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An analysis and examination of the current practices and procedures utilized by Iowa K-12 school districts for evaluating principals

Thomas Lee Williams
Iowa State University

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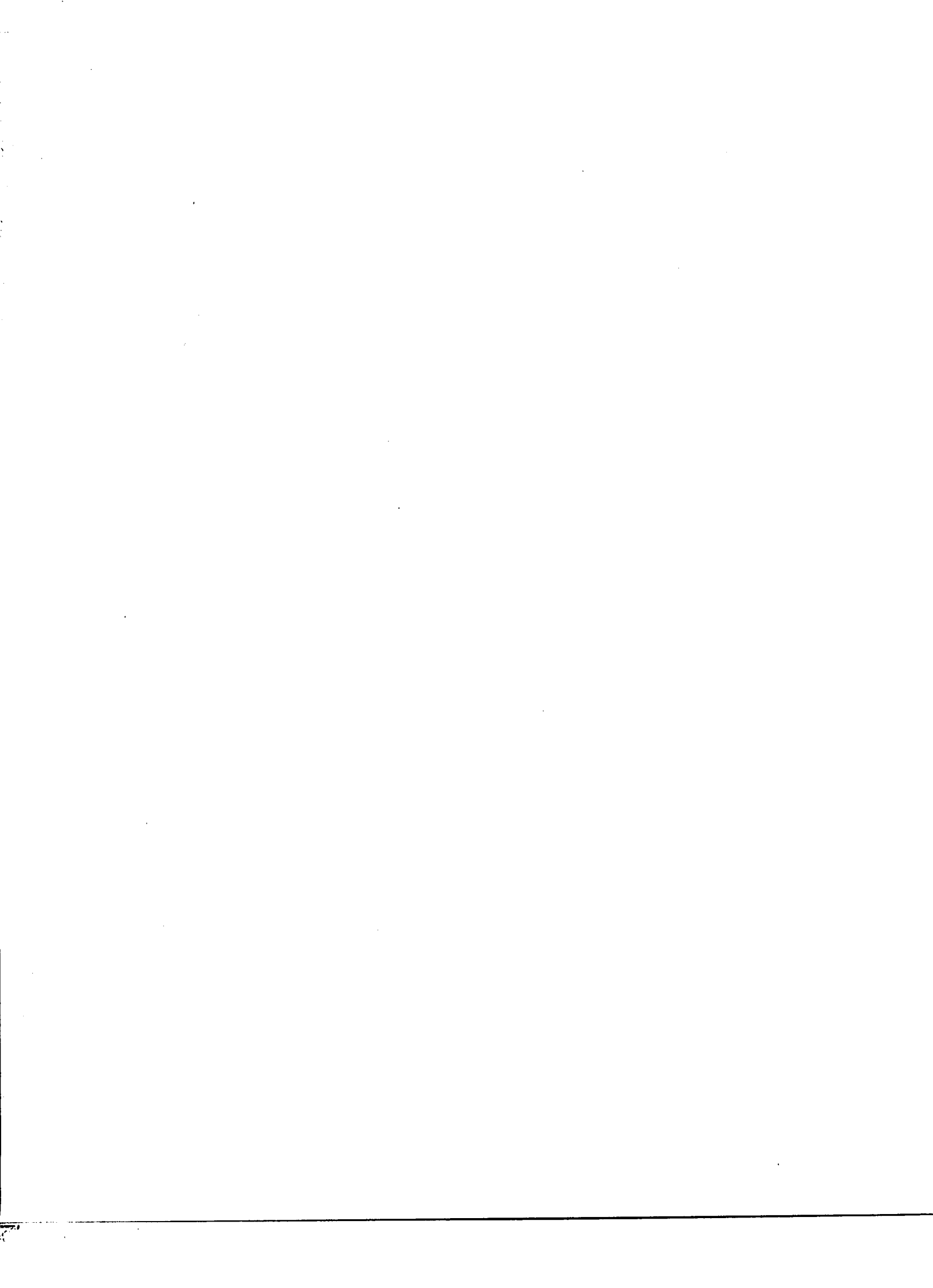
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**An analysis and examination of the current practices and
procedures utilized by Iowa K-12 school districts for evaluating
principals**

Williams, Thomas Lee, Ph.D.

Iowa State University, 1990

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An analysis and examination of the current practices and
procedures utilized by Iowa K-12 school districts for
evaluating principals

by

Thomas Lee Williams

A Dissertation Submitted to the
Graduate Faculty in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

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CHAPTER I. INTRODUCTION

Background for the Study

"Whenever there are human beings, there will be evaluation. Man is a valuing and goal seeking being" [54, p. 183]. Adequate evaluation has been a central concern of educators and researchers for many years. Never in the history of education in the country has there been so much external demand for evaluation. Rising costs, trouble within schools, loud voices of criticism, more specific attention by the state governments, and the widespread emphasis on accountability are all factors contributing to the heightened interest in evaluation.

The research on both effective principals and effective schools cites the importance of principals who serve as strong instructional leaders and closely monitor student achievement. Principal evaluation has thus evolved as a process for ensuring accountability for instructional leadership, student achievement, and effective schools.

Most of what we know about principal evaluation is extracted from studies of evaluation programs in individual school districts. Although most principal evaluation systems remain the responsibility of the local school boards, there is a definite move toward increased intervention on the part of state school authorities and state legislatures. The major result of this intervention is an increase in the number of school districts across the country that evaluate principals. Principal evaluation procedures and practices tend to draw ideas from the literature on management theory and effective

principalship. The basic concepts of defining good principalship, choosing and training evaluators, and developing evaluation instruments are drawn from the literature.

In 1986, the Iowa State Legislature adopted legislation that required the performance appraisal of all school personnel. The design of the procedure and policy was left to each individual school district. Thus, there could be conceivably 433 different procedures/policies for principal evaluation in the state of Iowa. The new Iowa Standards that were enacted by the Iowa Legislature in 1988 [48], and became effective on July 1, 1989, outlined more specifically in Article 12.3 [4], that "each Board shall adopt a performance evaluation process for school personnel."

The purpose of this research is to document district mandated practices and procedures for principal evaluation and to reveal if a discrepancy exists between the written procedures and the actual practices in use. Because of the varying quality of principal evaluation procedures and practices in the state of Iowa, a review of existing programs should increase the reliability and validity of evaluation systems. Ideally, evaluators will be able to learn from the practices of other school districts.

Statement of the Problem

Rosenburg [44], in an analysis of American education, indicated that a very large number of observers agreed that the school principal holds the most strategic position in the educational system.

Goldhammer and Becker [20] concluded that excellent schools are led by aggressive, professionally alert dynamic principals determined to provide the level of educational program they deem necessary.

Robinson [42] stated,

Due in part to the realization of the principal's importance in influencing the performance and attitudes of students, faculty, and support staff, formal evaluation procedures for administration are now being advocated, implemented, researched, and legislated [42, p. 1].

The ERS report further states that "appropriate, fair procedures for assessing and improving the performance of school administration are crucial to effective instructional programs" [42, p. 1]. The importance of principal evaluation and the procedures associated with administration evaluation then becomes obvious. Evaluation becomes a means of defining principal effectiveness, an important ingredient for a school to become more effective. In the final analysis, principal evaluation becomes the key ingredient to ensure accountability for a quality educational program.

Therefore, if the need for evaluation is evident, and if the principal is the single most important position in the educational system, the need to examine and analyze the current practices and procedures for principal evaluation is apparent. Furthermore, with the implementation of Senate File 106 [50], Iowa K-12 school districts are now required by state statute to have written evaluation criteria for school principals. Unfortunately, there is very little, if any, data concerning the current practices and formal written procedures

for principal evaluation in the K-12 school districts of Iowa. There is, therefore, a need to examine principal evaluation procedures and practices if the evaluation process is to become a meaningful tool for school improvement.

Definitions

Evaluation practices - The actual process or manner of evaluation that is being used in the school system.

Evaluation procedures - The formal written policy describing the methods, steps, criteria, and process for principal evaluation in the school system.

Evaluator - The person(s) conducting the evaluation.

Evaluatee - The person being evaluated.

Formative evaluation - The focus is on helping administrators improve their performance. The evaluation process involves ongoing communication between evaluators and evaluatees [42].

Summative evaluation - Evaluation serves as an end, a judgment of administrators' performance on which to base an individual administration promotion, demotion, incentive pay rewards, and other personal action [42].

Performance standards - Evaluation is based on a list of predetermined criteria which are rated numerically, by selecting a descriptive phrase, or by written comments. The principal does not contribute to the establishment of the criteria [53].

Performance goals - Evaluation is designed for the individual principal. Goals may be determined by the immediate supervisor in conjunction with the principal. Various persons or groups of persons may be involved in the evaluation of the goals [53].

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this research study will be to examine the formal written procedures and the actual practices utilized for evaluating school principals in the K-12 districts of Iowa.

More specifically, the study will:

1. Describe principal evaluation practices and formal written procedures currently in place in the K-12 school districts in Iowa.
2. Compare those practices and procedures with the current recommendations found in the literature.
3. Compare those procedures and practices as they relate to the size of the school district.
4. Make recommendations that should prove helpful in the development of more valid principal evaluation practices and procedures for the K-12 school districts in the State of Iowa.

Research Questions

1. To what extent do Iowa K-12 school districts have formally written Board policies covering principal evaluation procedures?
2. What practices for the evaluation of principals are presently in place in the K-12 school districts of Iowa?

- a. Have principals been involved in the development of principal evaluation procedures in the K-12 school districts of Iowa?
- b. Is an evaluation instrument used?
- c. Who are the evaluators?
- d. How often are principals evaluated?
- e. Does principal evaluation practice include observations?
- f. How often are principals formally observed?
- g. Does the evaluation practice include setting performance goals?
- h. Is the principal aware of the criteria that will be used in his/her evaluation?
- i. Does the evaluation practice include a face-to-face post-observation conference?
- j. In practice, does the evaluator(s) meet with the principal to review the overall evaluation?
- k. Does the evaluation include written comments to the principal?
- l. What is the purpose of principal evaluation?
- m. In practice, are job targets developed as a result of the evaluation process?
- n. Do principals have job descriptions and are they used in the evaluation process?
- o. Who, other than the supervisors, has input into the principal evaluation process in the K-12 school

districts of Iowa?

3. Are current principal evaluation practices consistent with the written procedures in the K-12 school districts of Iowa?
4. Do principal evaluation practices vary as they relate to the size of the school district?
5. What recommendations can be made for the use of "valid" principal evaluation procedures and practices being followed in the K-12 school districts of Iowa?

Hypotheses

1. There is a discrepancy between the written procedure for formally reviewing the performance expectations of the principal during a pre-cycle evaluation conference, and the actual practice in use in the K-12 school districts of Iowa.
2. There is a discrepancy between the written procedure for formal observation for principal evaluation and the actual practice in use in the K-12 school districts of Iowa.
3. There is a discrepancy between the written procedure for holding a post-observation conference for principal evaluation and the actual practice in use in the K-12 school districts of Iowa.
4. There is a discrepancy between the written procedure for providing written feedback to principals for evaluation purposes and the actual practice in use in the K-12 school districts of Iowa.
5. There is a discrepancy between the written procedure for completing a summative evaluation instrument for principal evaluation

and the actual practice in use in the K-12 school districts of Iowa.

6. There is a discrepancy between the written procedures for holding a summative evaluation conference and the actual practice in use in the K-12 school districts of Iowa.

7. There is a discrepancy between the written procedure for utilizing job targets for principal evaluations and the actual practice in use in the K-12 school districts of Iowa.

8. There will be a decrease in the discrepancy between the written procedures for principal evaluation and the actual practices in use as the size of the school district increases in the K-12 school districts of Iowa.

Assumptions of the Study

The study will be predicated on the following basic assumptions:

1. The principal from each school district who completes the survey will do so accurately and honestly according to that particular school's evaluation practices and procedures.

2. The survey used to collect data concerning practices and procedures used in each school district will result in the collection of valid and reliable information.

3. The literature review will describe current practices and procedures used in principal evaluation.

Delimitations of the Study

1. The research for this study was limited to the evaluation procedures and returned questionnaires received from the public K-12 school districts in the state of Iowa during the 1989-90 school year.
2. The findings and conclusions of this study are applicable only to the public K-12 school districts of the state of Iowa.

Organization of the Study

The study is organized into five chapters. The first chapter introduces the study and covers the background for the study, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, research questions, hypotheses, assumptions of the study, definition of the study, and organization of the study. Chapter II is a review of relevant literature. Chapter III describes the methodology used in data collection, the population from which data was collected, and the procedure used to interpret the data. Chapter IV presents the interpretation of the data and Chapter V provides a summary of the research, as well as recommendations and conclusions.

The Iowa State University Committee on the Use of Human Subjects in Research reviewed this project and concluded that the rights and welfare of the human subjects were adequately protected, that risks were outweighed by the potential benefits and expected value of the knowledge sought, that confidentiality of data was assured and that informed consent was obtained by appropriate procedures.

CHAPTER II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Introduction

The demand for quality education is sweeping our country. Teachers, students, school board members, and school administrators are all being held more accountable for their performance by the public. During the past 15 years, there has been a major emphasis placed on teacher evaluation. Only recently has this emphasis shifted to include principal evaluation and appraisal. Manatt [30, p. 22] observes that "despite recent advances in the quality of teacher evaluation, performance evaluation for principals, and indeed, for all school executives, remains sketchy, poorly thought out, and largely ineffective." Bolton [6] indicates that accountability is often expressed in terms of increased costs to the public. The public's concern is related not only to an increase in the absolute cost of education, but also to the increased cost in relation to the quality of the product obtained. Bolton continues by discussing the public awareness concerning increased costs without increases in productivity and how the two contribute directly to inflation. The public wants to hold the education profession accountable for incompetent or ineffective members. While accountability and evaluation are sometimes interchanged, there are clear differences between these two terms. Bolton [6] defines accountability as the "responsibility for taking action" [p. 8]. Evaluation is defined by Bolton [6, p. 8] as "making judgments regarding the set of events,

behavior, and/or results of behavior in light of predetermined and well understood objectives." Thus, he concludes that evaluation is a central mechanism that allows one to correct errors and plan changes, wherever accountability allows one to determine whether a person (or organization) carries out responsible action.

Manatt's research [31] clearly demonstrates that the performance appraisal of principals is essential to assess valid and reliable teacher performance evaluation. Bolton [6] concluded that principal evaluation is necessary and justified.

State Mandated Principal Evaluation

According to Manatt [31], 15 states had administrative evaluation requirements in 1972. By 1985, 27 states had mandated administrative evaluation procedures. In a recent study conducted by the Southeastern Educational Improvement Laboratory [37], 51 responses were received from the 56 states and U.S. territories surveyed regarding state-mandated principal evaluation. Results indicated that 74 percent of the states mandate or plan to mandate principal evaluations in the near future. The content of that mandate varied widely from state to state. Typically, states fall into one of three categories. At one extreme, states simply mandate that local school districts evaluate principals, but provide no guidelines. Other states provide model guidelines or evaluation instruments that the local school boards may use. At the other extreme, states may prepare guidelines or evaluation instruments and require that local authorities use them.

