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# The Iowa elementary school principal: a sociological perspective

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**THE IOWA ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PRINCIPAL: A SOCIOLOGICAL  
PERSPECTIVE**

*Iowa State University*

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The Iowa elementary school principal:  
A sociological perspective

by

Robert J. Vittengl

A Dissertation Submitted to the  
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## INTRODUCTION

## Statement of the Problem

There are more than 50,000 elementary school principals in America. Collectively, they have been charged with the responsibility of providing a solid educational foundation for nearly twenty million children. Perhaps no single leadership position is more crucial to our nation's eventual economic, political, and human success. Given the vital role principals play in the educational process, a large body of research has focused on the principalship. Yet, while countless researchers have investigated what principals do and how they do it, few of the recent inquiries have been devoted to the individual who occupies the position.

Blumberg and Greenfield (6) lament the absence of information about the individual who serves as a principal, indicating that studies of the school principalship are:

. . . appropriate and essential to the development both of a sense of history concerning the evolution of the principalship and of an empirical knowledge base concerning the structure and function of that role. What is missing from this . . . is a feel for the individual. [Other studies have spoken to] . . . the role and function of some rather anonymous group of job-holders called school principals. They did not address . . . questions that involve the human and seemingly idiosyncratic part of the enterprise . . . .

Who is this person we call the principal? What motivated him or her to accept the challenges inherent in the principalship? What costs or disadvantages are associated



with the job? What are their joys and frustrations? The list of unanswered questions seems endless. Since we had no definitive answers to these and other important questions, professionals responsible for recruiting, selecting, training, and supporting the elementary school principal were seriously handicapped. They had little information to help them make important decisions in these and other key areas. To do so, they needed to know much more about the individual who serves as an elementary school principal. The present study was designed to address this inadequacy.

#### Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to examine the ethos of the Iowa elementary school principal. By ethos, this researcher is suggesting that there may be a pattern of preoccupations, orientations, beliefs, and preferences which are unique to elementary school principals and which distinguishes them from members of other educational occupations. Viewed from a different perspective, the study was designed to paint a portrait of the Iowa elementary school principal.

This information will provide colleges, universities, professional organizations (the Educational Administrators of Iowa and the National Association of Elementary School

Principals in particular), and local school officials assistance in recruiting, selecting, training, and supporting elementary school principals. In addition, it will provide valuable information to those considering entering the field, as well as to superintendents, central office personnel, and boards of education.

There are numerous areas that are of interest to these referent groups. A few of the important questions to be answered were:

1. Who is the Iowa elementary school principal--what demographic data can be used to describe the typical elementary school head?
2. What motivated the elementary school principal to choose his/her profession?
3. What does the individual see as his/her most important job responsibilities?
4. What job related tasks are the most difficult to do well?
5. What costs or disadvantages can be associated with the principalship?
6. What type of work achievements are sources of great pride for the elementary school principal?
7. What are some of the major sources of frustration for the principal?

8. What constitutes a good day or a bad day for the principal?

9. What goals, if any, has the principal set for him/herself professionally?

10. What extrinsic and intrinsic rewards do elementary school principals covet?

#### Rationale and Basic Assumptions

There are approximately 640 practicing public elementary school principals in Iowa. Despite their significant role in the educational process, we know very little about the individual who serves as an Iowa elementary school principal for s/he has been the object of little study.

Wolcott (60) points out this neglect of attention to the individual and suggests that the literature on educational administration should be augmented by research focused upon:

. . . people occupying roles in professional education, contextualized not only in terms of the formally organized institution in which they work but also in terms of their lives as human beings interacting within the context of a broader cultural milieu.

This study was predicated upon the idea that through sociological research one could discover and describe the ethos of the Iowa elementary school principal. Ianni (25) likens this type of research to anthropological inquiry in that it is:

. . . holistic, situational, descriptive, and generally designed to result in a statement of system characteristics rather than of the inevitable association of the elements within the system.

The rationale for investigating the etiology of principals' sentiments, joys, and frustrations was based upon a simple proposition. If problems and frustrations principals experience affect both their performance and student outcomes, and if their successes are successes for teachers and students too, then identifying specific areas as targets for reduction of the former, and enhancement of the latter, will prove invaluable in the educational process.

