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Variation in the willingness of superintendents to recommend hiring alternatively licensed principals

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The purpose of this article is to report the viability, as expressed by superintendents, of alternative routes to principal licensure as a solution to the principal shortage, regardless of whether it is a quantitative or qualitative shortage. The researcher's interest is in assessing and explaining the variation in superintendents' willingness to recommend hiring alternatively licensed principals. In this article, the researcher reports on a set of 17 interviews with superintendents from across the United States. This study provides informative data regarding superintendents' attitudes and views about the subject for policy makers at the state, university, and local levels. The data contained several variables that may affect superintendents' willingness to recommend the hiring of these principals. These are in four domains: (1) conditions under which superintendents would consider hiring alternatively licensed principals, (2) concerns superintendents have about the ability of alternatively licensed principals to do the job and to relate to constituents, (3) the availability of appropriate instruction and guidance in mentoring and other training programs, and (4) past behaviors and experiences with alternatively licensed personnels.

Key words: Educational leadership, principalship, alternatively licensed principals.

INTRODUCTION

In many parts of the country, principal candidates are being licensed through alternative pathways. Some view this movement as a plausible solution to the shortage of principals. Others feel insulted and threatened by the prospect of a person from a non-traditional background leading a school. The debate as to whether or not these candidates possess the prerequisite skills and knowledge to effectively lead a school continues. However, will superintendents, as gatekeepers to school districts, afford these individuals the opportunity to prove their worth as principals? This is an initial effort to address this question by assessing the variation in superintendents' willingness to hire alternatively licensed principals and to identify variables that explain this variation. The data from this study will be used to develop a questionnaire to expand the findings to a population of superintendents nationwide.

A number of economic, social, and political forces are causing great turmoil in education and in the preparation of educational leaders. Among these are strict accountability for student achievement resulting from state and federal (No Child Left Behind, 2000) policies; increased demands on schools to solve social problems; insufficient funding, including the compensation of teachers and school leaders; shortages in some teaching, leadership, and geographic areas; shifts in expectations for teachers and leaders; increased diversity in community and student populations; and an increasingly critical policy that seems impossible to please. In addition to the critical reports given by organizations such as the Thomas B. Fordham Institute (2003), the Southern Regional Education Board (2003) and the Education Schools Project (Levine, 2005), there are jobs (especially teaching) that fewer and fewer candidates are willing to accept. The consequence of this is a shortage of staff, either in quantity or in quality. Such shortages are not tolerated in education: schools must be staffed; children must be educated. The solutions to this are: there should be quick staffing, particularly the one that places bodies in classrooms and offices-long-term substitutes, emergency licenses, and alternative licenses, with the later being promoted as a near panacea for both quantity and

quality shortages of personnel.

Alternative certification for teachers

Advocating for non-traditional pathways to education is not a novel idea. For several years now, teachers have entered the profession through alternative routes. Proponents of alternative teacher certification (e.g. Thomas B. Fordham Institute, 1999) claim that opening the doors of education will attract competent individuals from highly respected professions, minority teachers, teachers willing to work in high-need districts, and hard-to-staff schools. Some contend that beginning teachers with proficient knowledge in content areas, especially Mathematics and English, are as prepared as their traditional counterparts. Others argue that traditional certification routes provide teachers with the adequate preparation they need to successfully face and overcome the challenges of the 21st century (Darling-Hammond, 2000). Whether one agrees with alternative certification of educational personnel or not, its roots within education are deeply set. In 2005, 47 states and the District of Columbia had some form of alternative license for tea-chers (Feistritzer, 2005).

Alternative License for school principals

University-based principal preparation programs are under constant scrutiny (Thomas B. Fordham Institute, 2003; Levine, 2005; Southern Regional Education Board, 2002). Some believe institutional barriers in universities, such as promotion and tenure of staff and the demand for refereed publications have produced research and preparation programs that are remote from the serious problems and important questions in K-12 education. They cite the limited collaboration between school districts and universities as a contributing factor. They argue that those preparing future principals are often out of touch with the needs in schools. Many (education graduates) received their degrees and were practicing leaders years earlier, and thus are unfamiliar with the new roles and responsibilities of principals. This is to say their graduates are inadequately prepared to meet the demands of instructional leadership with which they will be faced (Farkas et al.,, 2003). In addition, there is the notion in the minds of some critics (Thomas B. Fordham Institute, Southern Regional Education Board) that there are large numbers of potential leaders with fresh ideas, strong leadership skills, and high motivation at the doors of schools waiting for some alternative way of gaining access without taking those loathsome, irrelevant, non-substantive, and useless education courses.

These concerns and beliefs, along with the apparent "success" of alternative teacher certification, have engen-dered support and enthusiasm for alternative licensure of school principals. Over the last decade, state departments of education, local school districts, private interest groups, and some universities and colleges have trained and licensed principals through alternative routes. Large urban districts such as New York City, Chicago, Los Angeles, and Baltimore are preparing principals through a program called *New Leaders for New Schools (http://www.nlns.org/program/*, 2005), which allows highly skilled, non-educators to become certified principals. School districts are partnering with universities to tailor principal preparation to the needs of the district (Virginia Department of Education, 2005; http//:www.doe.va.gov). Some principal development programs now reside in schools of management or public administration within their universities, and focus preparation on policy, communication skills, and school reform (University of Virginia Partnership for Leaders in Education, 2005; Levine, 2005).

Many stakeholders have invested considerable time, effort, and money into these innovations. But, are these programs a premonition of things to come or a passing fad? This study is one of several being conducted to understand how policy makers and other stakeholders view the alternative licensure of school principals. All are focused on predicting the willingness of these stakeholders to behave when they are directly confronted with a decision about supporting or not supporting the hiring of an alternatively licensed school principal. In this case, the stakeholder is the superintendent of schools. Superintendents of schools are the gatekeepers to the princepalship; they often participate in the selection process, and they recommend employment of principals to school boards.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this article is to report the viability, as expressed by superintendents, of alternative routes to principal licensure as a solution to principal shortage, regardless of whether it is a quantitative or qualitative shortage. The researcher's interest is in assessing and explaining the variation in superintendents' willingness to recommend hiring alternatively licensed principals. In this article, the researcher reports on a set of 17 interviews with superintendents from vacross the United States. The data expand the study to larger numbers of superintendents

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The initial questions of interest were:

1. How do superintendents vary in their willingness to recommend the hiring of alternatively licensed principals?

2. What variables explain the variation in super-intendents' willingness to hire alternatively licensed principals?

As the study progressed, three additional questions were identified:

1. What are superintendents' attitudes toward alternative licensure for school principals?
2. What are the conditions under which superintendents would recommend the hiring of alternatively licensed principal?
3. If hired, what concerns would superintendents have regarding alternatively licensed principals?

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The study of beliefs, attitudes, values, behaviors, and the interrelationships among these has a rich history in sociology, psychology, and social psychology (Olson and Maio, 2003; Petty et al., 1997; Shaw and Wright, 1967). This history emanates from the human desire to understand behavior and its antecedents and consequences. Theoretical and research activity throughout the last century (Olson and Maio, 2003; Petty et al., 2003; Shaw and Wright, 1967; Wood, 2000) has produced both knowledge and methods that are useful in such applied fields as education, political science, economics, and social work.

