal resources in a responsible and ethical manner, engaging in effective budgeting, decision making, and accounting practices;
b. Collaborate with the school principal to manage scheduling and resources by assigning instructional personnel to roles and responsibilities that optimize their professional capacity to address all students’ learning needs;
c. Organize time, tasks, and projects effectively to protect school personnel’s work and learning, as well as their own, to optimize productivity and student learning;
d. Collaborate with school leaders to utilize data, technology, and communication systems to deliver actionable information to improve the quality and efficiency of operations and management to include safety, climate, and student learning;
Appendix B (continued)

e. Utilize best practices in conflict resolution, constructive conversations, and management for all stakeholders related to school needs and communicate outcomes with school leaders;
f. Inform the school community of current local, state, and federal laws, regulations, and best practices to promote the safety, success, and well-being of all students and adults;
g. Collaborate with the school principal to develop and maintain effective relationships with feeder and connecting schools for enrollment management and curricular and instructional articulation;
h. Develop and maintain effective relationships with the district office and governing board;
i. Collaborate with the school principal to create and maintain systems and structures that promote school security to ensure that students, school personnel, families, and community are safe;
j. Collaborate with the school principal to ensure compliance with the requirements for school safety, as outlined in Section 1001.54, F.S., Section 1006.09, F.S., and Rule 6A-1.0017, F.A.C.;
k. Collaborate with the school principal to implement a continuous improvement model to evaluate specific concerns for safety and security within the school environment; and
l. Collaborate with the school principal to create and implement policies that address and reduce chronic absenteeism and out-of-school suspensions.

2. School Principals

a. Manage the school’s fiscal resources in a responsible and ethical manner, engaging in effective budgeting, decision making, and accounting practices;
b. Manage scheduling and resources by assigning instructional personnel to roles and responsibilities that optimize their professional capacity to address all students’ learning needs;
c. Organize time, tasks, and projects effectively to protect school personnel’s work and learning, as well as their own, to optimize productivity and student learning;
d. Utilize data, technology, and communication systems to deliver actionable information to improve the quality and efficiency of operations and management to include safety, climate, and student learning;
e. Utilize and coach best practices in conflict resolution, constructive conversations, and management for all stakeholders related to school needs and communicate outcomes with school and district leaders;
f. Inform the school community of current local, state, and federal laws, regulations, and best practices to promote the safety, success, and well-being of all students and adults;
g. Develop and maintain effective relationships with feeder and connecting schools for enrollment management and curricular and instructional articulation;
h. Develop and maintain effective relationships with the district office and governing board;
i. Create and maintain systems and structures that promote school security to ensure that students, school personnel, families, and community are safe;
j. Ensure compliance with the requirements for school safety, as outlined in Section 1001.54, F.S., Section 1006.09, F.S., and Rule 6A-1.0017, F.A.C.;
Appendix B (continued)

k. Utilize a continuous improvement model to evaluate specific concerns for safety and security within the school environment; and
l. Collaborate with district and school leaders to create and implement policies that address and reduce chronic absenteeism and out-of-school suspensions.

**Standard 4: Student Learning and Continuous School Improvement.**
Effective educational leaders enable continuous improvement to promote the academic success and well-being of all students.

1. Assistant Principals:
   a. Assist with the implementation and monitoring of systems and structures that enable instructional personnel to promote high expectations for the academic growth and well-being of all students;
   b. Monitor and ensure the school’s learning goals and classroom instruction are aligned to the state’s student academic standards, and the district’s adopted curricula and K-12 reading plan;
   c. Collaborate with teachers and the school leadership team to create an evidence-based intervention, acceleration, and enrichment plan focused on learning;
   d. Engage in data analysis to inform instructional planning and improve learning for all student subgroups and minimize or eliminate achievement gaps;
   e. Utilize comprehensive progress monitoring systems to gather a variety of student performance data, identify areas that need improvement, and provide coaching to improve student learning;
   f. Support and openly communicate the need for, process for, and outcomes of improvement efforts; and
   g. Ensure and monitor the implementation of the Florida Educator Accomplished Practices as described in Rule 6A-5.065, F.A.C., by all instructional personnel.

2. School Principals:
   a. Create and maintain a school climate and culture of high expectations and enable school personnel to support the academic growth and well-being of all students;
   b. Ensure alignment of the school’s learning goals and classroom instruction to the state’s student academic standards, and the district’s adopted curricula and K-12 reading plan;
   c. Develop a structure that enables school personnel to work as a system and focus on providing evidence-based intervention, acceleration, and enrichment that meet student needs;
   d. Promote the effective use of data analysis with school personnel for all student subgroups and provide coaching to improve student learning and minimize or eliminate achievement gaps;
   e. Ensure all students demonstrate learning growth through a variety of ongoing progress monitoring data as evidenced by student performance and growth on local, statewide, and other applicable assessments as stipulated in Section 1008.22, F.S.;
Appendix B (continued)

f. Manage uncertainty, risk, competing initiatives, and the dynamics of change by providing support and encouragement, and openly communicating the need for, process for, and outcomes of improvement efforts; and
g. Ensure and monitor the implementation of the Florida Educator Accomplished Practices as described in Rule 6A-5.065, F.A.C., by all instructional personnel.