The state may then monitor the local school districts to ensure compliance. In their study on state-mandated principal evaluation practices, the Southeastern Educational Improvement Laboratory [39] reviewed the most common practices in state-mandated principal evaluation. These practices can be summarized as follows:

- Nearly all states explain their principal evaluation programs in terms of a desire to improve the performance of individual principals. Most states indicate that evaluations will be used to improve performance and for promotion and retention. Few states, however, have an explicit program for retraining, rewarding, or punishing principals based on their evaluations. A few states use evaluations for certification or tenure, and a few require poor-performing principals to take classes or attend workshops.
- In almost every case, principal evaluation is mandated by legislation. This legislation varies in specificity. At one extreme, the law simply may require local school districts to evaluate principals; at the other, the law may require the state department of education to create an evaluation instrument and require that local school districts use the instrument.
- In most states that mandate evaluation, the nature of this evaluation is the responsibility of the local school boards. This is the case in Iowa. Occasionally, the state may develop instruments or guidelines that the local school board can

use or adapt for use. In a smaller number of cases, the state may require the local school boards to evaluate principals in terms of a limited number of criteria. The local school board may evaluate on a wider series of issues, but, at a minimum, they must cover their criteria.

Some states require various evaluation approaches that appear less frequently than others [37]. In Mississippi, principals are required to develop a portfolio of documents to demonstrate how they have performed in a number of areas considered important by the evaluators. This allows principals who might be considered weak in one area or another to try to demonstrate what they have accomplished. This measure improves the reliability of the evaluation and also gives the principal a measure of power.

Many states, such as in Iowa, try to increase the professionalism of principal evaluation by requiring that the evaluator receive training. In some cases, this training is to be continual. For example, Illinois does not require the use of specific guidelines or instruments, but it does require that superintendents attend training sessions on the issue of principal evaluation every two years. In Iowa, all administrators that carry out evaluations must receive an evaluator approval endorsement by attending a 30-hour course for evaluator training.

Some states have principals establish goals and then evaluate the principal against these goals [37]. In Missouri, the evaluator reviews the principals' goal statements throughout the year to assure

compliance. Delaware's new principal evaluation instrument combines a formative and summative evaluation. As part of the formative evaluation, the principal and the evaluator set goals at the beginning of the year against which the principal will be evaluated. The regulations in Delaware also require a minimum of two annual conferences between the principal and evaluator, to provide feedback on the progress the principal is making in meeting the goals. The advantage of this method is that the principal is certain of the criteria for a positive evaluation. Thus, the evaluation should be reliable, and the principal should not feel threatened.

Mississippi and Tennessee [37] seek evaluation from both superiors and subordinates. While in most states the principal's evaluation is the responsibility of his/her supervisor, these states try to reduce the randomness or bias by seeking evaluation from a number of sources.

South Carolina [37] requires that the evaluation instrument itself be evaluated by outside evaluators. Such a procedure is intended to increase the reliability of the instrument. States that require local boards of education to follow a series of guidelines without providing an instrument sometimes evaluate the local instruments to ensure that these local evaluation instruments are in compliance with state guidelines.

One of the points of greatest similarity among the states is the frequency of evaluation. Most have chosen to evaluate principals once a year. But even on this point of apparent similarity, there

are differences. Many states have established unique practices with the frequency of evaluation determined by such things as the experience of the principal, a need for remediation, or a potential promotion.

In 1987, Senate File 106 [48] was enacted by the Iowa State Legislature. Senate File 106 requires Iowa K-12 school districts to establish written evaluation criteria for school administrators, and written job descriptions for all supervisory positions. The Statute also requires Iowa school boards to annually implement evaluation procedures for K-12 school administrators.

Policy

In education, the responsibility for principal appraisal generally belongs to the superintendent. If the school system does not have appropriate policy that stipulates that evaluation takes place, the superintendent should insist that the Board make this a goal. Bottoni [7] stated in a National School Board Association presentation that:

A major step in administrative evaluation is the establishment of a broad school board policy void of specific details. A successful operation depends on the school board setting the parameters and then judging the quality of work within these parameters [7, p. 4].

Sunday O. Ezeody [17] was not in complete agreement with Bottoni. He felt that district policies should be clearly defined so that the "general apathy shown by administration toward an evaluation program

may be minimized" [p. 34]. Policies should include five basic elements so that evaluation is not threatening to the principal. The elements are:

1. The principal should be given a written copy of the evaluation, documenting evaluation observations and findings.
2. The principal should be assured the opportunity to respond in writing to all evaluations.
3. The principal should be given the opportunity to appeal the findings and recommendations of the evaluation.
4. The principal should be required to propose corrective measures for those areas rated as less than desirable.
5. The evaluation process should incorporate pre- and post-evaluative conferences between the evaluator and the principal [17, pp. 34-35].

In a 1983 article for The School Administrator, John Savage [45] contended that all personnel evaluation systems should be based on sound board policy. The policy should provide answers to four questions:

1. Why does the board want their administrative staff evaluated?
2. Who is responsible for performing the task?
3. When is evaluation to occur and/or be completed?
4. What, in general terms, is to be done such as measuring performance on a list of district standards or mutually agreed upon goals?

Research has substantiated the need for written policy governing principal evaluation. Generally, the policy should permit flexibility of interpretation, but should provide clearly defined parameters. Five elements should be included: (1) who is responsible for evaluation, (2) the timetable for the evaluation process, (3) the reasons for evaluation, (4) a mechanism for establishing the procedures for the evaluation process, and (5) the method of response by the principal to the evaluation.

The Principal as Instructional Leader

Studies on effective schools consistently cite the fact that such schools have principals who act as strong instructional leaders [55, 57, 8, 34, 11, 15]. Edmons [15] found that one clear difference between improving and declining schools was that in the former, principals acted as instructional leaders. In their study for Rand Corporation [5], Paul Berman and Milbrey McLaughlin considered the support of the principal so important to school improvement efforts that they describe principals as "gatekeepers of change." James Lipham [26] claimed that "no change of substantial magnitude can occur in any school without the principals' understanding and support."

In a study conducted by Anderson and Nicholson [2], they found that the absence of valid and easily used instruments to measure behavior and skills related to instructional leadership in secondary schools is the basic reason for the lack of research in this area. Their study concluded that an evaluation instrument can be useful as

a reliable and valid measure of the level of instructional leadership.

Sweeney [49] indicates that the most recent research links positive student outcomes to building administrator behaviors; however, few organizations make a valid effort to evaluate and improve administrator performance. Sweeney describes administrator evaluation as "overlooked" and "ignored."

Look [27] cited Sweeney's review [50] of eight major studies that focused on the behavior associated with instructional leadership in effective schools. Each study showed evidence that leadership behavior was positively associated with school outcomes. As a result of his review, Sweeney listed six leadership behaviors associated with school effectiveness: emphasizing achievement, setting instructional strategies, providing an orderly atmosphere, frequently evaluating student progress, coordinating instructional programs, and supporting teachers.

Most of the research on effective schools focuses particularly on the leadership of the principal. Maher [29] stated that one rarely finds a good school with an ineffective principal or a bad school with a great principal. D'Amico [12] concluded that the behavior of the school leader is crucial in determining school success. Gersten [19] claimed that the key to enduring, sustained, effective educational services is the site administrator - especially the principal. Parkey [36] found that one of the most common elements to effective schools is strong instructional leadership on the part of the school principal. Vornberg [54] summarized that the

principal's instructional leadership role is critical to the development and maintenance of an effective school. Involvement in classroom visitations, student achievement, program assessment, and encouraging the staff in instructional writing are the types of activities necessary to make an instructional difference in the school. Valentine and Bowman [52] described the principal as the key to effective schooling, but to be the significant leader, "he/she must be open to the candid snapshot of their skills captured by formal evaluation procedures."

Goldhammer and Becker [20] concluded that excellent schools are led by aggressive, professionally alert dynamic principals determined to provide the kind of educational programs they deem necessary. Ron Edmons [16] argued that one of the most tangible and indispensable characteristics of effective schools is "strong administrative leadership without which the disparate elements of good schooling can neither be brought together nor be kept together." Rosenberg [44] stated that the principal holds the most strategic position in the educational system. And, in one of the earliest and most widely cited studies, George Weber [55] listed strong instructional leadership from the school principal as one of eight school-wide characteristics that influenced student achievement.

But what does instructional leadership mean? What do principals do to demonstrate that they are instructional leaders? In its summary of research on effective schools, the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory [35] identified several behaviors that

characterize instructional leadership:

- Understanding the school's mission and stating it in direct, concrete terms in order to establish a focus and unify the staff;
- Portraying learning as the most important reason for being in school;
- Demonstrating the belief that all students can learn and that the school makes the difference between success and failure;
- Establishing standards and guidelines that can be used to monitor the effect of the curriculum;
- Protecting learning time from disruption and emphasizing the priority of efficient use of classroom time;
- Maintaining a safe, orderly school environment;
- Monitoring student progress by means of explicit performance data and sharing those data with the staff;
- Establishing incentives and rewards to encourage excellence in student and teacher performance;
- Allocating resources according to instructional priorities;
- Establishing procedures to guide parental involvement;
- Maintaining two-way communication with parents;
- Expressing the expectation that instructional programs improve over time;
- Involving staff and others in planning implementation strategies;
- Monitoring the implementation of new practices and programs;

- Celebrating the accomplishments of students, staff, and the school;
- Knowing, legitimizing, and applying research on effective instruction;
- Making frequent classroom visits to observe instruction; and
- Focusing teacher supervision on instructional improvement.

It is impossible for principals to function as instructional leaders unless they are willing to monitor teaching by venturing into the arena where instruction takes place, the classroom. In addition, they must be sufficiently knowledgeable about effective teaching practices in order to provide teachers with meaningful feedback on their instructional strategies and methods. In his review of research on effective principals, Lipham [26] wrote,

Effective principals are skilled in time management and find opportunities to plan cooperatively with teachers, visit and observe classrooms, provide teachers with helpful feedback, and evaluate the progress of both staff and students [26, p. 14].

In addition to somehow managing to spend considerable time in the classroom, principals must, if they are to serve as instructional leaders, find time to develop the expertise necessary to assess the effectiveness of instruction. As Gordon Cawelti concluded [11], "The difference between effective principals and others seems to lie in their knowledge of quality instruction." Thus, if schools are to move toward excellence, principals must take responsibility for developing such knowledge and skills.

What is an Effective Principal?

In his Pulitzer Prize winning study of leadership, James M. Burns [9] advised that the first step a leader must take if he or she hopes to influence others is to clarify his/her own goals. It is impossible for an organization to remain focused on its vision and values unless its leaders are certain of what the vision and values entail. In short, leaders must know what they want to accomplish.

Bennis and Nanus [4, pp. 28-29] stated:

Leaders are the most results oriented individuals in the world. This fixation with the undeviating attention to outcome, some would call it an obsession, is only possible if one knows what he wants.

This focus on goals and vision is especially important in the public schools, which are called on to cure every social problem our country faces. The establishment of a clear, purposeful focus is one of the most important ingredients necessary for an effective school. A building principal who provides the focus necessary to clarify a school's mission will place that school one step closer to being an excellent school.

Vision and value can influence an organization and those within it only if the vision and values are communicated. Bennis and Nanus [4] concluded that the mastery of communication is essential to effective leadership.

What are the keys to communication that attract and inspire? Peters and Waterman [38] discovered that one key is redundancy; a "boorish consistency over long periods of time in support of one or

two transcending values." Benniis and Nanus [4] cited the effective use of metaphors and slogans. Their advice to anyone trying to institute change is to ask, "How clear is the metaphor?" Effective principals will on a daily basis emphasize what remains the same, the vision and values that direct the efforts of those within their schools.

Furthermore, effective principals will repeat that message at every opportunity, recognizing that, in the words of Peters and Waterman [38], "No opportunity is too small, no forum too insignificant, no audience too junior."

Principals can use every available opportunity and the most creative metaphors to express their school's values and still be ineffective communicators if the stand they take on a day-to-day basis is not consistent with those values. Benniis and Nanus [4, p. 43] described trust as "the lubricant that makes it possible for organizations to work," and contend that leaders can establish trust only by being the "epitome of constancy and reliability." Effective leaders are predictable. They establish positions that are consistent with organizational values. They make those positions known, and remain relentlessly committed to them. They stay the course over the long run.

According to DuFour and Eaker [14, pp. 25-27], any assessment of a principal's effectiveness in communicating values should include the following:

1. What does the principal plan for? Does the principal develop long-term plans that are consistent with the mission of the school and are designed to instill its values? Does he or she share those plans with the staff and help them see the relationship between the plans and the mission?

2. What does the principal monitor? A principal who devotes considerable time and effort to the continual assessment of a particular condition within a school sends the message that the condition is important. Conversely, inattention to monitoring a particular factor indicates that the factor is less than essential, regardless of how often its importance is verbalized.

3. What does the principal model? Principals who truly believe that the presence of certain values is critical to the success of their schools will attempt to model those values. Effective principals will make a conscious effort to embody the values of the schools they lead.

4. What does the principal reinforce through recognition and celebration? Recognition and celebration are key components in building the culture of pride that is found in excellent schools. However, recognition simply for the sake of recognition serves no purpose in the effort to improve the school.

5. What behavior is the principal willing to confront? If principals wish to communicate the importance of particular values, they must be willing to confront those who disregard these values. If a school claims to value an orderly atmosphere throughout the

building, the principal must be willing to confront the unruly student, the teacher who ignores misbehavior, or the parent who seeks to justify it. If a school claims to value teaching directed to particular student outcome, the principal must be willing to confront the teacher whose instruction does not address these outcomes.

Joseph Rogue [43] describes the effective principal in the following ways:

- Clearly states school goals and objectives for the year;
- Develops consensus among the faculty around school goals and behavior expectations;
- Closely monitors progress towards school goals;
- Frequently monitors and provides feedback about teachers' performance;
- Ensures that the building environment is orderly and quiet without being repressive;
- Ensures that departments are vital subgroups;
- Provides support for staff in-service;
- Provides time for teachers to plan together;
- Establishes high expectations for teacher and student performances;
- Demonstrates strong involvement with the instructional program;
- Knows what is happening in classrooms; and
- Assumes personal responsibility for the school's achieving its objectives.

Principal Evaluation

Evaluation of principals is effective only if the principals being evaluated and the supervisors who are evaluating them understand the components of the evaluation process.

According to William Harrison and Kent Peterson [22], three major themes generally emerge as necessary for effective appraisal: setting criteria, sampling performance, and communicating expectations and results.

To perform successfully, principals must clearly understand their superiors' expectations. Harrison and Peterson found in their study that included surveys from 149 principals and 121 superintendents that 80 percent of the superintendents said they made their expectation of principal performance clear. While the majority of principals concurred, nearly 42 percent were uncertain or felt expectations were not made clear.

Along similar lines, the two groups disagreed about what indicators superintendents should examine to evaluate principal performance. When the two groups ranked a list of eight indicators, they agreed on the top five, though not in the same order.

Principals perceived the reaction of the public - positive or negative - to be the most important factor the superintendent assesses. Superintendents ranked this indicator fifth.

The study found that 81 percent of the principals surveyed believe that public reaction is the most important factor to the superintendent, while only 58 percent of the superintendents cited

this factor as important.

Superintendents ranked general quality of instruction, teacher performance and morale, and atmosphere of the school as the top three indicators of a principal's performance. Principals ranked public reaction, positive or negative; teacher performance and morale; and atmosphere of the school as the top three indicators of principal performance.