As the research and understanding of attitudes has matured, so too has the definition of attitudes. Olson and Maio (2003) defined attitudes "as tendencies to evaluate objects favorably or unfavorably". Eagly and Chaiken (1998) defined attitude as an individual's willingness to engage in a specific behavior. It is the latter definition that the researcher used in the study.

The composite model of attitude-behavior consistency

The composite model of attitude-behavior consistency was developed to predict specific behaviors from specific attitudes toward those behaviors and other influencing variables (Eagly and Chaiken, 1993; 1998). Among these variables are (a) past behaviors, (b) attitudes toward the target, (c) attitudes toward the specific behavior, (d) utilitarian outcomes such as rewards and punishments, (e) normative outcomes such as approval or disapproval from others, and (f) self-identity outcomes such as implications for one's self image (Eagly and Chaiken, 1998).

Specific attitudes toward behavior and willingness to behave

Attitudes are strongly correlated to behaviors in certain circumstances. For example, "measures of specific attitudes (toward behaviors) predict specific behaviors" (Olson and Maio, 2003). Weak correlations have been found when general attitudes toward an object are used for prediction (Olson and Maio, 2003). For instance, if a superintendent hires an alternatively licensed principal, it can be assumed that the superintendent has a positive attitude toward the target alternatively licensed principal. At the same time, this superintendent probably holds a positive attitude toward the behavior of hiring alternatively licensed principals. Many superintendents may hold positive attitudes toward alternative licensure for principals, but a variety of conditions, concerns, and barriers may prevent them from engaging in the behavior of hiring an alternatively licensed principal. Thus, these super-intendents may exhibit a negative attitude toward the specific behavior of hiring an alternatively licensed principal.

The converse of the situation holds true. Several superintendents interviewed by Kufel et al. (2004) expressed general opposition toward hiring alternatively licensed principals, but could have been persuaded otherwise due to shortages of quality principal candidate, floundering schools, pressure from the surrounding community, and other factors. Therefore, an attitude towards the specific behavior has been found to be a better predictor of a behavior (Olsen and Maio, 2003) than a general attitude toward the target.

Attitudes toward target and attitudes toward a specific behavior

Many of the theories related to attitude-behavior consistency are predicated on the assumption that general attitudes influence behavior; that is, positive attitudes toward a target result in positive outcomes and negative attitudes toward a target result in negative outcomes (Olson and Maio, 2003). This explanation works well when the referent is typical and fits the stereotype one has developed based on the general attitude. However, when a referent is atypical, the behavior might contradict the general attitude toward the referent (Lord et al., 1984). Early researchers found weak correlations when they inappropriately tried to predict specific behaviors from general attitudes (Olson and Maio, 2003). For example, general attitudes toward a certain ethnic group did not accurately predict behavior toward an individual member of the ethnic group in a specific setting at a specific time (Ajzen and Fishbein, 1977; Kraus, 1995). Therefore, it can be expected that general attitudes held by superintendents about alternative licensure routes for principals or about hiring alternatively licensed principals will not consistently predict a superintendent's attitude toward hiring a specific individual who has been alter natively licensed. Such is the case as portrayed by Kufel et al. (2004), when superintendents who were at first ada-

mantly opposed to hiring a person from outside the educational profession, cited, when probed, skills, experiences, and characteristics of candidates as prerequisites under which they might consider an alternatively licensed principal.

Utilitarian outcomes and attitudes toward a specific behavior

In addition to general attitudes toward the target and past behaviors, the model includes outcomes expected by the decision maker which affect the attitude toward the behavior and ultimately the behavior itself. These outcomes are utilitarian outcomes, normative outcomes, and self-identity outcomes. One's attitude toward the behavior is influenced by the expected rewards and punishments (utilitarian outcomes) that are directly related to the behavior (Eagly and Chaiken, 1998). Therefore, the expected benefits reaped or the anti-cipated costs of engaging in a behavior contribute to the overall attitude toward the behavior. If a superintendent believes that the employment of an alternatively licensed principal will bring discipline to a school that is difficult to manage (Kufel et al., 2004), then the rewards will directly influence the superintendent's attitude toward hiring the alternatively licensed principal. Willingness to hire, thus, will increase.

Normative outcomes and attitudes toward a specific behavior

Normative outcomes are those that decision makers perceive significant based on the opinions of others (Olson and Maio, 2003), and this influences the specific behavior of the decision maker, contrary to the decision maker's own attitude. For example, the expected norms of a school community may pressure a superintendent to recommend a traditionally licensed candidate even though the superintendent may possess favorable attitudes toward hiring an alternatively licensed candidate. Community, parent, school board, teacher, and student expectations might be that only traditionally licenced princepals are appropriate for the position. Consequently, these expected normative outcomes could cause the superintendent to opt for the traditional candidate. The converse of this situation could occur: a superintendent may hire an alternatively licensed principal, contrary to his attitude, "in a very politically conservative community that favors any number of alternative education practices" (Kufel et al., 2004).

Self-identity outcomes and attitudes toward a specific behavior

A final anticipated outcome from engagement in a speci-

fic behavior is the self-identity outcome. The decision to act can either support or repudiate one's self-image; thus causing an individual to engage in the behavior or not (Eagly and Chaiken, 1998). Several superintendents interviewed by Kufel et al. (2004) believed it was insulting that alternatively licensed principals thought they could be successful principals. A superintendent holding beliefs consistent with this view would find engaging in the employment of an alternatively licensed principal damaging to his or her self-image. Therefore, it would be highly unlikely a superintendent with this view would recommend an alternatively licensed principal to lead a school.

Past behaviors and attitudes toward a specific behavior

The last variable to have an effect on attitudes toward a behavior, which also has a direct effect on engagement in a specific behavior, is past behavior. Conditioned or automatic responses form as a result of numerous past behaviors toward a given target. These past behaviors, sometimes called habits, serve as effective predictors of behavior or willingness to behave in a certain manner (Ouellette and Wood, 1998), especially when used to predict spontaneous daily routines. Human resource directors and superintendents develop criteria for the purpose of recruiting and screening potential principal candidates. Past behaviors may bias the recruiting and screening process against alternatively licensed principals, thus disallowing the formation of an attitude toward these candidates and proceeding directly into behavior. Several superintendents interviewed by Kufel et al. (2004) admitted they had never considered an alternatively licensed principal for a job because they preferred traditionally licensed principals, and their district had a surplus of quality candidates.

As the popularity of alternative licensure of principals intensifies, superintendents will have to make more decisions regarding the recruitment and selection of these individuals because they "are the gatekeepers to the principalship" (Kufel et al., 2004). The willingness to recommend hiring these candidates will be influenced by the general attitudes superintendents hold about hiring alternatively licensed principals, superintendents' past behaviors, the perceived anticipated outcomes they expect from the decision, the context they are working in, and the specific attitude toward hiring an alternatively licensed candidate (Eagly and Chaiken, 1998).