#### Methodology

A comprehensive survey instrument of 135 wide-ranging questions was developed by the investigator especially for this research effort (Appendix D). The literature on principals and the principalship was reviewed in order to obtain a frame of reference for the development of the instrument. Additional input to aid in this development was obtained from the Executive Director of the Iowa Association of Elementary and Middle School Principals, the Executive Director of the Iowa Association of Secondary School Principals (now the Executive Director and Assistant Executive Director respectively of the Educational Administrators of Iowa), the Executive Director of the National Association of

Elementary School Principals, professors of educational administration, and practicing school administrators. A commitment of financial support for the research effort was also obtained from the Iowa Association of Elementary and Middle School Principals.

Following the development of the survey instrument, it was field tested, analyzed, and modified as necessary. A letter of endorsement was obtained from the Executive Director of the Iowa Association of Elementary and Middle School Principals (Appendix B), and the letter of transmittal readied (Appendix A).

In February 1983, each of Iowa's 640 public elementary school principals was mailed the survey instrument and asked to respond. After approximately two weeks, each principal who had not yet completed and returned the survey instrument received a follow-up letter (Appendix C) requesting that s/he complete the instrument. The final count showed that 451 principals (slightly more than 70%) completed and returned the instrument.

The data were then coded, keypunched, and analyzed. The instrument and basic statistical data are shown in Appendix D. While it was not the intent of this study to prove or disprove a set of hypotheses, some statistical tests were employed to help acquire a more thorough understanding of differences between large and small district principals, as well as among

those who practice in urban, suburban, and rural settings. The results of these tests are shown in Appendix E.

#### Explanation of the Dissertation Format

The dissertation format used in the presentation of this research was approved by the Graduate Faculty at Iowa State University. The format is designed to allow presentation of the research in manuscript form suitable for publication in professional journals.

The chapter divisions are similar to that of a traditional dissertation style--introduction, review of literature, and discussion. The methods and findings sections are represented by the three sections entitled Journal Article I, II, and III.

Journal Article I deals primarily with recruitment and retention of the principal. The assorted sub-topics include entrance into the profession, costs associated with the position, critical tasks, and the desire for specific forms of recognition or reward. Also included is a discussion of the principals' beliefs about what constitutes an ideal school building and district.

The joys and frustrations of the elementary principal are the central theme of Journal Article II. Specific discussion includes things the principal takes great pride in,

sources of regret or embarrassment, as well as what constitutes a good and bad day.

Journal Article III is a portrait of the Iowa elementary school principal. It includes general background and descriptive information, as well as a discussion of frustrations, morale, and autonomy.

Each of the articles is designed for such publications as The Elementary School Journal, Phi Delta Kappan, Principal, and Educational Leadership.

And finally, the concluding chapter of the dissertation provides a general discussion and broad overview of the major findings of the research. Also included are several implications for practice and the limitations of the study.

## REVIEW OF LITERATURE

This chapter presents the review of the related literature. The first section deals with historical perspectives of the elementary school principalship. The focus of the second section is the principalship in the '80s, and the chapter concludes with a brief examination of Lortie's research (33) with teachers. It was that work which provided the foundation for this investigation.

Historical Perspectives  
of the Elementary Principalship

The role of the principal has evolved in unique ways in other societies partly because of the hand of history. While we Americans may conceptualize our school principals in a particular fashion, people in other countries view them somewhat differently. In this first section, I shall highlight the evolution of the educational systems in England, France, and the United States, paying particular attention to elementary school administration.

England

The English concept of public education began its evolutionary process in the late 1700s in the form of Sunday schools. In the early 1800s, "ragged schools" began providing



instruction in reading, writing, arithmetic, and the basic trades. It was also at this time that the first governmental action was taken to provide support of education with small grants made to religious organizations (3).

The English government created an Education Department in 1839. Its avowed purpose was to ensure efficiency in the schools and to supervise the distribution of grants. By 1870 publicly elected school boards had been established, but some 30 years later "Local Education Authorities" were granted the powers which had been given to school boards. Near the end of World War II, an Education Act was passed by the government. Its purpose was to provide for the division of public education into three progressive stages: primary, secondary, and "more advanced." The Act also ensured that the power structure of the school would continue to have strong local control.

The English tradition of decentralization in educational administration remains today. In the elementary schools, principals retain considerable authority in running their schools. The principal is expected to perceive his position as a long-term challenge. He is able to select his staff after consulting with the Board of Managers, an advisory group whose function is to see that the traditions of a particular school are maintained. In general, the English principal is much more of a power broker than his counterpart

in the United States. His style is likely to be considerably more authoritarian and decisions are seldom questioned by pupils or the public.