Harrison and Peterson [22] conclude that if principals are to improve their performance, the stages of the evaluation process must be clear, specific, and understood by both the evaluator and the evaluatee. Superintendents must make their expectations for principal performance clear, ensuring that principals understand the tasks they are to accomplish, the criteria used to assess performance, the type of data used, and the ways performance outcomes are appraised.

Administrator Performance Evaluation (APE), according to Stow and Manatt [47, pp. 353-386], is oriented to process and should ask the following questions:

- What do we expect each administrator to accomplish?
- How do we expect each administrator to perform?
- What changes in behavior do we want?
- How does his/her performance interrelate with that of others?

Stow and Manatt [47] further state that Administrator Performance Evaluation should be based on an analysis or measurement of progress made toward accomplishment of predetermined objectives.

Stow and Manatt [47] have spearheaded the implementation of a new type of performance evaluation system for educational administration in school districts across the country. The process is a total system approach outcome/based model that is tied to raising K-12 student achievement through performance evaluation of all administrators. The process utilizes a steering committee and several subcommittees to guide the development of the system. The following key components are crucial to the development process:

Administrative philosophy - The administrative philosophy must be general because it provides boundaries for generic decision making. The overall philosophy needs to be considered and applied in varying degrees. This phase of the system is intended to determine if each administrator's performance (style, values, and productivity) is consonant with that philosophy.

Performance factors - This component of the system is based on the job description of an administrative position. Administrators are evaluated by their immediate superiors. The ratings identify strengths and weaknesses and suggest areas for growth. The performance responsibilities of each position description are distributed into categories:

1. Improving the educational process.
2. Implementing district policies.
3. Working with the community.
4. Staff personnel.
5. Managing operations.

Critical work activities (CWAs) - This portion of the appraisal is intended to determine if the administrator's performance on CWAs is congruent with the priorities and needs of subordinates. CWAs are those tasks deemed most essential for the performance of the position. They are continuous, regular activities necessary to the day-to-day operation of the building or school organization.

Job improvement targets - Job improvement targets are central to the evaluation system. This is the point at which the "rubber meets the road"--when evaluation is tied to improvement of performance. Writing job improvement targets requires time and careful analysis of each situation and usually occurs during or after the end-of-cycle conference. Customarily, three to five targets are developed by the evaluatee (with the help of the evaluator) for each evaluation cycle.

Field-test - After these components have been developed, the prototypic instruments are field-tested. Part of this process is to gather baseline data about an administrator's performance. To accomplish this take, the documents are completed by those who report to an administrator. At times, student and parent input is used. The data are compiled and a feedback session is held with each administrator. This step has produced some very positive results. Administrators gain perceptions of their strengths and weaknesses and begin to make plans for improving their administrative skills.

Stow and Manatt [47] conclude by indicating that an administrator performance evaluation system developed by the aforementioned process will prove to be effective in the improvement of district management

and leadership.

Herman [23, pp. 5-10] stated that the real challenge is to create an effective evaluation system based on the competencies that the local decision makers deem important to excellence in administrative performance. If well-defined competencies are in place, the administrator is more likely to be evaluated in an objective format. Administrators will not be evaluated on "friendship, their willingness to always agree with "the boss", or some other criteria not related to the predetermined competencies."

Bolton [6] pointed out that evaluation must be based on information that has been collected according to a specific plan. And, that measurement includes collection of all information necessary to make decisions regarding whether goals and objectives are being accomplished. He continues by stating that for certain behaviors, measurement must be made while the behavior or action is being taken or the measurement is unreliable. Bolton further states that who collects the information about activities and behavior depends on what plan is agreed to by the principal and the evaluator.

In 1983, Look and Manatt [28] identified research-based discriminating items for use in the evaluation of school principals. A discriminating item was one which elicits similar responses from members of the group rating a particular individual and maximum differences among the individuals being rated. Items with discrimination power assist with helping the evaluator discriminate between high and low performance.

Duke and Stiggins [13] in Mueller [33] report that when principal evaluation and professional development are linked, it is by individual action plans or special workshops, and the barriers to closer links include lack of interest or desire, lack of plans and procedures for creating links and the shortage of time and resources. They suggest that principal evaluation systems can be designed to achieve both the basic purposes of accountability and improvement. They indicate that performance criteria need not be the same for each principal, since each may seek to grow in a different area or direction. They conclude by stating that the evaluation data must be descriptive, individualized, and suggestive of needs.

Valid Principal Evaluation Procedures

What is a "valid" principal evaluation? A "valid" principal evaluation really has no clearly defined meaning. Perhaps the mere existence of formalized evaluation procedures, rather than the informal systems of the past, constitute valid evaluation. Nationwide, ERS [40] reports that 85 percent of all school districts have formalized evaluation procedures and practices.

According to Bolton [6], the need for evaluation is evident; it helps to plan change and to prevent and correct errors. When planning for evaluation, it is important to be aware of the good practices in the various systems being used. There should also be some recognition of the need to plan for the future and to make changes that will improve the evaluation process that is in place.

There are many varied perspectives concerning principal evaluation. An ERIC Action Brief [39] argued that evaluations should be as precise as possible, use checklists of specific skills and competencies rather than nebulous essay-type descriptions of principal behavior and include as many people as possible in the evaluation process. The predominant view, however, is that principal evaluations tend to rate and criticize the principal by emphasizing weaknesses rather than strengths [56].

The critics of graphs, checklists, scales, and charts contend that evaluation should be used as a method of improving principal activity and providing feedback to the results of the planned activity. This has the effect of moving principal evaluation away from its negative connotations into the area of positive experience.

According to Millman [32], research indicates that personnel evaluation can be divided into two categories:

1. Formative evaluation serves as means to help administrators improve their performance. The evaluation process involves ongoing communication between evaluators and evaluatees with the focus on improving the overall educational program.

2. Summative evaluation serves as an end judgment of administrators' performance on which to base an administrator's promotion, demotion, retention, or incentive pay rewards.

The professional literature clearly emphasizes the formative role. According to Gaslin [18], formative evaluation ensures that the major goal of administrator evaluation is "To improve performance in

the variety of roles which member of the administrative team might plan in instructional leadership and building management." Similarly, Redfern [41] argues that evaluation becomes more productive when the purpose of evaluation is the improvement of performance instead of merely rating performance. Licata [25] believes that evaluation is a data gathering system by which the organization can make necessary judgmental decisions about its educational leadership personnel.

Management by objective is a key component in many school district evaluation systems. A recent ERS survey [42] indicates that 84 percent of school districts now use performance objectives as part of their evaluation program. The American Association of School Administrators [1] strongly endorses the approach of using goals and objectives in an evaluation program. An evaluation by objectives program typically involves a number of steps. First, an annual conference between the evaluator and evaluatee takes place at which time district goals are discussed and set. The evaluator and evaluatee then agree on performance goals. The evaluator rates the evaluatee on the accomplishment of the goals. Self-evaluation is encouraged. Formative evaluation conferences are held throughout the year for the purpose of checking on the progress of the evaluatee towards accomplishment of his or her goals. Finally, a summative conference is held to discuss the performance of the individual based upon their attainment of the pre-established goals.

One version of an evaluation by objective programs typified by the Leadership Excellence Achievement Plan (LEAP) of Redfern and

Hersey [40] agrees on the job content, identifies performance levels, reviews progress during the year, and assesses the result at the end of the year.

A more "product" oriented evaluation by objectives system suggested by Seifert [46] gives more credence to the level of achievement of the stated objective rather than improving performance. Stow and Manatt [47] strongly recommend that early in the process of developing procedures, the district decide whether to emphasize performance, objectives attainment, or both. The failure of many administrator evaluation systems, they claim, can be traced to emphasizing performance, but not objectives attainment.

Manatt [30] indicates that the best evaluation systems "stress both how principals perform and what they accomplish." Manatt continues by observing that "top-notch evaluations involve some kind of follow-up that sets goals for future performance. Evaluation isn't a product--it's a process." Manatt's [30] process includes an extensive 15 step performance evaluation cycle that includes establishing the evaluation plan, the formative evaluation cycle involving a self-evaluation, goal setting conference, formal observation, and post-observation conference; a supervisory observation is also an important part of the cycle. Finally, steps 11-15 are the summations analyzing data, writing a summative report, holding a summative conference, and establishing job improvement targets.

Data Collection

Anderson [3] indicates that collecting information or sampling performance through personalized observation is an important phase in the evaluation process. The data-collection phase, along with communicating results, is at the crux of the "formative" approach to evaluation according to Valentine [51]. Valentine [51] contends that the formative phase of collecting information "is the most significant series of events in an evaluation process designed to promote personal growth and organizational development." Valentine [51] points out that at least "90 percent of the time and energy given to evaluation activities should be made in the formative phase."

Unfortunately, many principals report that they often do not know what information is collected on their performance nor how it is obtained. Harrison and Peterson [22] found that only half of the principals they surveyed "claimed to know how the superintendent accumulated information upon which they based their evaluations." According to Anderson [3], it is therefore important that school districts not only develop and adopt sophisticated collection strategies, but that they also communicate to principals who, what, when, where, and how information will be collected.

In a survey by Robert Buser and Freddie Banks, Jr. [10] of elected heads of state affiliates of several national administrator and teacher associations, all groups of respondents overwhelmingly supported the superintendent as the primary person responsible for observation and evaluation activities (over 90 percent). According

to Buser and Banks [10], superintendents or supervisors should collect data through on-site visits where they shadow the principal for extended periods, recording specific statements and actions made. They should also observe principals performing specific job functions. Faculty meetings, parent conferences, teacher observation and evaluation conferences, and public meetings all can be observed for the purpose of collecting information and evaluating performance.

Valentine [51] recommends that the evaluator schedule a preconference or at least make contact with the principal prior to "scheduled observations" to agree upon the "time and specific tasks to be observed". In addition, he suggests that evaluators make "unscheduled or informal observations", to provide opportunities for observing more "typicality" in principal performance than with the scheduled observation.

Although it appears that the direct observation and supervision of principals by superiors are critical for obtaining reliable data, many superintendents do not directly observe the performance of principals. In their study, Duke and Stiggins [13] found that most evidence for principal evaluation derives only from superiors' perceptions of how principals perform versus directly observing them. Duke and Stiggins [13] speculate that the reason for why good evidence is missing may simply be the fact that supervisors of principals lack the time needed to conduct thorough observations. They conclude by recommending the use of other school personnel in collecting useful information on principal performance.

Valentine [51] suggests artifacts as other important pieces of information that should be collected to assess principal performance. Student test scores; written evidence of progress toward a principal's personal, school, and district goals; principal awards and recognitions; newspaper clippings; newsletters; and logs of how principals spend their time are examples of artifacts that can be used as a part of the collection process. Valentine [51] recommends that principals need to "know prior to the beginning of the school year the types of artifact data that will be required so arrangements can be made to collect those data." Valentine [51] also recommends that supervisors discuss artifacts with principals during conferences throughout the year, as well as at the end of the year.

Using Information

Analyzing, interpreting, and making decisions from the information gathered during the data collection phase of principal evaluation are the least important aspects of the evaluation process. To use information effectively, it is vital that supervisors and principals communicate about the information collected throughout the year, not just a summary report at year's end. Bolton [6] notes, "There is not much doubt that the process of communication is extremely important." Bolton [6] suggests that far too often there is a tendency for the evaluator and the principal to avoid contact after data are collected and to analyze, interpret, and make decisions before a conference with each other.

Conferences between supervisors and principals are an important means for communicating feedback on performance to principals. To be effective, conferences must be carefully planned, purposeful, and completed as soon after data collection as possible. Valentine [51] suggests that effective conferences are based on the internal motivation for the improvement by the principal, not external motivation by the evaluator. Thus, a skilled evaluator "promotes this internal motivation by involving the principal in the discussion and promoting self-assessment of skills through inquiry, probing questions, and comments." Communicating both positive and negative feedback is important if principals are to improve, according to Harrison and Peterson [22].

Valentine [51] recommends that only after ongoing communication throughout the school year between the evaluator and the principal should final summative reports be written and decisions made about the next steps to be taken. Valentine [51] even suggests that principals and evaluators identify areas for improvement and develop growth plans during the year, not just at the final evaluation conference.

Valentine [51] concludes by indicating that with summative information in hand, goals, objectives, and final growth plans should be developed, starting the cycle of evaluation over again.

Problems Regarding Evaluation

One of the more basic problems regarding evaluation of principals is how one defines and perceives evaluation. Bolton [6, pp. 28-29] defines evaluation as "the process of making judgments regarding the value or goodness of certain events, behaviors, or results of behaviors in light of certain agreed upon or well-understood and predetermined objectives." There are several implications of such a definition.

First, it is dynamic or involves movement, as indicated in the term process. This movement is continuous and cyclical, allowing one to provide feedback in an iterative fashion. Such feedback stimulates correction before major damage is done and allows new plans to be made.

Second, it provides direction, in the form of predetermined objectives. The underlying assumption of this part of the definition is that the organization is purposeful and that specifying purpose is beneficial to the organization.

Third, the value system for making judgments regarding events, behavior, or results of behavior is open and available rather than hidden. This openness is provided by the predetermined objectives that are either agreed upon or at least well-understood by those involved. No surprises should occur when such a definition is in operation.

Fourth, there is interest in situations, processes, and outcomes. To evaluate one of these without the other two will not allow decisions to be made about adjustments in goals, implementation, or

procedures.

Fifth, the making of judgments occurs late in the process. Unless adequate measurement, analysis, and interpretation occur prior to making value judgments, there will be errors and poor results. Snap judgments made on inadequate information or hearsay may give one a tremendous sense of importance as a feeling that intuitive processes are working adequately, but such activities are not permitted by this definition.

Another major problem regarding evaluation of a general nature concerns the political nature of the educational administration task. In many situations, survival in a job may depend more on circumstances than on the capability of the principal. Griffiths [21] believes that only the most astute school principals survive through a finely attuned political acumen. He states:

It is clear that the faculties of universities really do not want presidents and deans, that public school teachers do not want principals or superintendents, but that these administrators are necessary if the institutions are going to operate [21].

A third problem relates to measurement difficulties that complicate the evaluation process. Kelber [24] identifies education as one of the six hardest areas to manage by objectives and one of the major reasons is the difficulty of measuring outcome. Bolton [6] indicates that research has shown that training in workshop situations helps to prevent errors of measurement such as similarity (to oneself), contrast, halo, and first impression errors.

A final problem that Bolton [6, p. 30] discusses relates to one's perception of motivation. "What causes a given individual to act or not to act?" Some of the procedures for evaluation of administrators depend on what might be described as a cognitive theory of motivation. This theory, according to Bolton [6], places emphasis on individuals knowing what they want, knowing the approximate effort that will be needed to acquire what they want and to overcome obstacles along the way, and knowing the values that will be attached to the outcome of their efforts. Under these circumstances, individuals can make decisions about their own actions; therefore, they may be motivated to do certain things.

Summary

The literature review leaves little doubt of the importance of principal evaluation in today's public schools. A well-designed evaluation program has the capability of pointing out strengths and weaknesses in principal performance. Through an effective formalized evaluation process, a building principal can have the opportunity to know what must be done to improve.

Effective schools cannot be separated from effective principals. Effective principals are predictable. They establish positions that are consistent with organizational values. They make these positions known, and remain relentlessly committed to them. They stay the course over the long run. Effective principals plan, monitor, model, reinforce, and confront.