METHODOLOGY

This was a qualitative study of a purposive sample of school superintendents from across the United States. Short interviews were used to collect data. The constant comparative method of Maykut and Morehouse (1994) was used to analyze the data.

Sample

The researcher selected 17 superintendents from across the country to participate in telephone interviews. The selection matrix had three variables: geographic region (rural, suburban and urban) of the superintendents' school district, status of alternative licensure in the superintendents' state (yes, no), and shortage condition in the superintendent's state (shortage, no shortage).

Demographic information was obtained from each superintendent at the beginning of each interview. Specific information about the participants' gender, years of experience as a superintendent and principal shortage status in their states and districts is in Table 1. Four of the superintendents were females. The remaining 13 superintendents were males. Five superintendents participated under the definition of an alternatively licensed principal, as one with previous experience in education as a teacher, counselor, or other role. The remaining 12 superintendents participated under the definition of an alternatively licensed principal as one with no experience in education.

Alternative licensure definitions

At the beginning of the study, an alternately licensed principal was defined as one with no experience in education and no specific training in a traditional principal preparation program. As the study evolved, so did the definition of an alternatively licensed principal. The simple definition became two definitions—one describing people with experience and degrees within education and the other describing people with experience and degrees in fields outside education.

The outside education definition of alternatively licensed principals referred to candidates with a master's degree in an area other than education, leadership experience outside education, no experience in education, and no training in a university-based principal preparation program. Superintendents giving this definition are referred to as the "outside education group" throughout this report. The inside education definition denoted candidates with a master's degree in education, experience in education, and no training in university-based principal preparation program. These candidates could include, but were not limited to guidance counselors, reading specialists, and department heads. Superintendents giving this definition are referred to as the '"inside education group" throughout this article.

Interview protocols

Two interview protocols were developed, one for the inside definition and one for the outside definition. Both interview protocols consisted of the same five demographic questions and seven semi-structured, open-ended questions that focused on superintendents' attitudes toward alternative principal licensure. The interview protocol was piloted with a selected superintendent. The superintendent made suggestions, offered feedback, and discussed concerns he had about the protocol. His feedback was considered and revisions were made. Throughout the interview process, the researcher was sensitive to clarity of questions and other problems with the protocols, and adjustments were made and necessary probes were added as the interviews progressed.

Data collection

The researcher interviewed each participant by telephone for approximately 15 min. The interviews were audio taped and trans-cribed with the permission of each superintendent. The transcriptions were analyzed using the constant-comparative method of Maykut and Morehouse (1994). Each transcription was "unitized" (Maykut and Morehouse, 1994) and coded using broad themes found in the data. The themes were defined, reviewed, and refined by the researchers as data were gathered. Then, the data were thematically categorized based on the two definitions of alternative licensure. As the themes evolved, chunks of data were "constantly compared" and rearranged to ensure they were categorized appropriately.

RESULTS

Results are divided into two parts. Part 1 is an overview of the major themes—a summary of the findings that provides a perspective for understanding the detailed analysis that follows. It is the big picture. Part 2 is a detailed analysis of the findings with representative excerpts from the data. It contains examples of the superintendents' perspectives and the expressed emotions that some hold in this area of study.

Overview of the results

Five major themes were identified during the interviews with superintendents regarding their willingness to recommended hiring alternatively licensed principals. The themes consisted of general attitudes superintendents hold toward alternative licensure of principals, conditions under which superintendents would consider hiring an alternatively licensed principal, concerns superintendents have if alternatively licensed principals are hired, thoughts superintendents had on the content of induction programs for alternatively licensed principals, and experiences of superintendents in hiring alternatively licensed personnel.

General attitudes of superintendents toward alternatively licensure of principals

The majority of superintendents from both groups expressed attitudes of indifference about alternative licensure of school principals. That is, they had not formed definite beliefs, attitudes, or anticipated actions related to the alternative licensing of principals. Some superintendents who were given the outside education definition, however, were steadfastly opposed to hiring alternatively licensed principals. This view was not expressed by those who were given the inside education definition. Some members of both groups conveyed favorable attitudes toward alternatively licensed principals.

Conditions under which superintendents would hire alternatively licensed principals

This was a major theme in the data. Many superinten-

Table 1. Demographic information on superintendents.

Parameter	Outside education definition		Inside education definition	
	N	%	N	%
Number of participants	13	76	4	24
Sex				
Females	2	15	2	50
Males	11	85	2	50
Experiencing statewide principal shortage				
Yes	7	54	3	75
No	6	46	1	25
Experience district principal shortage				
Yes	7	54	0	0
No	6	46	4	100
Year experience as superintendent				
1 - 5	4	31	0	0
6 - 10	4	31	2	50
11 – 15	4	31	2	50
16 – 20	0	0	0	0
>20	1	8	0	0
Superintendent classification of locality				
Urban	4	31	1	25
Urban-suburban	2	15	0	0
Suburban	3	23	1	25
Suburban-rural	0	0	0	0
Rural	4	31	2	50

dents believed alternatively licensed principals would be a viable option if they were experiencing a shortage of quality candidates, if the candidates fit the community, or were trying to fill a specific need where a unique skill set would be beneficial. Both groups expressed interest in prior work-related leadership experiences and skills that could forecast future success. Deficiencies in the preparation of traditional principal candidates were cited as conditions under which some superintendents would consider alternatively licensed principals.

Concerns of superintendents about the alternatively licensed principal on the job

Several concerns of superintendents about the ability of alternatively licensed principals to deal with the special problems and issues of managing and leading schools were in the data. The ability of alternatively licensed principals to effectively lead instruction for student achievement was the major concern articulated by superintendents in both the inside and outside education groups. Both groups expressed concern over the perceptions of members in the educational community surrounding the school where an alternatively licensed prin-

cipal was placed. Those given the outside education definition cited the context a principal must work within as a major challenge for those entering the principalship from the private sector.

The induction of alternatively licensed principals

The induction of alternatively licensed principals was a concern of the superintendents. Some from both the inside education and the outside education groups believed the main component of the induction process should be a strong internship with a purposefully selected mentor. The presence of an internal support system consisting of fellow administrators within the district was a recommendation from some in the inside education group. Whereas, those in the outside education group believed coursework and professional development would be integral components of a training program.

Superintendents' experience with alternatively licensed personnel

Superintendents' past behaviors with regard to hiring

alternatively licensed principals was the last major theme that surfaced. Some superintendents had experiences hiring alternatively licensed principals; however, the majority of the participants had not had the opportunity. Superintendents from both groups had experiences either hiring or working with school personnel that had been alternatively licensed.

The above section provides a brief overview of the major themes in the data. In the next section, an in depth description of these themes is presented with special attention given to the patterns that emerged during the interview process.

Detailed results

The composite model of attitude-behavior consistency (Eagly and Chaiken, 1993, 1998) was the original framework used to assess superintendents' attitudes toward alternative licensure for principals and to identify the variables that influence those attitudes. This framework included such influencing variables as past behaviors, normative outcomes, utilitarian outcomes, self-identity outcomes, and attitudes toward the target. However, during the data collection and analysis, the original framework had to be revised to accommodate the data (Figure 1). This post-analysis framework will be utilized in the development of an instrument for a national quantitative study to assess and explain superintendents' willingness to recommend hiring alternatively licensed principals.