Standard 5: Learning Environment.
Effective educational leaders cultivate a caring, rigorous, and supportive school community that promotes the academic success and well-being of all students.

1. Assistant Principals:
   a. Collaborate with the school principal to maintain a safe, respectful, and student-centered learning environment;
   b. Facilitate a comprehensive system that establishes a culture of learning, which includes policies and procedures to address student misconduct in a positive, fair, and unbiased manner;
   c. Deliver timely, actionable, and ongoing feedback about instructional practices driven by standards-aligned content to support and coach the development of instructional personnel’s knowledge and skills; and
   d. Support instructional personnel to recognize, understand, and respond to student needs to minimize or eliminate achievement gaps.

2. School Principals:
   a. Develop and maintain routines and procedures that foster a safe, respectful, and student-centered learning environment;
   b. Cultivate and protect a comprehensive system that establishes a culture of learning, which includes policies and procedures to address student misconduct in a positive, fair, and unbiased manner;
   c. Deliver timely, actionable, and ongoing feedback about instructional practices driven by standards-aligned content to support and coach the development of instructional personnel’s knowledge and skills; and
   d. Provide opportunities for instructional personnel to recognize, understand, and respond to student needs to minimize or eliminate achievement gaps.

Effective educational leaders build the collective and individual professional capacity of school personnel by creating support systems and offering professional learning to promote the academic success and well-being of all students.
Appendix B (continued)

1. Assistant Principals

a. Assist with hiring, developing, supporting, and retaining diverse, effective, and caring instructional personnel with the professional capacity to promote literacy achievement and the academic success of all students;
b. Attend to personal learning and effectiveness by engaging in need-based professional learning, modeling self-reflection practices, and seeking and being receptive to feedback;
c. Collaborate with the school principal to identify instructional personnel needs, including standards-aligned content, evidence-based pedagogy, use of instructional technology, and data analysis for instructional planning and improvement;
d. Collaborate with the school principal and content or grade-level leads to develop a school-wide professional learning plan based on the needs of instructional personnel and students, and revise elements of the plan as needed;
e. Collaborate with the school principal to develop school personnel’s professional knowledge and skills by providing access to differentiated, need-based opportunities for growth, guided by understanding of professional and adult learning strategies;
f. Support the school principal in monitoring and evaluating professional learning linked to district- and school-level goals to foster continuous improvement;
g. Collaborate with the school principal to monitor and evaluate professional practice, and provide timely, actionable, and ongoing feedback to instructional personnel that fosters continuous improvement;
h. Collaborate with the school principal to utilize time and resources to establish and sustain a professional culture of collaboration and commitment to the shared educational vision, mission, and core values of the school with mutual accountability; and
i. Adhere to the professional learning standards adopted by the State Board of Education in Rule 6A-5.069, F.A.C., in planning and implementing professional learning, monitoring change in professional practice, and evaluating impact on student outcomes.

2. School Principals:

a. Recruit, hire, develop, support, and retain diverse, effective, and caring instructional personnel with the professional capacity to promote literacy achievement and the academic success of all students;
b. Attend to personal learning and effectiveness by engaging in need-based professional learning, modeling self-reflection practices, and seeking and being receptive to feedback;
c. Identify instructional personnel needs, including standards-aligned content, evidence-based pedagogy, use of instructional technology, and data analysis for instructional planning and improvement;
d. Develop a school-wide professional learning plan based on the needs of instructional personnel and students, and revise elements of the plan as needed;
Appendix B (continued)

e. Develop school personnel’s professional knowledge and skills by providing access to differentiated, need-based opportunities for growth, guided by understanding of professional and adult learning strategies;
f. Monitor and evaluate professional learning linked to district- and school-level goals to foster continuous improvement;
g. Monitor and evaluate professional practice, and provide timely, actionable, and ongoing feedback to assistant principals and instructional personnel that fosters continuous improvement;
h. Provide time and resources to establish and sustain a professional culture of collaboration and commitment to the shared educational vision, mission, and core values of the school with mutual accountability; and
i. Adhere to the professional learning standards adopted by the State Board of Education in Rule 6A-5.069, F.A.C., in planning and implementing professional learning, monitoring change in professional practice, and evaluating impact on student outcomes.

Standard 7: Building Leadership Expertise.
Effective educational leaders cultivate, support, and develop other school leaders to promote the academic success and well-being of all students.

1. Assistant Principals:

a. Develop and support open, productive, caring, and trusting working relationships among school and teacher leaders to build professional capacity and improve instructional practice driven by standards-aligned content;
b. Collaborate with the school principal to cultivate a diverse group of emerging teacher leaders;
c. Develop capacity in teacher leaders and hold them accountable; and
d. Plan for and provide opportunities for mentoring new personnel.