Studies are clear that although principal evaluation is difficult, it is necessary. School systems should have a well-defined, cyclical evaluation system in place. The research indicates that the essential elements of a formal evaluation system include the following:

(1) knowledge of the supervisor's expectation; (2) formal observation; (3) a face-to-face conference with the supervisor following the observation; (4) written feedback concerning his/her job performance; (5) completion of a summative evaluation instrument at the conclusion of the evaluation cycle; (6) holding a summative evaluation conference; and (7) utilizing job targets to improve performance and as a basis for the next evaluation cycle.

Evaluation of all public school personnel was mandated in the state of Iowa in 1987. While each district is free to develop their own procedures and evaluation instrument, any person who is responsible for evaluating personnel in an Iowa school district must have completed a 30-hour course in evaluation training by July 1, 1989. This training should provide Iowa administrators the continuity and consistency that will provide for a more reliable and valid evaluation process.

CHAPTER III. METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The intent of this chapter is to present the methodology of this study. The chapter describes the design of the study, the population, instrumentation, data collection, and data analysis.

Design of the Study

The purposes of this study were fourfold. First, the study was designed to describe principal evaluation practices and formal written policies and procedures currently in place in the K-12 public school districts in the state of Iowa. Second, the study was conducted to compare those policies and procedures with the current recommendations found in literature. Third, it was hoped that the study would yield recommendations that should prove helpful in the development of principal evaluation practices and procedures for the K-12 school districts in the state of Iowa. Finally, the study was designed to compare principal evaluation practices and procedures as they relate to the size of the school district.

In order to address the first purpose, information describing evaluation practices and formal written procedures used in principal evaluation in the K-12 school districts of Iowa was gathered in two ways. A randomly selected principal from each of the 433 school districts in the state of Iowa was asked to send copies of the district written procedures governing principal evaluation. These

data were analyzed through the use of a document analysis check sheet. The check sheet was developed from a review of the literature (Appendix E). To supplement the data from the documents, the principal was sent a questionnaire to determine the actual practices of principal evaluation in his/her school district. The data from the questionnaire were analyzed through an examination of the frequencies and percentages.

The data gathered from the questionnaire were applied to address research question numbers one, two, three, four, and five. Formal written procedures for principal evaluation were identified from the document analysis check sheets, and actual district practices for principal evaluation were identified from the questionnaires. The data were then analyzed to determine whether there was a difference between the formal written procedures for principal evaluation and the actual practice in use in the K-12 school districts of Iowa.

An extensive review of literature concerning principal evaluation was conducted. Most of the literature reviewed was published after 1980. This date was selected because since 1980 there has been a wealth of research identifying the principal as the most important person in effective schools. The effective schools research is directly linked to the current emphasis on formal principal evaluation. The second and third purposes of the study were accomplished by comparing the current research on principal evaluation with what is currently taking place in the K-12 school districts of Iowa.

Recommendations for improved principal evaluation were made as a result of these comparisons.

Population

The population of this study consisted of principals from all the public K-12 school districts in the state of Iowa. The 1988-1989 Iowa Educational Directory was the source used to make the selections. Data were solicited from one randomly selected principal from each of the 433 school districts in Iowa. Principals were selected by alternating between secondary and elementary principals by district as listed in the 1988-1989 Iowa Educational Directory. There was an attempt to select a proportionate number of secondary and elementary school principals according to the total state make-up of such positions. Approximately one-half of those principals selected were elementary principals, and one-half were secondary principals (see Table 1). The principals were asked to send copies of the written procedures used for principal evaluation in their school district and to complete a questionnaire describing the principal evaluation practices in use in their particular school district.

Instrumentation

A questionnaire was developed to supplement the documents collected from each school district as well as to collect data that might not be included in the documents. The questionnaire was developed through a review of the literature. A draft of the

Table 1. Frequency of responses to administrative position held in Iowa school districts.

Current administrative position	N	Percent
Secondary principal	142	44.9
Elementary principal	139	44.0
K-12 principal	21	6.6
Principal/superintendent	13	4.1
Others	<u>1</u>	<u>.3</u>
Total	316	100.0

questionnaire was sent on July 10, 1989, to a review panel of six professional educators for evaluation (Appendix A). The review panel was made up of public school principals, public school superintendents, and university professors.

A cover letter and an evaluation form (Appendix B) were included with the questionnaire. Panel members were asked to use the evaluation form as a guide to review and critique the questionnaire. Comments and suggestions were specifically requested concerning format, directions, questions, clarity, response options, bias, and length. Reviewers were invited to write their observations on the evaluation form and/or directly on the questionnaire. The questionnaire was made up of 34 questions.

After receiving the draft copies of the questionnaires from members of the review panel, a final form of the questionnaire

consisting of 35 questions was developed (Appendix C). The questionnaire in its final form was professionally printed in preparation for distribution to the school districts.

Data Collection Procedures

The questionnaire was forwarded to the randomly selected principals in each of the 433 school districts in the state of Iowa. Names and addresses of the principals were taken from the 1988-1989 Iowa Educational Directory.

A letter of introduction (Appendix D) and a postage-paid, self-addressed envelope accompanied the questionnaire. The letter of introduction was co-signed by Dr. Jim Sweeney, advisor to the researcher (Appendix D).

The time frame for the data collection began with the first mailing on October 1, 1989. Four weeks later, 316 questionnaires had been received, or 72.9 percent of the school districts in the state of Iowa. Written procedures from 100 districts had been received. Thus 23 percent of the 433 selected principals from Iowa school districts sent copies of their district's written principal evaluation procedures. As a follow-up, 28 additional school districts were contacted by phone on November 6 and were asked to send copies of their written procedures for principal evaluation. The 28 principals from the selected districts had indicated on their returned questionnaires that their districts had written procedures for principal evaluation. However, they had failed to return the

written procedures at the time the questionnaire was returned. Eighteen additional written procedures were received as a result of the follow-up request. Therefore, a final total of 118 school districts, or 27 percent of the K-12 school districts in Iowa, submitted written principal evaluation procedures for this study. This represents 37 percent of the total number of questionnaires returned by the selected principals.

Data Analysis

The data collected through the mailed questionnaire were reported by frequency and percentage of responses. Data were categorized and reported in tables in Chapter IV. A document analysis check sheet (Appendix E) was used to record the data extracted from the written documents received from the school districts.

After all data were gathered, the school districts' principal evaluation procedures were compared to the actual practices for principal evaluation to determine if a discrepancy existed between what was supposed to occur and what actually did take place for principal evaluation in the K-12 school districts of Iowa. A descriptive analysis was used to determine if a discrepancy existed between the expected and actual procedures and practices in seven essential areas for effective principal evaluation in the K-12 school districts of Iowa. An additional analysis was used to determine if the discrepancy between principal evaluation procedures and

practices vary as they relate to the size of the school district. Schools were divided into those of under 1000 students and those of over 1000 students. This information was then compared to the recommendations identified in the literature. Suggestions for improvements as a result of discrepancies found between the literature review, written procedures, and actual practices were made.

CHAPTER IV. ANALYSIS OF DATA

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to present the analysis of data collected from the K-12 school districts in the state of Iowa. Data were gathered through a questionnaire sent to a randomly selected principal in each of the 433 school districts in the state. Each principal was also requested to send a copy of their district's written principal evaluation procedures. Questionnaires were received from 72.9 percent of the 433 school districts. One hundred and eighteen districts returned copies of their district's evaluation procedures.

The data analysis is organized according to the research questions presented in Chapter I. Frequency distributions and percentages for questionnaire items are presented in Tables 2 through 26. A descriptive analysis was used for Hypotheses 1 through 7, and a statistical analysis was used for Hypothesis 8.

Descriptive Data

Research question 1 - To what extent do Iowa K-12 school districts have formally written board policies covering principal evaluation procedures?

Responses concerning to what extent Iowa K-12 school districts have formally written board policies covering principal evaluation procedures are presented in Table 2. Two hundred and forty-six or 78 percent reported they had written board policies covering principal evaluation procedures. Only 56 or 18 percent of the

Table 2. Frequency of principals reporting having written policy for principal evaluation in Iowa school districts

Principal evaluation policy in district	N	Percent
Yes	246	77.8
No	56	17.7
Don't know	11	3.5
No response	<u>3</u>	<u>.9</u>
Total	316	100.0

316 responses indicated that they did not have policies covering principal evaluation procedures. Fewer schools have written procedures in place (Table 3). One hundred and seventy-nine different principals reported that their school district had written procedures

Table 3. Frequency of principals having written procedures for principal evaluation in Iowa school districts

Written procedures for principal evaluation	N	Percent
Yes	179	56.6
No	119	37.7
Don't know	14	4.4
No response	<u>4</u>	<u>1.3</u>
Total	316	100.0

for principal evaluation. One hundred and nineteen or 38 percent indicated that their district did not have written procedures. Fourteen or 4 percent of the principals did not know if their district had written procedures.

Research question 2 - What practices for the evaluation of principals are in place in the K-12 school districts of Iowa?

a. Have principals been involved in the development of principal evaluation procedures in the K-12 school districts of Iowa?

Only 55 percent of the 316 principals that were surveyed had input into the development of the principal evaluation policy in their district. One hundred and one or 32 percent of the responses answered "no" to this question (Table 4). Thirty-five principals reported that they didn't know if principals had input into the development of principal evaluation policies in their school districts.

Table 4. Frequency of principals having input into the development of principal evaluation policy

Input into development of evaluation policy/procedures	N	Percent
Yes	174	55.1
No	101	32.0
Don't know	35	11.1
No response	<u>6</u>	<u>1.9</u>
Total	316	100.0

When principals were asked when their school district's principal evaluation policy was last reviewed or updated, 143 or 45 percent of those reporting indicated that their policy was last reviewed or updated within the last two years. Eighty-four or 27 percent of the principals responding indicated they didn't know when their district's policies for principal evaluation were last reviewed and/or updated (Table 5).

Table 5. Frequency of when school district's principal evaluation policies were last reviewed and/or updated

Principal evaluation policy last reviewed or updated	N	Percent
Within last 2 years	143	45.3
Within last 3-5 years	59	18.7
Over 5 years	20	6.3
Don't know	84	26.6
No response	<u>10</u>	<u>3.2</u>
Total	316	100.0

b. Is an evaluation instrument used?

Table 6 provides data relative to this question. Two hundred and thirty-five or 74 percent of the principals responded that an evaluation instrument was used in their school district. Fifty-four or 17 percent of the principals said they did not have an evaluation

Table 6. Frequency of principals reporting the use of an evaluation instrument for principal evaluation in Iowa school districts

Evaluation instrument used	N	Percent
Yes	235	74.4
No	54	17.1
Don't know	15	4.7
No response	<u>12</u>	<u>3.8</u>
Total	316	100.0

instrument in use in their school district. Fifteen or 5 percent indicated that they didn't know if an instrument was used for principal evaluation in their school district.

c. Who are the evaluators?

Table 7 provides data concerning who evaluates principals in the K-12 school districts of Iowa. Two hundred and eighty-three principals or 90 percent of those responding said that superintendents formally evaluated principals in their school districts. Nine or 3 percent said that assistant superintendents evaluated principals, and nine or 3 percent said "other" when asked who formally evaluates principals in their school districts. Eleven or 4 percent indicated that "no one" formally evaluates principals. Two principals said they didn't know who formally evaluated the principals in their school district.

Table 7. Frequency of who does formal principal evaluation in Iowa school districts

Who does formal evaluation	N	Percent
Superintendent	283	89.7
Assistant superintendent	9	2.8
Other	9	2.8
No one	11	3.5
Don't know	2	.6
No response	<u>2</u>	<u>.6</u>
Total	316	100.0

d. How often are principals evaluated?

When respondents were asked how often principals were evaluated in the K-12 school districts of Iowa, 234 or 74 percent said at least annually. Twenty-three or 7 percent indicated that they were never evaluated. Eleven principals or 4 percent said they were evaluated once every two years. Sixteen principals or 5 percent of the respondents didn't know how often principals were evaluated in their school district (Table 8).

e. Does principal evaluation practice include observation and

f. How often are principals formally observed?

Tables 9 and 10 provide data relative to the practice of observation in the principal evaluation process. One hundred and eighty-three or 58 percent of the respondents indicated that no formal observation took place during their evaluation. Nineteen or

Table 8. Principals' responses to the frequency of principal evaluation in Iowa school districts

Occurrence of complete evaluation cycle for principals	N	Percent
None at all	23	7.3
Annually	234	74.1
Once every two years	11	3.5
Once every three years	6	1.9
Other	6	1.9
Don't know	16	5.1
No response	<u>20</u>	<u>6.3</u>
Total	316	100.0

Table 9. Frequency of the practice of formal observation during principal evaluation in Iowa school districts

Formal observation included in practice of principal evaluation	N	Percent
No formal observation	183	57.9
Once yearly	19	6.0
Twice yearly	18	5.7
Other	37	11.7
Don't know	46	14.6
No response	<u>13</u>	<u>4.1</u>
Total	316	100.0

Table 10. Percent of principal evaluation based upon informal observation in Iowa school districts

Percent of evaluation based upon informal observation	N	Percent
0 percent	43	13.7
5-25 percent	94	29.7
26-50 percent	87	27.5
51-75 percent	11	3.5
76-100 percent	19	6.0
No response	<u>62</u>	<u>19.6</u>
Total	316	100.0

6 percent said that they were formally evaluated once yearly, and 18 or 6 percent indicated that they were formally evaluated two times each year. Forty-six of 15 percent said that they didn't know if they were formally observed during the evaluation process. Table 10 shows that many principals believe that a large share of their overall evaluation is determined by informal observation. Eighty-seven or 28 percent of the respondents said that informal observation accounted for between 25 and 50 percent of their overall evaluation. Another 30 respondents or approximately 10 percent of those surveyed believe that 50 to 100 percent of their overall evaluation is determined by informal observation.

g. Does the evaluation practice include setting performance goals?

Table 11 addresses the practice of establishing performance goals as part of the evaluation process. One hundred and sixty-one respondents or 54 percent of those surveyed indicated that they did set performance goals as part of the evaluation process in their school district. One hundred and twelve or 35 percent said that no they did not set performance goals. Twenty-four or 8 percent of the respondents said they didn't know if performance goals were set as part of the evaluation practice in their school district.

h. Is the principal aware of the criteria that will be used in his or her evaluation?

Tables 12-14 provide data about the use of criteria for principal evaluation. Table 12 shows that 214 respondents or 68 percent of the principals said that written criteria were used in the principal evaluation process. Sixty-two or 20 percent indicated that written

Table 11. Frequency that performance goals are established as part of the principal evaluation practice in Iowa school districts

Performance goals established as part of the evaluation practice	N	Percent
Yes	161	54.2
No	112	35.4
Don't know	24	7.6
No response	<u>19</u>	<u>6.0</u>
Total	316	100.0

Table 12. Frequency of the use of written criteria in the evaluation of principals in Iowa school districts

Are written criteria used in principal evaluation	N	Percent
Yes	214	67.7
No	62	19.6
Don't know	31	9.8
No response	<u>9</u>	<u>2.8</u>
Total	316	100.0

Table 13. Frequency of written criteria for principal evaluation being part of board policy in Iowa school districts

Criteria for principal evaluation are in board policy	N	Percent
Yes	120	38.0
No	162	51.3
No response	<u>34</u>	<u>10.8</u>
Total	316	100.0

Table 14. Frequency of written criteria for principal evaluation being included in the evaluation instrument in Iowa school districts

Criteria for principal evaluation are in the evaluation instrument	N	Percent
Yes	205	64.9
No	77	24.4
No response	<u>34</u>	<u>10.8</u>
Total	316	100.0

criteria were not used in the principal evaluation process. Thirty-one or 10 percent did not know. One hundred and sixty-two or 51 percent of those principals surveyed indicated that written criteria for principal evaluation were not a part of board policy. One hundred and twenty principals or 38 percent said that written criteria were part of the board policy (Table 13). Table 14 reveals that 205 principals or 65 percent of the respondents said that the written criteria for principal evaluation were in the evaluation instrument itself. Seventy-seven or 11 percent of those surveyed indicated that written criteria were not included in the evaluation instrument.

i. Does the evaluation practice include a face-to-face post-observation conference?