Consistent with the original framework, both inside and outside education groups expressed general attitudes toward alternative licensure and reported past behaviors with regard to alternatively licensed principals. Because the interview protocol was developed with the intent to ascertain conditions and concerns that influence superintendents' attitudes toward their willingness to recommend hiring alternatively licensed principals, much of the data fell into these categories. The superintendents' responses were captured under these broad themes, but much variation was represented between and within the two groups of participants.

As illustrated in Table 2, the themes in the data for the superintendents in the inside education group and those in the outside education group were the same. Many of the patterns in the data were also the same for both groups; however, distinct patterns exclusive to each group were discovered.

General attitude toward alternatively licensure for principals

General attitudes toward a target have been found to influence attitudes toward a specific behavior, which in turn helps predict specific behavior (Ajzen and Fishbein, 1977; Eagly and Chaiken, 1998; Krraus, 1995; Olson and Maio, 2003). Eagly and Chaiken (1998) claim that an attitude toward the target is one of the factors that influences attitudes toward a specific behavior; however, alone, an attitude toward a target will not successfully predict a superintendents' willingness to recommend hiring an alternatively licensed principal.

Throughout data collection, it became apparent that one of the variables influencing superintendents' willingness to recommend hiring an alternatively licensed principal was their attitude toward alternative licensure of principals. Three patterns emerged during the interviews. Specific to the outside education group, several superintendents stated passionate opposition toward alternative licensure for principals. Other superintendents from both the outside and inside education groups expressed a favorable attitude toward alternative licensure of school principals; however, the majority of participants conveyed attitudes that were ambivalent toward the idea (Table 3).

Superintendents opposed to alternative licensure: Three of the 13 superintendents in the outside education group were opposed to alternative licensure for school principals. These participants strongly believed that a school principal must have the requisite amount of time in a classroom before they could assume a leadership position within the school. They felt the only way to be familiar with the intricacies of public education was to be an experienced teacher. One superintendent exclaimed, "They need to go out and teach for three years in a public school classroom. If they haven't taught in a public school classroom, then I won't even consider them."

Participants from the outside education group cited a sincere reverence for the principalship as a reason for their opposition toward alternative licensure. These superintendents were not comfortable putting a person without educational experience in a leadership position accountable for student learning, student achievement, and the professional growth of the staff. A participant commented on the importance of a dedicated and effective principal:

One of the things that I have to keep in mind all the time is that almost all the research we have and certainly my own experiences is that the single most important thing to a great school is a great principal leader. You can have the greatest staff in the world, but if you have a bad principal, it will all fall apart in 15 min. So that position is so key to a successful school that I just don't think it's something we can compromise on.

Superintendents in favor of alternative licensure: Superintendents from the inside and outside educa-
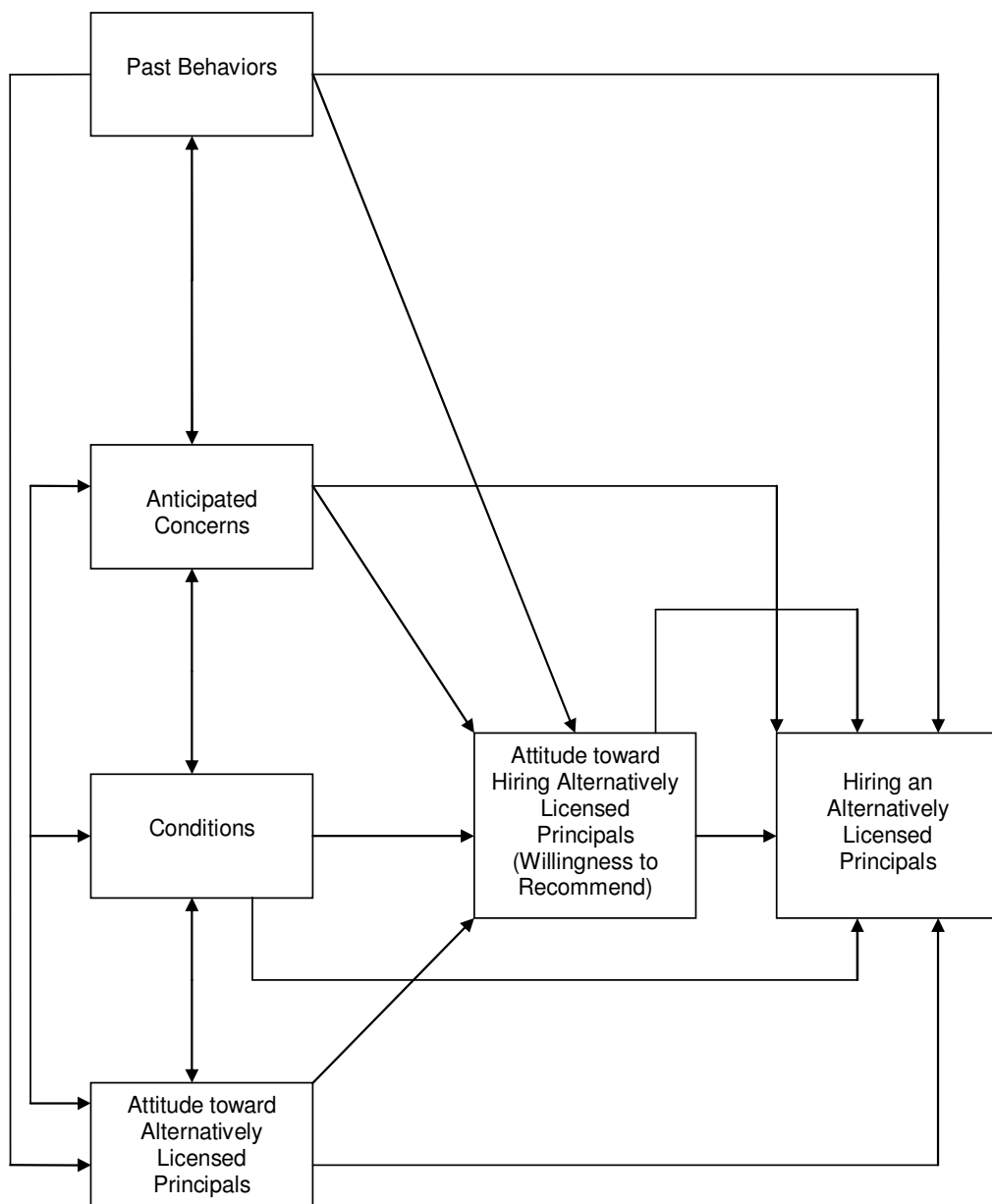
Figure 1. Theoretical framework for explanation of superintendents' specific attitude to-ward the behavior of hiring alternatively licensed principals.

tion groups expressed positive attitudes toward alternatively licensed principals. Those interviewed from the outside education group believed individuals running companies, working in the private sector, retired military officers, and those in technological fields possess unique skills and leadership characteristics that could be advantageous to public education. One superintendent who preferred a traditional candidate as principal expressed a positive attitude toward alternatively licensed principals. He re-marked, "I guess I would prefer a person coming out of a traditional program with the caveats that

I've indicated. I'm not opposed to looking at a person who's gone through an alternative program. In some respects I might even prefer them with the idea that I can provide the in-service in the areas that I think are most critical."