2. School Principals:

a. Develop and support open, productive, caring, and trusting working relationships among school leaders and other personnel to build professional capacity and improve instructional practice driven by standards-aligned content;
b. Cultivate current and potential school leaders and assist with the development of a pipeline of future leaders;
c. Develop capacity by delegating tasks to other school leaders and holding them accountable; and
d. Plan for and manage staff turnover and succession, providing opportunities for effective induction and mentoring of school personnel.
Appendix B (continued)

**Standard 8: Meaningful Parent, Family, and Community Engagement.** Effective educational leaders utilize multiple means of reciprocal communication to build relationships and collaborate with parents, families, and other stakeholders to promote the academic success and well-being of all students. All school administrators:

1. Understand, value, and employ the community’s cultural, social, and intellectual context and resources;
2. Model and advocate for respectful communication practices between school leaders, parents, students, and other stakeholders;
3. Maintain high visibility and accessibility, and actively listen and respond to parents, students, and other stakeholders;
4. Recognize parents, students, and other stakeholders for contributions and engagement that enhance the school community; and
5. Utilize appropriate technologies and other forms of communication to partner with parents, students, and families on student expectations and academic performance.
Appendix C

Principal Sense of Efficacy Scale (PSES)

Principal Questionnaire

This questionnaire is designed to help us gain a better understanding of the kinds of things that create challenges for principals in their school activities.

Directions: Please indicate your opinion about each of the questions below by marking one of the nine responses in the columns on the right side. The scale of responses ranges from “None at all” (1) to “A Great Deal” (9), with “Some Degree” (5) representing the mid-point between these low and high extremes. You may choose any of the nine possible responses, since each represents a degree on the continuum. Your answers are confidential.

Please respond to each of the questions by considering the combination of your current ability, resources, and opportunity to do each of the following in your present position.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>None at all</th>
<th>Very Little</th>
<th>Some Degree</th>
<th>Quite a Bit</th>
<th>A Great Deal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Facilitate student learning in your school?</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Generate enthusiasm for a shared vision of the school?</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Handle time demands of the job?</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Manage change in your school?</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. Promote school spirit among a large majority of the student population?</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>6. Create a positive learning environment in your school?</td>
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<tr>
<td>7. Raise student achievement on standardized tests?</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>8. Promote a positive image of your school with the media?</td>
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<td>9. Motivate teachers?</td>
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<tr>
<td>10. Promote the prevailing values of the community in your school?</td>
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<td>11. Maintain control of your own daily schedule?</td>
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<tr>
<td>12. Shape the operational policies and procedures that are necessary to manage your school?</td>
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</table>
13. Handle effectively the discipline of students in your school? 

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14. Promote acceptable behavior among students? 

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15. Handle the paperwork required of the job? 

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16. Promote ethical behavior among school personnel? 

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17. Cope with the stress of the job? 

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18. Prioritize among competing demands of the job? 

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</table>
Appendix D

Letter of Permission for Survey Use and Adaptation

William & Mary
School of Education

Megan Tschannen-Moran, PhD
Professor of Educational Leadership

August 19, 2022

Justin Faulkner,

You have my permission to use and adapt the Principals’ Sense of Efficacy Scale, which I developed with Chris Gareis, in your research. The best citation to use is:


You can find a copy of these measures and scoring directions on my web site at https://mxtsch.pages.wm.edu/. I will also attach directions you can follow to access my password protected web site, where you can find the supporting references for these measures as well as other articles I have written on this and related topics.

All the best,

Megan Tschannen-Moran
William & Mary School of Education
Appendix E

Principal Sense of Efficacy Scale (PSES) - Adapted

Principal Questionnaire

This questionnaire is designed to help us gain a better understanding of the kinds of things that create challenges for principals in their school activities.

Directions: Please indicate your opinion about each of the questions below by marking one of the nine responses in the columns on the right side. The scale of responses ranges from “None at all” (1) to “A Great Deal” (9), with “Some Degree” (5) representing the mid-point between these low and high extremes. You may choose any of the nine possible responses, since each represents a degree on the continuum. Your answers are confidential.

Please respond to each of the questions by considering the combination of your current ability, resources, and opportunity to do each of the following in your present position and to what extent your Level II Principal Preparation Program made an impact. There are additional optional open-ended questions to garner insight into your preparation experience.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>“To what extent did your Level II principal preparation program prepare you to…”</th>
<th>None at all</th>
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Appendix F

Additional Survey Questions

1. Do you plan on leaving the profession of principal?

2. If so, when do you plan on leaving?
   a. One year
   b. Two to three years
   c. Three years

3. Add any details about your principal preparation program and how it impacted your role as a principal.
Appendix G

G*Power Analyses
Appendix G (continued)
**Appendix G: G*Power Analyses**

![G*Power Analysis](image)

**Input Parameters**
- Effect size $f^2$: 0.15
- $\alpha$ err prob: 0.10
- Power (1-$\beta$ err prob): 0.90
- Number of predictors: 6

**Output Parameters**
- Noncentrality parameter $\lambda$: 15.600000
- Critical $F$: 1.8357721
- Numerator of: 6
- Denominator of: 97
- **Total sample size**: 104
- Actual power: 0.9024924