Since only 64 or 20 percent of the total respondents indicated that the formal observation was part of the evaluation process in their school district, only 64 responses were possible for the

question, "Does the evaluation practice include a face-to-face post-observation conference?" Fifty-four principals or 84 percent indicated that they did have a post-observation conference. Only nine or 14 percent said that they did not have a post-observation conference (Table 15). Therefore, in most cases when a formal observation occurs, a face-to-face conference between the supervisor and the principal is likely. Table 16 shows data that describe the worth of the conference. That is, is the post-observation conference productive or useless? How does the principal evaluate the value of the comments made by his or her supervisor? Thirty-three or 52 percent of the respondents indicated that their post-observation conferences were "very productive". Seventeen principals or 27 percent said that their post observation conference was "somewhat productive". Only three or 5 percent of the respondents said that the post observation conference was "not very

Table 15. Frequency of the practice of holding a face-to-face post-observation conference between the evaluator and the principal in Iowa school districts

Face-to-face conference following a formal observation	N	Percent
Yes	54	84.4
No	9	14.1
Don't know	<u>1</u>	<u>1.6</u>
Total	64 ^a	100.0

^aOnly 64 respondents indicated formal observation as part of their evaluation practices (see Table 9).

Table 16. Principals reported description of the post-observation conference in Iowa school districts

Description of post observation conference	N	Percent
Very productive	33	51.5
Somewhat productive	17	26.5
Not very productive	3	4.6
No response	<u>11</u>	<u>17.4</u>
Total	64 ^a	100.0

^aOnly 64 respondents indicated formal observation as part of their evaluation practices (see Table 9).

productive". These data would strongly suggest that a post-observation conference is usually somewhat or very productive. Unfortunately, the total number of supervisors that formally observe their principals is small in the K-12 school districts of Iowa.

j. In practice, does the evaluator meet with the principal to review the overall evaluation?

When principals were asked if their district's principal evaluation practice included holding a summary conference with their supervisor at the conclusion of the evaluation cycle, 240 or 76 percent of the respondents said yes. Only 39 or 12 percent of the principals indicated that they did not have a summary evaluation conference at the conclusion of the evaluation cycle (Table 17). When principals were asked to rate the worth of their summary conference, 97 or

Table 17. Frequency of the practice of holding a summative conference in Iowa school districts

Summary of conference between principal and evaluator	N	Percent
Yes	240	75.7
No	39	12.3
Don't know	18	5.7
No response	<u>19</u>	<u>6.0</u>
Total	316	100.0

31 percent of the respondents indicated that it was very worthwhile (Table 18). One hundred and twelve or 35 percent of the principals said that their summary conference was somewhat worthwhile. Only

Table 18. Frequency of principals' responses concerning the value of the summary conference in Iowa school districts

Principals' evaluation of summary conference	N	Percent
Very worthwhile	97	30.7
Somewhat worthwhile	112	35.4
Not very worthwhile	20	6.3
A waste of time	6	1.9
No response	<u>81</u>	<u>25.6</u>
Total	316	100.0

20 or 6 percent said that the conference was not very worthwhile, and six or 2 percent said that the summary conference with their supervisor was a waste of time.

k. Does the evaluation include written comments to the principal?

Data regarding the number of principals that reported receiving written feedback or comments during their evaluation can be found in Table 19. Two hundred and twenty-five respondents or 71 percent of those surveyed said that they did receive written comments or feedback during the principal evaluation practice in their school district. Fifty-four or 17 percent indicated that they did not receive written comments, and 18 or 6 percent said they did not know if they received written comments during the evaluation process.

Table 19. Frequency of the evaluation providing written comments or feedback to the principal in Iowa school districts

Written feedback	N	Percent
Yes	225	71.2
No	54	17.1
Don't know	18	5.7
No response	<u>19</u>	<u>6.0</u>
Total	316	100.0

1. What is the purpose of principal evaluation?

When principals were asked what the purpose of principal evaluation was in their particular school district, the responses varied considerably. Table 20 reviews the data that was collected regarding this question. The improvement of performance was selected most often by the principals in the K-12 school districts of Iowa as the purpose of principal evaluation. The second most often selected purpose was to provide a formal process for communicating strengths and weaknesses of the principal. Two hundred and thirty-seven or 75 percent of those surveyed selected this item as one of the purposes of principal evaluation. To comply with legal requirements was selected by 206 or 63 percent of the principals. The fourth most often selected purpose was to identify job improvement targets, which was chosen by 158 or 50 percent of the principals. Not surprisingly, only 36 or 11 percent said that the purpose of principal evaluation was to determine merit or performance pay.

m. In practice, are job targets developed as a result of the evaluation practice?

One hundred and sixty-nine or 54 percent of the respondents indicated that job targets were developed as a result of the evaluation process. One hundred and six or 34 percent of the principals said that job targets were not developed as a result of their evaluation process. Twenty-two or 7 percent were unsure (Table 21).

Table 20. Frequency of responses as to the purposes for principal evaluation in Iowa school districts^a

Purposes of principal evaluation	N	Percent
To improve performance	250	79.1
To provide a formal process for communicating strengths and weaknesses of the principal	237	75.0
To comply with legal requirements	206	63.3
To identify job improvement targets	158	50.0
To determine retention or dismissal	130	41.1
To determine merit or performance pay	36	11.4
No response	21	6.6

^aFrequencies numbers more than 316 because of multiple responses.

Table 21. Frequency of responses concerning the development of job targets in principal evaluation in Iowa school districts

Are job targets developed as a result of the evaluation process	N	Percent
Yes	169	53.5
No	106	33.5
Don't know	22	7.0
No response	<u>19</u>	<u>6.9</u>
Total	316	100.0

n. Do principals have job descriptions and are they used in the evaluation process?

Tables 22 and 23 provide data related to the use of job descriptions in the principal evaluation process in the K-12 school districts of Iowa. When principals were asked if they have job descriptions, 279 or 88 percent of the respondents said that they do (Table 22). Only 32 or 10 percent indicated that they did not have job descriptions and three or 9 percent did not know. When principals were asked to what extent their job description was used in their evaluation, 42 or 13 percent said to a little extent; 140 or 44 percent said to a medium extent; and 85 or 27 percent said to a large extent (Table 23). Thus, while most of the principals in the K-12 school districts of Iowa have job descriptions, the extent of the use for evaluation purposes vary substantially.

Table 22. Frequency of job descriptions for principals in Iowa school districts

Do principals have job descriptions in your school district	N	Percent
Yes	279	88.3
No	32	10.1
Don't know	3	.9
No response	<u>2</u>	<u>.6</u>
Total	316	100.0

Table 23. Frequency of principal evaluations based on the job description in Iowa school districts

Are principal evaluations based on job descriptions	N	Percent
To a little extent	42	13.3
To a medium extent	140	44.3
To a large extent	85	26.9
Not applicable	35	11.1
No response	<u>14</u>	<u>4.4</u>
Total	316	100.0

o. Who, other than the supervisors, has input into the principal evaluation process in the K-12 school districts of Iowa?

In several of the K-12 school districts in Iowa, other personnel are asked to provide data related to the overall evaluation of the principal. Table 24 summarizes the results of the data concerning who, other than the supervisor, has input into the evaluation of the principal. The most often checked response, other than no one, was self. Seventy-six or 24 percent of the principals indicated that they have input into their own evaluation. Sixty-two or 20 percent said that the school board members have input into their evaluation. Fifty-one or 16 percent reported that teachers are given input into their evaluation. Forty-two or 13 percent indicated that other administrators had input into their overall evaluations. Surprisingly,

Table 24. Frequency of who has input into principal evaluation in Iowa school districts^a

Who has input into principal evaluation	N	Percent
No one other than supervisor	155	49.1
Teachers	51	16.1
School board members	62	19.6
Self	76	24.1
Parents	23	7.3
Support staff	18	5.7
Other administrators	42	13.3
AEA personnel	3	.9
Students	11	3.5
No response	26	8.2

^aFrequencies number more than 316 because of multiple responses.

parents input was only indicated by 23 or 7 percent of the respondents. Parents, support staff, and AEA personnel were also mentioned by a few principals.

Table 25 describes data concerning the percent of what makes up principal evaluation and what it is based upon in the K-12 school districts of Iowa. One hundred and forty-four or 46 percent of the principals surveyed indicated that specific measurable outcomes make up 0 percent of their evaluation. Seventy-one or 22 percent said that specific measurable outcomes make up to 25 percent of their

Table 25. Frequency of principals' responses concerning the basis of principal evaluation in Iowa school districts

Percent of what principal evaluation is based upon	N	Percent
Specific measurable outcomes		
0 percent	144	45.6
1-25 percent	71	22.3
26-50 percent	33	10.5
51-75 percent	3	1.0
76-100 percent	3	1.0
No response	<u>62</u>	<u>19.6</u>
Total	316	100.0
Job description		
0 percent	77	24.4
1-25 percent	87	27.5
26-50 percent	71	22.5
51-75 percent	10	3.2
76-100 percent	9	2.8
No response	<u>62</u>	<u>19.6</u>
Total	316	100.0
Input from others		
0 percent	129	40.8
1-25 percent	106	33.5
26-50 percent	16	5.1
51-75 percent	0	.0
76-100 percent	3	1.0
No response	<u>62</u>	<u>19.6</u>
Total	316	100.0
Hearsay or rumor		
0 percent	184	58.2
1-25 percent	54	17.1
26-50 percent	13	4.1
51-75 percent	1	.3
76-100 percent	2	.6
No response	<u>62</u>	<u>19.6</u>
Total	316	100.0

Table 25. Continued

Percent of what principal evaluation is based upon	N	Percent
Personal relationship with evaluator		
0 percent	116	36.7
1-25 percent	88	27.8
26-50 percent	39	12.3
51-75 percent	3	1.0
76-100 percent	8	2.5
No response	<u>62</u>	<u>19.6</u>
Total	316	100.0
Formal observation		
0 percent	165	52.2
1-25 percent	68	21.5
26-50 percent	19	6.0
51-75 percent	1	.3
76-100 percent	1	.3
No response	<u>62</u>	<u>19.6</u>
Total	316	100.0

evaluation. Only six or 2 percent indicated that the principal evaluation is based from 51 to 100 percent on specific measurable outcomes. When principals were asked what percent of their evaluation is based upon job descriptions, 87 or 28 percent said from 1 to 25 percent. Seventy-seven or 24 percent indicated 0 percent. Only 19 or 6 percent indicated from 51 to 100 percent. One hundred and six or 34 percent of the respondents indicated that from 1-25 percent of their evaluation was based upon input from others. One hundred and twenty-nine or 41 percent indicated that input from them had 0 percent influence on their evaluation. One hundred and eighty-four or 58 percent of the principals said that their evaluation was based upon 0 percent from hearsay or rumor. Fifty-four or 17 percent said that up to 25 percent of what their evaluation is based upon comes from hearsay or rumor. Eighty-eight or 28 percent of the principals indicated that up to 25 percent of their evaluation is based upon the personal relationship with the evaluator. One hundred and sixty-five or 52 percent said that none of their evaluation was based upon formal observation.

When the principals were asked to assign a letter grade to the quality of the principal evaluation process in their particular school district, 28 or 9 percent indicated an "A", excellent. One hundred and ten or 35 percent gave a letter grade of "B", above average to the quality of the principal evaluation process in their school district. Ninety-four or 30 percent of the principals said their district evaluation process was average. Fifty-seven or 18

percent of the respondents indicated that the quality of the principal evaluation process in their school district was below average or failing (Table 26).

Table 26. Frequency of principals' responses concerning the quality of principal evaluation in Iowa school districts

What grade would you assign the principal evaluation process in your school district	N	Percent
"A" - Excellent	28	8.9
"B" - Above average	110	34.8
"C" - Average	94	29.7
"D" - Below average	37	11.7
"F" = Failing	20	6.3
No response	<u>27</u>	<u>8.5</u>
Total	316	100.0

Hypothesis Testing

Research question 3 - Are current principal evaluation practices consistent with the written procedures in the K-12 school districts of Iowa?

Hypotheses 1 through 7 are related to research question 3. Seven elements of principal evaluation procedures and practices are analyzed to determine if a discrepancy exists between the written procedure and the actual practice in use in the K-12 school districts of Iowa. A descriptive analysis is used to determine if a discrepancy exists.

Hypothesis 1. There is a discrepancy between the written procedure for formally reviewing the performance expectations of the principal during a pre-cycle evaluation conference and the actual practice in use in the K-12 school districts of Iowa.

The descriptive data in Table 27 indicates that a discrepancy does exist between the written procedure for formally reviewing the performance expectation of the principal during a pre-cycle evaluation conference and the actual practice in use in the K-12 school districts of Iowa.

Only 13 or 11 percent of the documents submitted included a provision that called for the supervisor to hold a pre-evaluation conference and to discuss expectations for the upcoming school year. Slightly over half of the principals whose policy included this provision actually had the practice in use in their school district. Six or 46 percent of the principals surveyed indicated that this practice was not in use in their school district. Thus, the discrepancy exists that while the policy may call for a pre-evaluation conference between the supervisor and the principal, almost one-half of those districts surveyed did not have the practice in use.

Hypothesis 2. There is a discrepancy between the written procedure for formal observation for principal evaluation and the actual practice in use in the K-12 school districts of Iowa.

Table 28 indicates that there is a very small number of documents that actually include a procedure for formally observing the principal during the evaluation process. The data show a small

Table 27. Frequency of the written procedure for formally reviewing the performance expectations of the principal during a pre-cycle evaluation conference and the actual practice in use in Iowa school districts

Actual practice in use	Written procedure for pre-evaluation conference	
	N	Percent
Expectations discussed during pre-evaluation conference	7	53.8
No pre-evaluation conference	6	46.2
Don't know	<u>0</u>	<u>0.0</u>
Totals	13	100.0

Table 28. Frequency of the written procedure for formal observation of the principal during the evaluation cycle, and the actual practice in use in Iowa school districts

Actual practice in use	Written procedure for formal observation	
	N	Percent
Formal observation	5	71.4
No formal observation	1	14.3
Don't know	<u>1</u>	<u>14.3</u>
Totals	7	100.0

discrepancy between the written procedure for formal observation and the actual practice in use in the K-12 school districts of Iowa.