Another superintendent in the outside education group expressed an extremely favorable attitude toward prin-cipal alternative licensure. He did not believe teaching experience validated a principal's ability to be an effective school leader. His views were shaped from his many years of experience in education at all levels and were

Table 2. Thematic patterns in the data for the inside and outside education group patterns.

Themes	Patterns	Groups	
		Outside education	**Inside education**
General attitude toward alternative licensure of principals (ALP)	In favor of alternative licensure	X	X
	Opposed to alternative licensure	X	
	Indifferent about alternative licensure	X	X
Conditions under which superintendents would consider hiring alternatively licensed principals (ALP)	Shortage of quality principal candidates	X	X
	Filling a specific need	X	
	Proactive response	X	
	Community fit	X	X
	Deficiencies in traditional programs	X	X
	Leadership experiences	X	X
	Leadership skills	X	X
Anticipated concerns superintendents believed alternatively licensed principals would face	Ability to be an instructional leader	X	X
	Perceptions of constituents	X	
	Context a principal must work within	X	
Induction of alternatively licensed principals	Mentoring and internships	X	X
	Professional development and coursework	X	
	Internal support system		X
Superintendents' past behaviors with regard to hiring alternatively licensed principals	Hired alternatively licensed principals	X	X
	Have not hired alternatively licensed principals	X	X
	Hired alternatively licensed personnel	X	X

Table 3. Attitudes toward alternative licensure of school principals.

Attitude	Outside education definition		Inside education definition	
	N	**%**	**N**	**%**
Adamantly opposed to alternatively licensed principals	3	23	0	0
Accepting of alternatively licensed principals	4	31	1	25
Indifferent toward alternatively licensed principals	6	46	3	75

captured in the following remarks:

I think most of us know that the problem is that there have been some real terrible mistakes made out there by hiring the world's best professor to be a university president. And it is a different job. Just because they are a great professor, researcher, or teacher doesn't neces-sarily mean it follows [that] . . . they will be a good principal or good president. I think the same thing happens with teachers coming up. It doesn't, in my assessment, and knowing tea-chers now, a lot of teachers go into a teaching job because of the collegial K-12 atmosphere. I mean they love kids, they like to relate to that, and they really never have had the background of making tough decisions which principals do and where the

buck stops.

Two superintendents from the outside education group felt confined to state regulations and policies that prohi-bited them from considering alternatively licensed prin-cipals. Both superintendents were from urban districts and conveyed a genuine interest in exploring alternative possibilities for school leadership. One superintendent expressed excitement about the possibilities new leadership at the state and district level will afford him as he hires future principals:

Our state superintendent is looking at the types of alternatives that we can have. So we've wanted to, but just because our hands were tied, we didn't; and I don't think it was just our district, frankly. We

We haven't really pushed the envelope to say, "Ooh let's do this" because we've always been run by traditional superintendents. Now with the CEO model, and the CEO who gets it, we're fresh from having a conversation about it [alternative licensure for principals] - okay, let's do this.

The lone superintendent from the inside education group who possessed favorable attitudes toward alternative licensure viewed all principal candidates holistically. She did not believe licensure or certification determined whether or not a person was qualified for the principalship. But, she did believe that a principal should have experience in an educational environment and that his or her educational philosophy should match that of the school district.

Superintendents indifferent toward alternative licensure: Most superintendents communicated attitudes that were indifferent toward alternatively licensed principals. Some superintendents in the outside education group would prefer selecting principals that were traditionally licensed, but would not eliminate an alternatively licensed individual from consideration. Evidence of this ambivalence is articulated by a superintendent who stated, "I would always pick the best qualified candidate. It's just that, in my mind, I don't think that person [should be hired] if there's somebody [more qualifiers]…". Another superintendent from the inside education group expressed a similar sentiment when she stated, "I would [hire an alternative principal] if I needed to and I had somebody that seemed to be viable. My first preference would be someone [traditionally] certified". Several other participants were receptive toward alternative licensure, but felt the concept should be approached cautiously. One superintendent stated:

I would approach the employment of alternative licensed principals cautiously. I think that perhaps individuals could have experiences outside the education community that could lend themselves to a successful experience as a principal. My cautions and concerns lie in the area of teaching methodology and pedagogy, child development, and those kinds of things that you just don't necessarily pick up unless you have some training in education or education-related field.

Some superintendents displayed a shift in attitudes toward alternative licensure of principals but seemed to be wrestling with fully endorsing the concept. A superintendent from a rural district experiencing a shortage of principal candidates embodied this sentiment. He stated,

"I think there's certainly potential there, especially because of the dire need to hire administrators. I'm more open to it than I've been in the past. To be honest with you, I've changed my opinion on this; I've thought about it long and hard and first was very much opposed." One member from the inside education group from an affluent district with a surplus of principal candidates had not thought about alternative licensure for principals or teachers. He stated, "To be honest, until your research, I have never thought about this idea. We have always been able to find high quality candidates; however, the pool is less competitive than it was 10 years ago."

These attitudes illustrate that the majority of superintendents interviewed are willing to explore the notion of alternative licensure for school principals. Alternative licensing of principals appears to be too new in the field for superintendents to have solidified their views on the concept.

Conditions under which superintendents would consider hiring

Throughout the course of the study, it became apparent that superintendents' willingness to recommend hiring alternatively licensed principals was influenced by current conditions in their districts, hypothetical conditions that might be on the horizon, and specific characteristics an alternatively licensed principal may possess. Four conditions under which they would hire alternatively licensed principals were identified by both groups of superintendents. These conditions were a shortage of principal candidates, community fit, exemplary leadership skills, and successful leadership experiences of an alternatively licensed person.

Both groups of superintendents cited a shortage of principal applicants as a condition under which they would be more likely to consider an alternatively licensed principal candidate. Several of the superintendents interviewed were experiencing a shortage of applicants, while others have observed a noticeable decline in both the size and quality of their applicant pools.

A strong fit between the community and the alternative principal candidate was another condition under which superintendents in both groups would consider hiring an alternative principal. Both groups felt a connection with the surrounding community would be a vital factor influencing the decision to hire a non-traditional principal.

Two other conditions were cited as requisites by both groups. Alternative principal candidates must have exemplary leadership skills and successful leadership experiences. These could catapult them to the top of the applicant list. Nevertheless, unless candidates displayed the capacity to successfully lead an organization, they would be removed from consideration.

Participants from the outside education group mentioned the ability of an alternatively licensed principal to fill a specific need within the district as a condition of

employment. These superintendents believed alternatively licensed principals without education experience may possess expertise that could better serve a specialty school or a magnet school.

Another condition under which superintendents from the outside education group would hire a non-traditional candidate was when they perceived shortcomings in their pool of traditionally prepared candidates. These participants believed traditional candidates might not be equipped to meet the needs of their district. The superintendents felt alternative programs could more easily be tailored to focus on issues their districts were facing.

Shortage of principal candidates: Superintendents and those around the educational milieu view an alternative route to principal licensure as a possible option due to shortages of quality principal candidates and floundering schools (SREB, 2003; Fordham Institute, 2003). Many superintendents worked in states and districts that were experiencing a shortage of principal candidates. Reasons cited by superintendents for the decline point toward increased expectations and more strenuous demands of the principalship. A participant from the outside education group stated, "The job has become more and more difficult; the expectations have become higher and higher... and that puts tremendous pressure on the principal because there can't be any failure." He subsequently exclaimed, "Great principals are the single most important things in schools, and we have less and less people choosing to do that."

Some superintendents did not observe drastic declines in the quantity of licensed principal applicants, but in terms of quality, a noticeable difference has been mounting. Consistent with the literature (Roza, 2003), a need for quality principal candidates was a major concern expressed by many of the superintendents queried in the study. One participant stated, "In quantity, no we can find people. But in terms of quality it is getting tougher and tougher to find people…We don't get the number of candidates that we used to get."

As a result of the shortage, some superintendents have become more willing to consider candidates from alternative backgrounds. Others, not experiencing a shortage, cited a shortage of both quantity and quality as conditions under which they might consider an alternatively licensed principal. One superintendent would consider an alternatively licensed candidate if there was a "poor choice of candidates." A superintendent from the inside education group stated she would consider hiring an alternatively licensed principal if there was "a shortage, in terms of both quantity and quality."

Proactive response to alternative licensure: Several superintendents proclaimed they currently are or would be probative addressing the principal shortage. An urban superintendent established an in-house principal training program in conjunction with a local university to develop school leaders. He stated, "Advertising is not the way to go anymore," which reflects his experience recruiting principals. A superintendent from a suburban district suggested "developing a pool of candidates" if he thought there was going to be a shortage of principals. This superintendent was fervently against alternative licensure and planned to develop coursework and a strong mentor program to combat the principal shortage. These views express the desire to hire traditionally licensed people as opposed to candidates from the private sector.

Community fit: Superintendents' willingness to hire an alternatively licensed principal was dependent upon conditions in the educational community the principal would serve. If a superintendent felt the candidate would fit the community, then they would be more willing to consider hiring. For example, one superintendent felt a politically conservative community might provide a venue under which an alternative principal could flourish. He stated, "I could see that in a very politically conservative community… [that favors] any number of alternative education practices—home school, private school, charter school—that particular group may find it appealing that a non-educator leads their neighborhood school. The parental mind-set is that non-educators would certainly be more effective at this than educators."

A superintendent from the inside education group believed community fit would be an influencing condition that could lead to the employment of an individual. He stated, "If during the interview process… face to face, their answers were innovative and we… [felt] like [they] would fit and work with our community (because you know community fit is as big an issue)…then I believe we could and we would hire that person."

Another superintendent from the outside education group strongly believed that a community fit was essential to the hiring process of any principal, especially those alternatively licensed. He stated:

> Through all of the things you do in an interview process, there is the background of skill, what skill sets they bring, a fit for the particular school, and for what we know about the school. That was huge for me. You know some principals do great in one school and fail miserably in another, depending upon the neighborhood, the parents, the demographics, or the general attitude or climate of school or the teachers. So I think it is just if this... (is) a fit for the community. [If I ... believe the [alternative] principal…[has] a high percentage chance of succeeding, I would ap-point them, and I have.

Filling a specific need: Only superintendents from the outside education group viewed alternative principal

licensure as a way to filling a specific need a school within their district might encounter. Several school conditions were voiced as possible reasons to consider hiring an alternatively licensed principal. One set of conditions included managerial responsibilities of a principal such as discipline, communication, and overall school management. One superintendent stated:

Let's say we were dealing with a large high school that had several administrators on staff of whom there could be some who…[has] been designated to deal with curriculum and instructional issues, and perhaps what you needed is someone who can represent the school, can communicate well with the community, whose primary functions may not be what I would typically think of principals being and that is curriculum, instruction, and that sort of thing.

Another superintendent offered a situation in which he felt an alternative candidate might be successful: "The management is more critical than anything else. Perhaps where discipline is poor, there's a need to get the school under control. There can't be a whole lot of learning occurring if there isn't some sense of order in the school." Several superintendents in this group felt alternative principals might be better suited than traditional principals to lead specialty schools. These participants believed candidates from outside education could bring their expertise and outside connections to a school that focused instruction around a single topic such as engineering. A superintendent who has hired alternatively licensed principals to fill specific needs stated:

We brought in an engineering executive from one of the space firms, space-related business, to be the principal, to motivate kids to go into engineering, and he brought a lot of contacts and resources with him. He brought practitioners in who had a little different perspective. That worked well…This was trying to motivate kids to go into sciences and math and high tech fields…[He]…could bring a lot of friends and colleagues and resources from there.

Deficiencies in traditional preparation programs: For years, traditional principal preparation programs have been sharply criticized by practitioners, researchers, and private interest groups (Fordham Instituted, 2003; Levine, 2005; SREB, 2003). Two urban superintendents from the outside education group were also critical of principal preparation. This idea is on the periphery of alternative licensure, but it was an additional reason they had considered or were considering for hiring alternatively licensed principals.

One superintendent has been probative and aggressively trains and hires non-traditional principals.

The impetus for this program arose from the super-

intendent's belief that the candidates prepared by the local universities were not "getting the exposure in urban education they needed to be successful." This superintendent believed instructional leadership is the most important component of a successful school leader, but he felt traditional candidates were not prepared in this area. He thought current principal preparation programs offered: "Outdated courses related to educational theory, and the courses were not updated to reflect the new standards movement. There was no mention of No Child Left Behind. The whole world has changed and principal preparation was still a kind of an 80s, 90s kind of curriculum."

Prerequisite for leadership ability: Although several superintendents mentioned challenges alternatively licensed principals would face, they were confident that successful leaders have had experiences and possess skills that are relevant and transferable to all leadership positions. Superintendents believed an alternatively licensed candidate must possess the necessary leadership skills and experiences to be a successful principal.

Participants from both groups thought managerial experiences such as supervising and evaluating personnel would prove invaluable to the success of alternatively licensed principals. A superintendent from the outside education group said, "I think that perhaps individuals could have experiences outside the education community that could lend themselves to a successful experience as a principal." A superintendent from the inside education group said, "They would have to have had experience in supervising other people somewhere."

Through past experiences, successful leaders develop and acquire certain skills that characterize good leadership in any walk of life. One superintendent stated, "I think people who have good skills can transfer them to any setting." The superintendents who identified leadership skills as necessary for hiring alternatively licensed principals would only consider alternative candidates who possessed those skills prior to employment. Leadership skills mentioned by the superintendents were the ability to create and steward a vision, interpersonal skills, flexibility, and the ability to create a sense of teamwork and collaboration.