Seven actual documents or 6 percent of those submitted included formal observation as a part of the principal evaluation process. Over 70 percent of the principals whose policy included formal observation actually had the practice in use. Almost one-third of the principals either indicated that they did not have the practice of formal observation in use, or they did not know if the practice was in use. Thus, while the total number of districts utilizing formal observation appears to be very low, those districts whose written policy included this procedure were very likely to have the practice in use as well. And, while a discrepancy of 14 percent still exists among the principals whose policy included formal observation, this is a relatively low number, and we cannot draw a solid conclusion from the data.

Hypothesis 3. There is a discrepancy between the written procedures for holding a post-observation conference for principal evaluation and the actual practice in use in the K-12 school districts of Iowa.

The data in Table 29 indicate that a discrepancy between the written procedures/policies for holding a post-observation conference and the actual practice in use in the K-12 school districts of Iowa does not exist.

Only three or 2.5 percent of the 118 documents submitted included the provision for holding a post-observation conference. This small

number is not surprising since only seven policies included formal observation as an element of principal evaluation. One hundred percent of the principals whose policies included the element of a post-observation conference had the practice in use in their school districts. Thus, no discrepancy was evident amongst the policies analyzed and the principals surveyed. Again, while valid conclusions cannot be drawn from the small number, it appears that if the element of holding a post-observation conference is included in the written policy, there is a very good chance that the practice will be in place as well.

Table 29. Frequency of the written procedure for holding a post-observation conference for principal evaluation and the actual practice in use in Iowa school districts

Actual practice in use	Written procedure for post-observation conference	
	N	Percent
Post-observation conference	3	100.0
No post-observation conference	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>
Totals	3	100.0

Hypothesis 4. There is a discrepancy between the written procedure for providing written feedback to principals for evaluation purposes and the actual practice in use in the K-12 school districts of Iowa.

The analysis of the descriptive data in Table 30 indicates that a discrepancy exists between the written procedure for providing written feedback to principals for evaluation purposes and the actual practice in use in the K-12 school districts of Iowa.

One hundred and one documents or 86 percent of those submitted included the element for providing written feedback from the supervisor to the principal during the evaluation process. Almost 85 percent of the principals whose policy included the element of providing written feedback actually had the practice in use in their school district. There was a discrepancy of almost 11 percent of the principals who indicated that while their districts' policy included this provision, the actual practice was not occurring. Five of the principals or 5 percent indicated that they didn't know if the practice of providing written feedback was in use in their school district.

Table 30. Frequency of the written procedure for providing written feedback to principals for evaluation purposes and the actual practice in use in Iowa school districts

Actual practice in use	Written procedure/policy for providing written feedback	
	N	Percent
Yes	85	84.2
No	11	10.9
Don't know	<u>5</u>	<u>5.0</u>
Totals	101	100.0

Hypothesis 5. There is a discrepancy between the written procedure for completing a summative evaluation instrument for principal evaluation and the actual practice in use in the K-12 school districts of Iowa.

Table 31 describes data that indicates that a discrepancy exists between the written procedure/policy for completing a summative evaluation instrument for principals and the actual practice in use in the K-12 school districts of Iowa.

One hundred and thirteen documents or 76 percent of those submitted included the provision for completing a summative evaluation instrument. Almost 90 percent of the principals whose evaluation document included the element of completing a summative evaluation instrument actually had the practice in use in their school district. Thus, a discrepancy was found from 10 principals or 9 percent who indicated that the practice was not in use, even though their policy called for the procedure. Another two principals or 2 percent were not sure if a summative evaluation instrument was used in their district.

Hypothesis 6. There is a discrepancy between the written procedures for holding a summative evaluation conference and the actual practice in use in the K-12 school districts of Iowa.

The descriptive data in Table 32 indicate that a discrepancy exists between the written procedure for holding a summative evaluation conference and the actual practice in use in the K-12 school districts of Iowa.

Table 31. Frequency of the written procedure for completing a summative evaluation instrument for principals and the actual practice in use in Iowa school districts

School practice in use	Written procedures for summative instrument	
	N	Percent
Yes	101	89.4
No	10	8.8
Don't know	<u>2</u>	<u>1.8</u>
Totals	113	100.0

Table 32. Frequency of the written procedure for holding a summative conference and the actual practice in use in Iowa school districts

Actual practice in use	Written procedure for summative evaluation conference	
	N	Percent
Yes	51	77.3
No	13	19.7
Don't know	<u>2</u>	<u>3.0</u>
Totals	66	100.0

Sixty-six or 56 percent of the documents submitted included a provision for a summative evaluation conference between the supervisor and the principal. Fifty-one or 77 percent of the principals from the districts from which the documents were submitted indicated that the practice of holding a summative evaluation conference was in use in their school districts. Almost 20 percent of the principals whose documents included the provision of holding a summative evaluation conference indicated that this practice was not in use in their school district. This discrepancy indicates that almost one-fifth of the districts are not following their policy and/or procedure for principal evaluation.

Hypothesis 7. There is a discrepancy between the written procedure for utilizing job targets for principal evaluation and the school practice in use in the K-12 school districts of Iowa.

The descriptive data in Table 33 clearly indicate that a discrepancy exists between the written procedure for using job targets for principal evaluation and the actual practice in use in the K-12 school districts of Iowa.

Sixty-eight documents or 58 percent of the total number of documents submitted included the written procedure for using job targets as part of the evaluation process. Forty-two principals from the districts that had this evaluation element in the document indicated that the actual practice was in use in their school districts. However, 24 or 35 percent of the principals whose policy included the element of using job targets did not have the practice in use in their

Table 33. Frequency of the written procedure for utilizing job targets for principal evaluation and the actual practice in use in Iowa school districts

Actual practice in use	Written procedure for use of job targets	
	N	Percent
Yes	42	61.8
No	24	35.3
Don't know	<u>2</u>	<u>2.9</u>
Totals	68	100.0

school district. Thus, over one-third of the districts had a discrepancy between what was written and the actual practice in place regarding an essential element of principal evaluation. Two principals indicated that they did not know whether job targets were used or not.

Research question 4 - Do principal evaluation practices vary as they relate to the size of the school district?

Hypothesis 8. There will be a decrease in the discrepancy between the written procedures for principal evaluation and the actual practices in use as the size of the school district increases in the K-12 school districts of Iowa.

School districts were divided into the size groups with those districts of 1000 or less recoded into group 1. School districts of

1001 or more were recoded into group 2. An independent analysis was done for each of the seven essential elements of principal evaluation. In only one of the seven elements was the hypothesis rejected at the .01 level of significance. That element was the written procedure for a post-observation conference for principal evaluation and the actual practice in use in the K-12 school districts of Iowa. Therefore, on only one occasion could it be shown that a significant difference existed between the mean discrepancy for the written procedure for a post-observation conference and the actual practice in use as it relates to school size. The mean discrepancy for group 1 (schools under 1000) enrollment was .9333 and the mean discrepancy for group 2 (schools of 1001 and over) was .4444. A +1 indicates that the element is not in the policy, but the practice is still in use in the school district. A 0 would indicate that there is no discrepancy; thus the evaluation element is in the written procedures and the practice is in use. Therefore, there was less of a discrepancy for the larger schools in group 2 than for those schools in group 1. In the other six essential elements for principal evaluation, there was no significant difference in the mean discrepancies as it related to size of the school district (Table 34).

Table 34. Analysis of variance with mean discrepancies between written procedures for principal evaluation and the actual practice in use as they relate to the enrollment in Iowa school districts

Elements of principal evaluation	Group ^a	Count	Mean	Standard deviation
Pre-cycle conference	1	81	.2346	.5760
	2	32	.3438	.4826
		N=113		
			F = .8990	
Formal observation	1	71	-.2535	.4696
	2	29	-.1724	.3844
		N=100		
			F = .6781	
Conference after observation	1	15	.9333	.2582
	2	9	.4444	.5270
		N=24		
			F = 9.372 ^b	
Written feedback	1	77	-.0519	.4558
	2	30	.0333	.3198
		N=107		
			F = .8789	
Summative evaluation instrument	1	82	-.0610	.3276
	2	33	-.0606	.3482
		N=115		
			F = .0000	

Summative evaluation conference	1	79	.2911	.7188
	2	32	.3125	.5351
		N=111		
			F = .0230	
Job improvement targets	1	78	.0128	.6545
	2	31	-.1290	.6187
		N=109		
			F = 1.0740	

^aEnrollment group 1 = 0-1000 students; group 2 = 1001 and up.

^bIndicates significance at .01 level.

Document Analysis

Documents collected from the K-12 school districts of Iowa concerning principal evaluation were analyzed using the document analysis check sheet found in Appendix E. The researcher determined whether the document was board policy, written procedure, or an evaluation instrument. The policies, procedures, and instruments were analyzed to determine whether the seven essential elements for principal evaluation were included in the individual district documents. Principals were expressly asked to submit copies of their written procedures for principal evaluation in their K-12 school district. Only 118 principals sent back some kind of document. As you can see in Table 35, only 27 or 23 percent of those sending back documents sent written procedures. Thirty-two or 27 percent sent written policies, while 59 or 50 percent sent back principal evaluation instruments. One hundred and ninety-eight or 63 percent of the total number of principals that responded to the questionnaire did not submit any document concerning principal evaluation from their school district. The researcher can only speculate on the reasons for this poor response. First, the reason could simply be that no written policy, procedure or instrument existed. Since the researcher requested only the written procedure for principal evaluation, the definition alone may have caused some principals to not understand what was wanted. It would appear that many districts do not have written procedures for principal evaluation. A written policy and/or evaluation instrument are not the same thing as a written procedure

Table 35. Frequency of the type of document submitted for principal evaluation procedures in Iowa school districts

Document submitted	N	Percent	Valid percent
Policy	32	10.1	27.1
Procedure	27	8.5	22.9
Evaluation instrument	59	18.7	50.0
No documents submitted	<u>198</u>	<u>62.7</u>	—
Totals	316	100.0	100.0

for principal evaluation. In some instances, the procedure for principal evaluation is included in the policy or evaluation instrument. Secondly, several principals indicated that they did not have access to their written procedures, and thus, they could not submit them. Finally, some may have just chose not to send back their evaluation procedures because of time, effort, or maybe lack of interest in the project.

The documents were analyzed to determine if certain elements regarding evaluation practices existed within the written narrative of the procedure, policy, or instrument. Only 118 documents were received. Only 14 or 12 percent of the documents submitted indicated that the expectations for the principals' performance were to be discussed at the beginning of each evaluation cycle (Table 36). Interestingly enough, many of the principals indicated that expectations were discussed at the beginning of their evaluation cycle,

Table 36. Frequency of documents that include the procedure of discussing the supervisor's expectations with the principal in a pre-evaluation conference in Iowa school districts

Expectations discussed at beginning of evaluation cycle	N	Percent	Valid percent
Yes	14	4.4	11.9
No	104	32.9	88.1
Missing data	<u>198</u>	<u>62.7</u>	<u>--</u>
Totals	316	100.0	100.0

even though it wasn't required in the district's written document.

Data about the inclusion of formal observation in the written documents submitted for principal evaluation procedures are summarized in Table 37. One hundred and eleven or 94 percent of the 118 documents submitted had no formal observation in the actual procedures. Only two documents had one formal observation included in the written procedure, while one document indicated twice yearly. Four documents or 3 percent had some other number of formal observation indicated in their district's principal evaluation document.

Only four documents or 3 percent required a post-observation conference. This figure is not alarming due to the fact that only seven documents required some form of formal observation. Many principals indicated that they are observed informally often and that they meet with their supervisors informally on a regular basis

Table 37. Frequency of documents that include a procedure for formal observation of the principal in Iowa school districts

Formal observation in procedure	N	Percent	Valid percent
No formal observation	111	35.1	94.1
Once yearly	2	.6	1.7
Twice yearly	1	.3	.8
Other	4	1.3	3.4
Missing data	<u>198</u>	<u>62.7</u>	<u>-</u>
Totals	316	100.0	100.0

Table 38. Frequency of documents that include a procedure for a post-observation conference with the principal in Iowa school districts

Post-observation conference in written procedure	N	Percent	Valid percent
Yes	4	1.3	3.4
No	114	36.1	96.9
Missing data	<u>196</u>	<u>62.7</u>	<u>--</u>
Totals	316	100.0	100.0

(Table 38).

The fourth essential element for principal evaluation is the procedure for providing written feedback to principals concerning

their performance. The 118 documents received were reviewed to see if this element was included. One hundred and six documents or 90 percent of those submitted called for providing written comments or feedback to the principal being evaluated. Only 12 documents or 4 percent did not provide for giving written feedback to the principal (Table 39).

Table 39. Frequency of documents that include a procedure for providing written feedback to the principal in Iowa school districts

Provided written feedback in written procedure	N	Percent	Valid percent
Yes	106	33.8	89.8
No	12	3.8	10.2
Missing data	<u>198</u>	<u>62.7</u>	<u>--</u>
Totals	316	100.0	100.0

The use of a summative instrument was stipulated in 114 documents or 97 percent of those documents submitted. This element is the most common of the elements identified. Many districts that do not have written procedures do have evaluation instruments. Many principals report that an evaluation instrument is used for their evaluation on a yearly basis. Table 40 shows that only 12 documents or 10 percent did not indicate that an evaluation instrument must be used as part of the evaluation procedure.

Table 40. Frequency of documents that include a procedure for the use of an evaluation instrument for the principal in Iowa school districts

Use of evaluation instrument in written procedures	N	Percent	Valid percent
Yes	114	36.1	96.6
No	4	1.3	3.4
Missing data	<u>198</u>	<u>62.7</u>	<u>--</u>
Totals	316	100.0	100.0

Sixty-nine or 59 percent of the procedures that were analyzed included a summative evaluation conference in the written document. While 75 percent of the 316 principals surveyed indicated that they had a summative evaluation conference, only 59 percent of the procedures examined actually included this element in writing. Thus, as in previous cases, the practice is being implemented more often than there is a policy or procedure in place in the K-12 school districts of Iowa (Table 41).

Are the development and use of job targets in the evaluation process included in the written procedures for principal evaluation in the K-12 school districts of Iowa? Seventy-one of the 118 documents analyzed or 60 percent did have this specific element in the written procedure. Forty-seven or 15 percent of the written documents did not have job targets included in the policy, procedure, or instrument.

Table 41. Frequency of documents that include a procedure for holding a summative evaluation conference between the supervisor and the principal in Iowa school districts

Summative evaluation conference in written procedure	N	Percent	Valid percent
Yes	69	21.8	58.5
No	49	15.5	41.5
Missing data	<u>198</u>	<u>62.7</u>	<u>--</u>
Totals	316	100.0	100.0

The quantity and quality of the written documents submitted that were the written procedures for principal evaluation in the K-12 school districts of Iowa were disappointing. Many of the documents that were submitted were actual instruments or policies relating to principal evaluation. Very few could actually be classified as written procedures for principal evaluation. Many principals have indicated that, in practice, many of the procedures that are suggested in the literature are truly being used and implemented. The shortfall appears to be in the actual written procedures. Many districts simply do not have actual written procedures, outlining exactly who, when, where, and how a principal will be evaluated. Principal evaluation practices cannot and will not improve until the procedures are written down and followed in a systematic manner.

CHAPTER V. SUMMARY, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND CONCLUSIONS

Introduction

The purposes of this study, as presented in Chapter I, were to:

1. Describe principal evaluation practices and formal written procedures currently in place in the K-12 school districts of Iowa.
2. Compare those practices and procedures with current recommendations found in literature.
3. Compare those procedures and practices as they relate to the size of the school district.
4. Make recommendations that should prove helpful in the development of more valid principal evaluation practices and procedures for the K-12 school districts in the state of Iowa.