One superintendent with a negative attitude toward alternative licensure for principals felt leadership skills were vital to the success of a principal. He stated:

It' s possible that you could see someone with such extraordinary leadership ability that they could create a shared vision of change with that staff and use the expertise of the staff in a way that will support each other, and if the staff would buy into that, they could be the preferred candidate. I wouldn't rule that out as a possibility. I think it would be very, very difficult, but wouldn't rule that out as a

possibility. But that would be the only quality, if you had somebody so extraordinary, in terms of that quality.

Another superintendent from the outside education group felt communication was the determining factor between whether a principal succeeds or fails. He avowed: "I feel that I've hired a lot of principals-most succeeded, some failed. The ones, who failed, failed not because they didn't know curriculum or not because they may not know computer technology. They failed because they lack the ability to interact with people on an ongoing basis successfully."

Those inside education also cited communication as vital to the success of a principal. A superintendent stated that an alternatively licensed principal must "be a team player, someone who can organize and rally a team, who can communicate well with faculty, parents, and students." Other members of the inside education group mentioned the fluidity of education and cited flexibility as an important trait a principal must possess.

Several superintendents referred to the importance of intelligence and quick thinking. A superintendent from the inside education group explicitly stated that an alternatively licensed principal would have to be smart." Another felt, "Representing yourself orally in an interview is very important. Thinking on you feet and being able to answer very difficult questions would be a criterion for accepting an alternatively licensed principal." Another member from the outside education group summed up a variety of leadership skills that many of the participants mentioned:

> I think willingness to be a learner for sure – a person who understands that there is a lot to learn positive attitude with interests of students at the foremost; an ability to work with people and build a team. One of my tests is a sense of humor; tolerance for ambiguity and changing environment; ability to be flexible and adaptable. I think those characteristics are very, very im-portant for a person to have, and the more of those they possess, the better likelihood that they will be a successful principal.

Superintendents 'concerns when hiring alternatively licensed principals

Across the attitude spectrum, superintendents from both groups were concerned that alternatively licensed principals would face a variety of challenges. Their concerns were community perceptions and credibility in the eyes of constituents, the person's ability to be an instructional leader, and the person's ability to work within the politics of education.

Ability to be an instructional leader: The majority of superintendents passionately believed that a principal's

primary responsibility is as the instructional leader. Throughout the interviews, they referred to a specialized knowledge of education and the principalship that can only be acquired through experiences in and studies about education. One superintendent stated:

> I believe that the education of children is one of the single most complex things that we as human beings do. I believe that there is a body of know-ledge relative to how you teach children and how they learn. I think you get that through experience in doing it, and you get it through, to be honest …structured coursework and that kind of work. That's the point at which, in our district, we are very serious about our principals being instructional leaders. That is the single biggest expectation.

Participants believed a candidate from the private sector could bring a diverse skill set to education that would assist in school management; however, the ability of this person to effectively lead instruction was the concern most often cited by the superintendents from the outside education group. Areas of concern were curriculum development, recognizing good instruction and supervising, and evaluating teachers for their improvement. One superintendent stated: "I think that perhaps individuals could have experiences outside the education community that could lend themselves to a successful experience as a principal. My cautions and concerns lie in the area of teaching methodology and pedagogy, child development, and those kinds of things that you just don't necessarily pick up unless you have some training in education or education-related field."

Another area of concern regarded the time and effort required for the alternatively licensed principal to be a competent instructional leader. During this time, student learning, student achievement, and the professional growth of the faculty could suffer as an unintended consequence based on the hiring. A superintendent opposed to alternative licensure discussed his feelings: "My first thought when I hear somebody's coming from an outside position is that they may not have enough knowledge of that [education]. We can't fumble or have a person take a year or two or three years to be brought up to speed, and have the school suffer for that long."

Perceptions of constituents: Participants from both groups were concerned about the perceptions members in the educational community might have toward hiring an alternatively licensed principal. The superintendents were cognizant they would have to factor constituents' perceptions of hiring an alternatively licensed principal into their final decision. Among the constituents mentioned, teachers and staff were the groups most often cited by the superintendents, but additional concern arose over parents, community members, and other administrators.

One superintendent exclaimed: "I would be concerned with the people they are going to work with first. That would be the perception that would be the most important. Everything else you can survive. That would be the single most important perception—the people in the school where that person is going to work."

Another superintendent was concerned about an alternatively licensed principal's "credibility in the eyes of their teachers." He, along with others, felt these individuals would have a difficult time creating a sense of teamwork and effectively evaluating, supervising, and providing feedback to teachers. The credibility issue of an alternatively licensed principal was prevalent in analogies stated by one superintendent: "It's like coaching a team and you've never played the sport. It's like leading an orchestra and not playing an instrument. It's like going into the army to lead troops, but you've never been a soldier."

As accountability demands heighten in the wake of *No Child Left Behind* and state mandated testing, the expectations of those serving as school leaders continue to expand and intensify. Along with teacher perceptions, some superintendents were concerned with the perceptions parents, members of the community, and other administrators have toward alternative licensure for school principals. A fear of resentment toward the alternatively licensed candidate was expressed by one superintendent who stated, "Because they have been through the training, taken the coursework, and gone the traditional route,…there may be a reluctance to accept the individual."

Context a principal must work within: Several superintendents articulated concern about a person from the private sector leading a public school and adjusting to the politics of education. Superintendents believed the principal's role as public servant and the levels of bureaucracy one has to deal with are foreign to non-educators. When discussing the politics of education, one respondent from a rural district in New England vehemently stated, "I can tell you, public relations is huge, the politics of education, dealing with power groups, identifying power groups, who are your energies, who are your supporters. For a lot of principals, it's baptism by fire."

Many superintendents felt the principalship is a unique profession. One superintendent discussed the pressures one faces as a school leader:

> You know, it's very demanding. There are pressures from above, from the district office, administration, certainly a lot of pressures from parents, teacher groups…Dealing with students is in a lot of cases the easiest part of the job. Being in the middle of all those various forces and trying to balance all of it I think would create a lot of problems for someone

who might not be familiar with our profession.

The impact a principal has on the surrounding community, and the fundamental role education has within that community are foreign concepts to those not familiar with the education profession. One superintendent stated, "I think one of the biggest challenges would be their newly-found awareness of how central education is within a particular community." This centrality brings great responsibility to the principal. Decisions made have a large impact on families and the community as a whole. An example of this impact was provided by a superintendent opposed to alternative licensure. He stated:

> You've got to be able to deal with that, especially when you get a child that comes to school and, all of a sudden, you tell them that they may have a learning disability or there are some special needs there. Their vision of an ideal child, all of a sudden, is like a death situation. So, it takes a lot of public relations with parents to help with that understanding.

A deep understanding of these relationships with parents and the community must be possessed by a candidate to be considered an effective school leader.

An underlying quality that superintendents believe traditional principal candidates possess is an inherent understanding of children with a student-centered focus of education. Many superintendents were concerned this quality would not be present in those from outside education. As one superintendent put it, "If an individual doesn't demonstrate some sense of understanding about what it means to try to educate a child, and what's involved in that, I'm going to be very unimpressed about that individual as a successful candidate."