Chapter II reviewed the current status of public school principal evaluation as found in the literature. The review of literature examined principal evaluation procedures and practices from about 1980 to the present. Chapter III detailed the design of the study, while Chapter IV presented the findings in tables to answer research questions one, two, and three. The data for Chapter IV were collected through a questionnaire sent to randomly selected principals in all of the 433 public school districts in the state of Iowa. Questionnaire returns were received from 316 principals or 72.9 percent of the K-12 school districts in the state of Iowa. Principals were asked to send a copy of their district's principal evaluation procedures. One hundred and eighteen procedures or 27 percent of the total number of K-12 school districts responded.

The data collected from the K-12 school districts in the state of Iowa are summarized in Chapter V. The data collected are compared to what has been determined as best practices described in extant literature. To answer research question four, recommendations are made for the development of principal evaluation policies and procedures and some conclusions are drawn.

Summary

Literature contends that principal evaluation is necessary and justified. Approximately 74 percent of all states mandate or plan to mandate principal evaluations in the near future. In 1987, the Iowa State Legislature enacted legislation that requires Iowa school boards to annually implement evaluation procedures for K-12 school administrators. Bottoni [7] stated, in a National School Board Association presentation, that, "a major step in administrative evaluation is the establishment of a broad school board policy void of specific details." While 246 principals or 77.8 percent of those responding indicated that their district did have a written policy for principal evaluation, 56 or 17.7 percent said that they did not have a principal evaluation policy in place in their school district. An even greater discrepancy exists for written procedures. It was found that only 56.6 percent of those principals responding have written procedures in place in their school districts.

Principals generally have not been given a great deal of input into the development of the principal evaluation policy and/or procedures. Only 55.1 percent of those surveyed indicated that they had been given input in the development of their district's evaluation policy. Slightly more than 45 percent of the principals responded that their policy and procedures have been updated in the last two years. Approximately 27 percent of those principals responding did not know when their district's policy and/or procedure for principal evaluation was last updated. These statistics indicate that principals should be given a greater opportunity to become involved in the development of policy for principal evaluation in the K-12 school districts of Iowa.

The percentage of principals that indicated that an evaluation instrument was used in their district is slightly over 74 percent. The instruments are generally the same for elementary and secondary principals. The data collected did not show that instruments were individualized.

The superintendent is the primary evaluator of principals according to almost 90 percent of the principals that responded to the survey. Respondents indicated that assistant superintendents conducted evaluations of principals in almost 3 percent of the districts. Another 3 percent indicated "other" when asked who does the formal evaluation of principals in your school district. The review of literature overwhelmingly supports the responsibility of the superintendent for principal appraisal.

The principals' responses concerning the number of complete evaluation cycles over a given period of time varied from 74 percent who indicated "annually" to 7 percent who stated that they were not evaluated at all. While the literature suggests that annual evaluations are most common, the quality of the evaluation is more important. Surprisingly, very few evaluation cycles included formal observation. Almost 58 percent of the principals responding stated that the evaluation process did not include formal observation. Only 12 percent of the principals indicated that they were formally observed one or two times each year. A slightly larger number or 15 percent did not know whether they were formally observed or not. Anderson [3] and Valentine [51] stress the importance of collecting information through formalized observation. They suggest that the "formative phase of collecting information through formal observation" is one of the most significant events in the evaluation process. It would appear that a greater degree of importance should be placed on the formal observation process in the K-12 school districts of Iowa. Almost 70 percent of the principals indicated that informal observation accounted for 5 to 100 percent of their overall evaluation. Thus, while formal observation is not used to a great degree in the K-12 school districts of Iowa, informal observation appears to be used more extensively for principal evaluation purposes. Principals that indicated that formal observation did take place were asked if a face-to-face conference was held with the supervisor following the observation. Slightly

more than 84 percent of the principals that were formally observed also had a post-observation conference. Over half of the principals that indicated having a post-observation conference described the conference as very productive. Only 5 percent responded that the post-observation conference was not very productive.

Criteria used for the evaluation of principals are most often found in the evaluation instrument. Approximately 65 percent of the principals reported that the criteria for principal evaluation could be found in the evaluation instrument. Board policy was identified by 38 percent of the of the respondents for including criteria for the principal evaluation.

Over 71 percent of the principals surveyed indicated they received written feedback concerning his/her evaluation at the conclusion of the evaluation cycle. On-going communication with the building principal is an important element to effective principal evaluation procedures. Written feedback provides the communication system necessary to provide a formalized way to express specific suggestions for improvement. While not all school districts use job improvement targets, over half of the principals that were surveyed said that their evaluation process included this element.

When principals were asked who had input into principal evaluation in the K-12 districts of Iowa, almost 50 percent indicated no one other than the supervisor. The next most common response was "self", with 24 percent of those responding. Teachers, school board members, parents, support staff, and other

administrators were also mentioned.

Principal evaluation is based upon many different elements and the degree to which these elements comprise the overall evaluation varies considerably. Approximately 100 principals or 33 percent of the respondents indicated that specific measurable outcomes determine anywhere from 1 to 50 percent of the principal's overall evaluation. One-half of all principals indicated that anywhere from 1 to 50 percent of the principal evaluation was based upon the job description. Almost one-fourth of the principals said that zero percent of their evaluation was based upon the job description. Three-fourths of the principals responded that input from other people accounted for from 0 to 25 percent of the overall principal evaluation. Approximately 50 percent of the respondents indicated that hearsay or rumor accounted for zero percent of their overall evaluation. Only 3 percent of the principals said that from 50 to 100 percent of their overall evaluation was determined from the personal relationship that existed between the supervisor and principal.

The improvement of performance and the opportunity to provide a formal process to communicate strengths and weaknesses of the principal were reported by 75 percent of the principals as purposes for principal evaluation in the K-12 school districts of Iowa. The third, fourth, and fifth most common purposes reported were to comply with legal requirements, to identify job improvement targets, and to determine retention or dismissal. Only 11 percent of the

principals indicated that merit pay was a purpose for principal evaluation.

The literature review emphasizes the importance of on-going communication between the supervisor and the principal. Communicating both positive and negative feedback is important if principals are to improve. Over three-fourths of the principals that were surveyed reported that summary face-to-face conferences between the supervisor and the principal were held in their particular school district. Only 12 percent indicated that summary evaluation conferences were not held. When principals were asked to rate the quality of the summative conference, over 30 percent indicated that they were very worthwhile. Only six percent reported that the summative conference was not very worthwhile. Two percent reported that the summative conference was a waste of time.

The final survey questions asked principals to grade the quality of the principal evaluation process in their particular school district. Respondents gave a letter grade, with 9 percent indicating the grade of "A", 35 percent reporting a grade of "B", 30 percent "C", 11 percent "D", and 6 percent indicating a grade of "F".

Major Findings of the Study

Hypotheses 1 through 7 were designed to determine if a discrepancy exists among seven specifically identified written procedures for principal evaluation and the actual practices in use in the K-12 school districts of Iowa. The written procedures were identified

from the literature as essential elements for principal evaluation and included the following: (1) expectations discussed during pre-evaluation conference between supervisor and principal, (2) formal observation, (3) post-observation conference following the formal observation, (4) written feedback provided, (5) use of evaluation instrument, (6) summative evaluation conference held at the conclusion of the evaluation cycle, and (7) job improvement targets are utilized. Hypothesis 8 was designed to show whether there was a significant difference between the mean discrepancies as they relate to the written procedures for principal evaluation and the actual practices in use in the different size school districts in the state of Iowa.

Is there a discrepancy between the written procedure for formally reviewing the performance expectations of the principal during a pre-cycle evaluation conference and the actual practice in use in the K-12 school districts of Iowa?

Only a small number of the documents submitted included this provision as an element of the principal evaluation process. Thirteen documents or 11 percent of the 118 documents submitted called for a pre-cycle evaluation conference. Six principals or 46 percent that submitted documents that required the pre-evaluation conference did not have the practice in use in their school district. This is a substantial discrepancy as it relates to this particular element of principal evaluation procedures. Slightly over one-half of the principals whose principal evaluation documents included the pre-evaluation conference between the supervisor and the principal had

the practice in use.

It was surprising that a larger number of the documents that were submitted did not include a pre-cycle evaluation conference between the principal and his/her supervisor.

Is there a discrepancy between the written procedures for formal observation for principal evaluation and the actual practice in use in the K-12 school districts of Iowa?

It appears that a small discrepancy does exist between the actual written procedure for formal observation and the actual practice in use in the K-12 school districts of Iowa. Again, it is difficult to draw conclusions from the data because of the small number of documents that included formal observation as part of the principal evaluation procedure in the school districts. Only seven documents or 6 percent of all documents submitted included formal observation as an element of principal evaluation. Over 70 percent of the principals surveyed and who had submitted the seven documents indicated that the practice of formal observation was in use in their school district. Again, while a small discrepancy exists between the written policy and actual practice in use, the alarming statistic is that only approximately 6 percent of the documents submitted included formal observation in the procedure for evaluating principals. The data would again indicate that if the essential element is written in a policy or procedure, there is a good chance that the practice will be in use.

Is there a discrepancy between the written procedure for holding a post-observation conference for principal evaluation and the actual practice in use in the K-12 school districts of Iowa?

Only three documents or less than 3 percent of those submitted included the element of holding a post-observation conference in their principal evaluation process. This small number is not that surprising due to the small number of school districts that have formal observation as part of their evaluation cycle for principals. Interestingly enough, the three principals that submitted the documents that included a post-observation conference all indicated that the practice was in use in their school districts. These results reinforce the conclusion that if a procedure is written down in the form of a policy or formal written procedure, the actual practice in use is more like to occur.

There is a discrepancy between the written procedure for providing written feedback to principals for evaluation purposes and the actual practice in use in the K-12 school districts of Iowa.

A large percent of districts that submitted documents had written feedback as part of their written procedure for principal evaluation. Almost 86 percent of the written documents included this provision and 85 percent of the principals from districts that have this written procedure actually had the practice in use in their school district. There was a small discrepancy of 11 percent between the principals whose policy included the element of written feedback, but who indicated that the practice was not in use in their school district.

Approximately 5 percent of the principals did not know if the practice was in place or not, even though their policy or written procedure included this procedure.

Is there a discrepancy between the written procedure for completing a summative evaluation instrument for principal evaluation and the actual practice in use in the K-12 school districts of Iowa?

Almost 96 percent of all documents submitted included the element of completing a summative evaluation instrument in the principal evaluation procedure in the school districts of Iowa. Ninety percent of the principals whose written document included a provision for completing a summative evaluation instrument did, in fact, have the practice in use. A discrepancy of under 9 percent was found to occur from the data. It appears that from the data, the most common written procedure and the most common practice for principal evaluation is the completion of a summative evaluation instrument in the K-12 school districts of Iowa.

Is there a discrepancy between the written procedure for holding a summative evaluation conference and the actual practice in use in the K-12 school districts of Iowa?

Only 56 percent of the documents submitted included the element of holding a summative evaluation conference between the supervisor and the principal. Over three-fourths of the principals whose written documents included a summative conference as an element of principal evaluation actually had the practice in use in their school districts. There was a discrepancy of approximately 20 percent between those

principals whose written document indicated that a summative conference should be held and the actual practice that was in use.

Is there a discrepancy between the written procedure for utilizing job targets for principal evaluation and the actual practice in use in the K-12 school districts of Iowa?

Sixty-eight of the 118 documents or 57 percent included the essential element of using job targets in the principal evaluation process. Slightly over 60 percent of the principals whose policies called for using job targets actually had the practice in use in their school districts. A discrepancy of over one-third of the principals existed between the written procedure and the actual practice in use.

Do principal evaluation practices vary as they relate to the size of the school district?

School districts were divided into two size groups with those districts of 1000 or less placed in one group, and those districts of 1001 or more placed in the other group. An independent analysis was conducted for each of the seven essential elements of principal evaluation by size of school district. An analysis was then conducted to see if a significant difference existed between the mean discrepancies as they related to the written procedures for principal evaluation and the actual practices in use in the K-12 school districts of Iowa.

In only one of the seven elements for principal evaluation was there a significant difference between the mean discrepancies of the

large and small size school districts. This one element was the post-observation conference between the supervisor and the principal. Schools of under 1000 were more likely to hold the conference, but not have it specified in the policy or procedure. The larger schools were more likely to have this practice written into the procedure as district policy. However, because of the small number, serious conclusions cannot be drawn from the data. In the other six elements, no significant differences appeared. Therefore, we can conclude that the mean discrepancy between the procedures and/or policies for principal evaluation and the actual practices in place does not appear to be related to the size of the school district. There is no real significant difference between the procedure/practice discrepancy and the size of the school in the K-12 school districts of Iowa.

Recommendations

What recommendations can be made that will prove helpful in the development of more valid principal evaluation practices and procedures?

Principal evaluation practices for K-12 school districts in the state of Iowa vary a great deal. Almost every school district has some form of principal evaluation practice in place. Policies and procedures also vary a great deal. Many districts appear to have a very short and simple policy in place that is modeled after the Iowa School Board Association's recommended policy for principal evaluation.

Most districts do not have a separate written procedure for carrying out the evaluation for the principals in the district. Policies typically indicate that the principal will be evaluated at least annually and that some form of written feedback will be provided to him/her. The actual practices in place greatly mirror the policies, but only because the policies lack detail and depth. Only a handful of districts provided all seven elements for principal evaluation in a written procedure. In many districts, the practices as defined in the literature as essential elements for principal evaluation are being carried out, even though it is not specified in the district's policy. The recommendations for more valid principal evaluation procedures are based on "best practices" as found in the literature. Because there are school districts in Iowa that do have the following recommendations already in practice, it is not the intent of the researcher that the recommendations apply to every school district. The list of recommendations are a result of a review of questionnaires and documents received from the K-12 school districts.

1. Every school district should have a written policy governing principal evaluation. The policy should include the following: Why does the board want this administrative staff evaluated? Who is responsible for performing the task? When is evaluation to occur and/or be completed? What in general terms is to be done?

2. Formal written procedures should be developed separately from board policy. Written procedures should be more specific than policy and should include the steps and procedures for the complete

evaluation cycle. The formal written procedures should be updated by the Board of Education.

3. Boards of Education, superintendents, and principals must work together to develop the written policies and procedures for the principal evaluation process. A policy and procedure review process should be implemented and maintained. Principals must have input into the development and revising evaluation policies and procedures if the evaluation process is to be valid and effective.

4. The formal evaluator of the principal should be the superintendent or the person designated as the principal's immediate supervisor. On-going evaluator training should be mandated for all supervisors and/or superintendents that are responsible for evaluating principals. The evaluator training endorsement that is now required in Iowa is a step in the right direction. Continual staff development and continuing education requirements for supervisors will improve the evaluation process in the state of Iowa.

5. A job description must be in place in order to effectively evaluate the performance of any employee, and that especially includes the principal. The job description should include the expectations of the supervisor and the Board of Education. It should clearly define the job when it is successfully performed.

6. Performance goals and expectations should be discussed and clearly understood prior to the start of the evaluation cycle. In many instances, principals have stated that they did not know what was expected of them by their supervisor. A pre-cycle conference

that reviews the supervisor's expectations will result in a more positive evaluation process and eliminate the feelings of anxiety that sometime accompany this practice.

7. Formal observation should be included in the data gathering process. While most supervisors indicated that they observed the principals in an informal manner for evaluation purposes, very few formally observe the principals. Formal observation allows the supervisor to gather data in a more systematic and unbiased manner. It provides valuable data relating to the effectiveness of the principal. Formal observation is more objective and removes the subjective nature that accompanies only informal observation methods.

8. A post-observation conference following the formal observation allows the supervisor to provide immediate feedback to the principal. When strengths and weaknesses are discussed in a formal setting, it allows the supervisor to provide reinforcement and the opportunity to suggest a change in behavior before the end of the evaluation cycle.

9. Written feedback should be provided throughout the evaluation cycle. A printed evaluation instrument should be developed and individualized to the greatest degree possible. While the instrument can effectively rate the performance of the principal in certain generic areas, a written narrative should be included to describe the performance of the principal on specific goals and objectives that were discussed during the pre-cycle conference. The written narrative allows the supervisor to further individualize the

the evaluation process.

10. A summative evaluation conference should be held between the evaluator and the principal. This allows the supervisor to reinforce and expand upon the formal written evaluation. The principal can then ask for clarification or evidence of documentation from the evaluator. The principal should have the opportunity to respond in writing to any question or concern he or she may have concerning their summative evaluation or the summative conference.

11. Job improvement targets should be developed by both the supervisor and the principal. Job improvement targets or growth plans should be directed at improving areas that were deficient during the previous evaluation cycle. It is important that they are jointly agreed to, and a plan jointly developed to accomplish in a given period of time.

12. A review process by the Department of Education should be developed in order to ensure that all school districts comply with the state law requiring school districts to have policies in place for administrative evaluation, and to see that school officials are actually following their policies.

Conclusions

There is a need for reviewing, revising, and updating principal evaluation policy and procedures in many of the K-12 public school districts of Iowa. Information describing principal evaluation policy and procedures currently in place in the K-12 public school

districts in the state of Iowa were collected in two ways. Written policy and procedures were gathered from the school districts and a questionnaire was sent to a randomly-selected principal from each of the school districts. Only approximately 25 percent of the districts returned a copy of their principal evaluation policy and/or procedure. Almost 75 percent of the principals surveyed returned their questionnaire. It appeared that the actual practice in many of the districts did not follow the written procedure or policy. Many of the policies were short, vague, and in need of revision. Only a handful of districts actually had written procedures for principal evaluation.

Continued efforts must be made to develop and implement a more objective evaluation process that incorporates the essential elements of effective principal evaluation procedures as discussed in the current literature. Superintendents and other central office administrators that are responsible for the evaluation of principals must re-evaluate their priorities in order to place more emphasis on the evaluation process. Effective evaluation practices should be implemented in the K-12 school districts of Iowa. A systematic cycle for principal evaluation should be jointly developed incorporating the elements of pre-cycle conference, formal observation, post-observation conference, completion of a written evaluation instrument, written feedback, summative evaluation conferences, and the utilization of job targets. Within this broad framework, an individualized or tailored-made process can be developed that will

provide a more valid evaluation process for principals.

An ongoing continuing education program for evaluators of principals is highly recommended. The recently imposed requirement for evaluator approval training in the state of Iowa is a positive and necessary prerequisite for implementing effective evaluation procedures and practices in the K-12 school districts of Iowa. However, this training must continue on a regular basis for evaluation practices to really improve. A sound knowledge and basic understanding of effective research regarding evaluation practices is necessary for continued progress in the improvement of principal evaluation procedures in the state of Iowa.

Further Research

The main source of data analyzed in this study was a questionnaire completed by a randomly selected principal from each of the 433 public school districts in the state of Iowa. It is suggested that this study be replicated by sending a similar questionnaire to superintendents. This replication would provide a comparison of the perception of the evaluator with that of the evaluatee concerning policy, procedure, and actual practice.

This research could be replicated in other states to determine if their principal evaluation policy and procedures are compatible with "best practices" as determined in the literature.

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APPENDIX A. LETTER TO EXPERT PANEL

August 7, 1989

Mr. Tim Hoffman, Superintendent
ADEL-DE SOTO COMMUNITY SCHOOLS
Adel, Iowa 50003

Dear Mr. Hoffman:

I am a Doctoral candidate in Educational Administration at Iowa State University. I am writing a dissertation on the current practices and procedures used to evaluate the performance of principals in the K-12 school districts of the State of Iowa. The intent of my study is to: (1) describe principal evaluation practices and procedures currently in place in the K-12 school districts in Iowa, (2) compare those practices and procedures with the current recommendations found in literature, and (3) make recommendations that should prove helpful in the development of more valid principal evaluation practices and procedures for the K-12 school districts in Iowa.

To conduct the research for this study, I will be using a questionnaire to gather data from selected school principals in each of the 433 K-12 school districts across the state.

I am asking for your assistance by requesting that you review and critique the enclosed questionnaire. An evaluation form is included for your convenience. However, if you prefer to write directly on the questionnaire please do so.

Please return the questionnaire with your comments by August 21, 1989. A stamped, self-addressed envelope is included for your convenience.

Thank you in advance for your assistance, time, and cooperation.

Sincerely,

Thomas L. Williams

Enclosures

APPENDIX B. QUESTIONNAIRE EVALUATION FORM

Name of Reviewer _____

QUESTIONNAIRE EVALUATION FORM

Please consider each of the following questions as you review and critique the questionnaire. Any comments or suggestions you might have in addition to these questions will be greatly appreciated. Feel free to make your comments on this form and/or on the questionnaire.

- | | | | |
|----|--|----------|---------|
| 1. | Are the directions for completing the questionnaire clear and helpful? | _____YES | _____NO |
| 2. | Is the meaning of each question clear? | _____YES | _____NO |
| 3. | Are the response options for each question appropriate? | _____YES | _____NO |
| 4. | Is the length of the questionnaire excessive? | _____YES | _____NO |
| 5. | Should additional questions be included in the survey? | _____YES | _____NO |

(If yes, please specify) _____

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS:

Thank You!

APPENDIX C. QUESTIONNAIRE

School District No. _____

QUESTIONNAIRE

Please complete the below questions as accurately as possible.

1. What best describes your current administrative position?
 - 142a. Secondary Principal
 - 139b. Elementary Principal
 - 21c. K-12 Principal
 - 12d. Principal/Superintendent Combination
 - 1e. Other _____

2. What is your current status?
 - 31a. Probationary
 - 284b. Non-Probationary

3. How many years have you served in your current position?
 - 61a. Less than 2 years
 - 88b. 2-5 years
 - 63c. 6-10 years
 - 64d. 11-20 years
 - 40e. Over 20 years

4. What is your age?
 - 2a. Under 30
 - 102b. 30-40
 - 117c. 41-50
 - 82d. 51-60
 - 13e. Over 60

5. What is the enrollment in your school district?
 - 142a. Under 500 pupils
 - 98b. 500-1000 pupils
 - 56c. 1001-2500 pupils
 - 10d. 2501-5000 pupils
 - 10e. Over 5000 pupils

6. What is your sex?
 - 282a. Male
 - 34b. Female

7. Does your school district have a written policy that covers principal evaluation?
 - 246a. Yes
 - 56b. No
 - 11c. Don't know

8. Does your school district have written procedures that describe how the performance evaluation of principals will be conducted.
- 179a. Yes
119b. No
14c. Don't know
9. In your best judgment, do principals have sufficient input into the development of your district's principal evaluation policy and procedures?
- 174a. Yes
101b. No
35c. Don't know
10. When were your school district's principal evaluation policies last reviewed and or updated?
- 143a. Within the last 2 years
59b. Within the last 3-5 years
20c. Over 5 years
34d. Don't know
11. Who does the formal evaluation of principals in your school district?
- 283a. Superintendent
9b. Ass't. Superintendent
9c. Other (specify) _____
11d. No one
2e. Don't know
12. Does your evaluator occupy an office in your building?
- 149a. Yes
155b. No
13. What are the purposes of principal evaluation in your school? (Check all that apply)
- 250a. To improve performance
200b. To comply with legal requirements such as state law and school district policy?
158c. To identify job targets
130d. For retention or dismissal
36e. To determine merit or performance pay
237f. To provide formal process to communicate strengths and weaknesses of the principal
 g. Other (specify) _____

14. Does your school district have a job description for principals?

- 279a. Yes
32b. No
3c. Don't know

15. If the answer to Number 14 was yes, to what extent is your evaluation based on your job description?

- 42a. To a little extent
140b. To a medium extent
85c. To a large extent

16. Are there written criteria that will be used in the evaluation of principals in your school district?

- 214a. Yes
62b. No
31c. Don't know

17. Are the criteria or expected performance behaviors for principal evaluation provided to the principals as: (Check all that apply):

- a. Part of written board policy 120 yes 162 no
b. Part of written procedure 114 yes 168 no
c. On the evaluation instrument/form 205 yes 77 no
d. Other (specify)? _____

Questions 18-34 are related to the actual procedures used for principal evaluation in your district.

18. Does your supervisor formally meet with you at the beginning of each evaluation cycle?

- 106a. Yes
184b. No
0c. Don't know

19. If the answer to No. 18 was yes, does your supervisor review his/her performance expectations of you for the upcoming school year?

- 80a. Yes
13b. No
3c. Don't know

20. How often does your supervisor observe you or come into your building for the express purpose of evaluating your performance?

- 183a. No formal observation
19b. Once yearly
18c. Twice yearly
37d. Other (specify) _____
46e. Don't know

If your answer to No. 20 was "No formal observation," then skip to question No. 24.

21. What is the length of the observation?

- 17a. Less than one hour
20b. Up to one half of a day
5c. One full day
18d. More than one full day
0e. Other (specify) _____

22. Does your supervisor meet with you following an observation to provide feedback and to discuss your performance?

- 54a. Yes
9b. No
1c. Don't know

23. If you answered yes to Item 21 how would you describe the post observation conference with your supervisor?

- 33a. Very productive
17b. Somewhat productive
3c. Not very productive
0d. A waste of time

24. Does the supervisor collect work samples from you such as newsletters and faculty agendas, as part of the evaluation process for principals in your school district?

- 117a. Yes
122b. No
54c. Don't know

25. Who provides written input and/or data into the evaluation of principals in your district? (This can include staff surveys, student questionnaires, self-evaluation, etc.) Check all that apply.

155a. No one
 51b. Teachers
 62c. School Board Members
 76d. Self
 23e. Parents
 18f. Support Staff
 42g. Other Administrators
 3h. A.E.A. Personnel
 11i. Students
 3j. Other (specify) _____

26. Is an evaluation instrument/form used for principal evaluation in your school district?

235a. Yes
 54b. No
 15c. Don't know

27. Is the same evaluation instrument used for evaluating all principals in your district?

233a. Yes
 19b. No (Varies by level, elementary, middle school, high school)
 13c. No (Individualized)
 27d. Other _____

28. Does your supervisor hold a conference with you at the conclusion of the evaluation cycle?

240a. Yes
 39b. No
 18c. Don't know

29. If you answered yes to Item 28, how would you describe this conference?

97a. Very worthwhile
 112b. Somewhat worthwhile
 20c. Not very worthwhile
 6d. A waste of time

30. About what percent of the evaluation is based upon: (Total should equal 100 percent)

a. Specific measurable outcome
 b. Job description
 c. Input from teachers, parents, students
 d. Hearsay or rumor

- e. Personal relationship with evaluator
- f. Formal observation
- g. Informal observation
- h. Other (specify) _____

31. Are you provided written feedback on your end of the year evaluation?

- 225 a. Yes
- 54 b. No
- 18 c. Don't know

32. Are job improvement targets developed as a result of your evaluation in your school district?

- 169 a. Yes
- 106 b. No
- 22 c. Don't know

33. Are professional growth goals developed as a result of your evaluation in your school district?

- 161 a. Yes
- 112 b. No
- 24 c. Don't know

34. How often do principals go through a complete evaluation cycle in your school district?

- 23 a. Not at all
- 234 b. Annually
- 11 c. Once every two years
- 6 d. Once every three years
- 6 e. Other (specify) _____
- 16 f. Don't know

35. If you were to assign a letter grade to the principal evaluation process in your district, what grade would you give?

- 28 a. "A" Excellent
- 110 b. "B" Above average
- 94 c. "C" Average
- 37 d. "D" Below average
- 20 e. "F" Failing

PLEASE RETURN THE COMPLETED SURVEY AND A COPY OF YOUR DISTRICT'S PROCEDURES FOR PRINCIPAL EVALUATION IN THE ENCLOSED SELF-ADDRESSED STAMPED ENVELOPE.

THANK YOU!

APPENDIX D. LETTER TO PRINCIPALS

October 1, 1989

Dear School Administrator:

I am a Doctoral candidate in Educational Administration at Iowa State University. Presently, I am writing a dissertation on the current procedures and practices used to evaluate the performance of principals in the K-12 school districts of Iowa. I am sure that you will agree that this is a very timely topic. This research should prove helpful in the development of more valid principal evaluation practices and procedures for the K-12 school districts in Iowa.

To gather the data necessary to conduct my study, I am sending this questionnaire to you and other selected school principals in each of the 433 K-12 school districts in Iowa. Your assistance in completing this questionnaire is vital for the success of the study. In addition to the questionnaire I am asking that you send a copy of your school's principal evaluation procedures.

You may be assured of the confidentiality of your responses to the questionnaire. Each questionnaire has been coded so that we can check your name off of the mailing list when your questionnaire is returned. The results of this study will be made available to the Iowa Department of Education and School Administrators of Iowa.

Please return the completed questionnaire and a copy of your district's principal evaluation procedures by October 15, 1989. Enclosed is a postage-paid, self-addressed envelope for your convenience.

Thank you for your time and assistance. Your cooperation is greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

Thomas L. Williams
Doctoral Candidate,
Iowa State University

James Sweeney, Phd.
Professor of Educational
Administration
Iowa State University

Enclosures: Questionnaire
Postage-Paid, Self-Addressed Envelope

APPENDIX E. DOCUMENT ANALYSIS CHECK SHEET

DOCUMENT ANALYSIS CHECK SHEET

SCHOOL DISTRICT NUMBER _____

DOCUMENTS SUBMITTED _____ POLICY
 _____ PROCEDURES
 _____ EVALUATION INSTRUMENT
 _____ NONE SUBMITTED

ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS OF PRINCIPAL EVALUATION

- A. PRE-EVALUATION CONFERENCE _____ YES _____ NO
- B. EXPECTATIONS DISCUSSED AT THE START
OF THE EVALUATION CYCLE _____ YES _____ NO
- C. FORMAL OBSERVATION FOR EVALUATION
 _____ NO FORMAL OBSERVATION
 _____ ONCE YEARLY
 _____ TWICE YEARLY
 _____ OTHER
- D. CONFERENCE FOLLOWING EACH
OBSERVATION _____ YES _____ NO
- E. PROVIDED WRITTEN FEEDBACK _____ YES _____ NO
- F. UTILIZATION OF A SUMMATIVE
EVALUATION INSTRUMENT
COMMENTS: _____ YES _____ NO
- G. SUMMATIVE EVALUATION CONFERENCE _____ YES _____ NO
- H. UTILIZATION OF JOB TARGETS _____ YES _____ NO