Induction for alternatively licensed principals

Many superintendents thought alternatively licensed principals may have the essential experiences and skills to become great school leaders, but they thought they needed time to get to know and understand how schools operate and time to learn the procedures and processes of a school-based organization. A clearly defined induction program was cited as a way to provide alternatively licensed principals with the supplemental knowledge and skills necessary to become effective principals.

A superintendent from the inside education group believed induction should be specialized based on the individual being hired. For example, he said, "It depends on the individual and the size of the school district. Some individuals would come in with business backgrounds and finance, but would need a lot of help in the area of instruction." Thus, induction could take a variety of forms.

Those mentioned by the superintendent were mentoring and internships, professional development, and internal support systems that comprised administrative colleagues.

Mentoring and internships: A mentor program or internship was most often cited by superintendents from the outside group. These superintendents believed prior to full employment as a principal, alternatively licensed principals should partake in a formal training period. During this training period, a great deal of learning would take place under the guidance of a mentor who was a seasoned administrator within the district. One superintendent stated: "I would develop a strong mentor program. I would look at centering somebody for six months or more, and getting ready to take over another year. There are so many things that happen that you aren't taught in textbooks that can throw you for a loop if you didn't have that background." Superintendents from both groups felt the principalship is a lonely profession, especially for those outside education. Similar to the notion of pre-service induction for alternatively licensed principals, they believed in-service training would be crucial to their success. Strong mentor programs were one form of in-service training recommended. One superintendent stated, "I don't think you can just leave someone, hire someone, and leave them alone in that position." Without this support mechanism, alternatively licensed principals would likely struggle to succeed in their new roles.

Professional development and coursework: In addition to the internship, several superintendents believed alternatively licensed principals would have to undergo some significant staff development. Most superintendents believed the professional development of alternatively licensed principals could be accomplished internally through coursework, pre-service and in-service programs, conferences, and seminars in the summer that would be a more intense form of the kind of training provided to most traditionally licensed principals. The training would be in the areas of curriculum, instruction, and teacher evaluation focused on student learning and achievement. One superintendent stated, with alternatively licensed principals, "You are going to be in a position where you are going to have to build a whole base of knowledge. And so I would demand that [professional development]."

Internal support system: An internal support system, that comprises administrative colleagues, was a type of induction only participants from the inside education group mentioned. In addition to mentors, many superintendents from this group advocated a collegial team designed to assist all administrators, but especially those alternatively licensed. In fact, some superintendents hire alternatively

licensed principals and have these support systems in place. One superintendent said: "All of our administrators are placed on a colleague critic team. And so they have either four or five other colleagues that they meet with regularly so that it is a very supportive environment…The administrative team meets every week and…Provides…support for a new principal." In the districts that implement these systems, new principals have transitioned successfully into the principalship.

Superintendents' past behaviors with regard to hiring alternatively licensed principals

Past behaviors are strong indicators for predicting future actions (Eagly and Chaiken, 1998; Ouellette and Wood, 1998). Therefore, doing the interview process superintendents were queried about past experiences hiring alternatively licensed principals. A few superintendents in the study had hired alternatively licensed principals, but most had not. However, some had experiences either hiring or working with alternatively licensed personnel that seemed to influence their willingness to recommend hiring alternatively licensed principals.

Have not hired alternatively licensed principals: In both groups, most superintendents interviewed had no experience hiring an alternatively licensed principal. There were two reasons why these superintendents did not have experience with alternative licensee for school principals. The first reason was that many of the states do not allow principals with alternative licenses to be hired. Currently, some states do permit alternatively licensed principals to be hired; however, participants in these states reported that alternative principals are not applying in their districts. When asked, "Have you ever considered an alternatively licensed candidate?" one superintendent replied, "I have not, we haven't had any-one apply. We have alternative licensed teachers. We have some experience there. But in the administrative ranks, we haven't had anyone apply."

Hired alternatively licensed principals: Although most superintendents have limited exposure to alternatively licensed principals, some of the participants have had such experiences. A few superintendents in larger urban areas had hired or were considering hiring alternatively licensed principals. A member of the outside education group was in a district that aggressively recruits, trains, and places non-traditionally prepared principals. Another superintendent from the inside education group hired alternative principals under the definition provided in the study. She worked in a state that does not have a strong university structure to train principals; therefore, most of her principals come directly from the teacher ranks.

Hired alternatively licensed personnel: Some superintendents opposed to alternative licensure for school principals cited experiences they had with alternatively certified teachers. One superintendent had an unpleasant experience with teachers from outside education, which affected his view of alternatively licensed principals. His current attitude was shaped by this experience. He exclaimed:

> These people went into the classroom, and they've never taught student. They had never been around kids very much. They didn't have all the developmental approaches. They didn't have any of the methods courses teachers go through and, therefore, they'd just begin to fumble, and they felt they weren't qualified enough to stay in the classroom. They couldn't handle it.

Another superintendent was in a district that employed non-educators in administrative positions at central office. His attitude toward alternative licensure has changed as the leadership structure has changed. He expressed an acceptance of alternative licensure and views principals trained alternatively favorably.

Summary

Superintendents varied in their attitudes toward alternatively licensed principals. Three levels of attitudes were identified: opposed to hiring, ambivalent, and in favor of hiring. The data contained several variables that may affect superintendents' willingness to recommend the hiring of these principals. These are in four domains: (1) conditions under which superintendents would con-sider hiring alternatively licensed principals, (2) concerns superintendents have about the ability of alternatively licensed principals to do the job and relate to constituents, (3) the availability of appropriate instruction and guidance in mentor and other training programs, and (4) past behaviors and experiences with alternatively licensed personnel. All four sets of variables form a new framework for understanding variation in superintendents' willingness to recommend the hiring of alternatively licensed principals (Figure 1).

DISCUSSION

Shortcomings of the composite model for attitude behavior consistency (Eagly and Chaiken, 1998) were revealed following analysis of the data. Participants in the study discussed concerns and conditions under which they would be willing to hire alternatively licensed principals; therefore, revisions in the theoretical framework were made. Some superintendents were fervently opposed to

ever hiring an alternatively licensed principal. Nevertheless, the majority of participants revealed circumstances and situations under which an alternative principal candidate would be considered and in some cases preferred.

Analyses of the findings suggest superintendents' attitudes toward hiring become more favorable in urban districts and when districts are experiencing a shortage of principal candidates. In addition, these candidates must possess the requisite skills, experiences, and knowledge superintendents believe all school leaders must have. If the alternative licensure trend continues, policy makers should be knowledgeable of superintendents' input regarding their attitudes toward these candidates and the conditions and concerns under which hiring them is a viable option. Although small, this study provides informative data regarding superintendents' attitudes and views about the subject for policy makers at the state, university, and local levels. Furthermore, the variation in superintendents' attitudes' toward alternative licensee and the identification of potential explanatory variables provide support for conducting a more in-depth, quantitative study of this phenomenon.

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