### France

In France, the roots of education began with the founding of the Brothers of the Christian Schools in 1684. They became an influential teaching order at the elementary level. Some one hundred years later, however, the basic principle of central control of government and education was established by Napoleon. The Constitution of 1791 explicitly called for "a system of public instruction, common to all citizens, gratuitous as regards the parts of education indispensable to all men" (2). Final control of the educational process rested with Napoleon himself.

In 1824, the first Minister of Public Instruction was appointed. Shortly thereafter all communes were required to open elementary schools, but in 1904 a law was passed forbidding members of religious organizations from teaching. It called for the closing of all private schools within ten years, but because of World War I, the law was never carried out. It was not until 1949 that the Delbos Act was passed, providing for three stages of education: preparatory, including children from age six to seven; elementary, ages seven to nine; and intermediate for nine to eleven-year-olds.

In 1959, President de Gaulle issued a decree that made education compulsory to the age of sixteen.

The concept of a centralized school administration in France is designed to provide freedom and equality for all. While the French system may appear to be potentially efficient and egalitarian, the opposite seems to be the case. By numerous accounts, the system is uniform to a fault and the pupils are forced to endure a myriad of almost meaningless examinations.

The French centralized administrative process for educational decision making allows little room for administrative power at the local level, and administrators have more clerical than administrative functions. In spite of this, French elementary school administrators tend to command more respect than administrators in the United States. There appear to be at least two reasons for this. First, Europeans traditionally view educators with high esteem and respect. Second, even though an individual administrator may not personally have a broad power base, he does represent authority and the public traditionally respects authority.

#### The United States

As one might imagine, the schools of the colonial period in the United States were greatly influenced by European practices. Even though the Dutch had established an

elementary school in New York by 1633, the first colonial education law was not passed until 1642. This law gave the town officials in Massachusetts the "power to take account of all parents and masters as to their children's education and employment" (35). This was followed by another law in 1647 which required all towns to establish and maintain schools.

The early schools involved only one teacher who, in addition to his teaching duties, was required to perform duties which today would be considered administrative. Typical of these was the dame school. Even though the teacher in dame schools performed some administrative functions, these duties were viewed as incidental to teaching. Most of the administrative duties of the early schools were carried out by elected public officials or lay committeemen. Thus, two principles of American schools were established: (1) elementary school administrators are first, teachers, and second, administrators; and (2) decisions concerning policy are made by lay persons.

The adoption of several early Massachusetts laws engendered the concept of modern elementary schools in the United States. In addition to the two previously mentioned laws, Massachusetts adopted a law in 1789 which required a school in every community. Subsequent laws in 1800 and 1827 provided the power to tax for education, select board members, and raise money for school buildings.

In 1847, the Quincy Grammar School of Boston established the first system of grade levels in an elementary school. Ten years later elementary school administrators were ready to abolish this system because of its inherent problems. At least four problems confronted them: (1) promotion or non-promotion, (2) evaluation and grading, (3) grouping, and (4) a subject-centered curriculum.

The early development of the principalship can be tied to the grade level system as well as three other phenomena. These were: (1) the rapid growth of cities during the 1850-1900 created an ever expanding school-age population, (2) the reorganization of schools and the consolidation of departments under a single administrative head, and (3) the establishment of the position of a head assistant to free the principal from teaching responsibilities (45).

As Pierce (45) notes, prior to 1850 many of the duties that lay boards of education prescribed for principals were of a clerical nature. A sampling shows that 59% of the duties concerned records and reports, 23% related to matters of school organization, 12% focused on buildings and equipment, and 6% concerned the discipline and care of pupils. These reflect the distribution of duties of what might be termed the "principal teacher." Most of the individuals serving at this time were responsible for some teaching in addition to their clerical duties.

By the late 1800s, the main responsibilities for the principal had shifted from the maintenance of records and reports to matters of school organization and general management. Of the duties prescribed by school boards during the period 1853-1900, 41% were related to organization and general management, 15% concerned equipment and supplies, 14% focused upon records and reports, 13% dealt with discipline and the care of pupils, 10% related to miscellaneous duties, and 8% concerned buildings and grounds (45, p. 212).

Thus, by the year 1900, "the principal had become the directing manager, rather than the 'presiding teacher' of the school." Principals began to assume increased responsibility for the daily management of schools. They had also acquired a number of powers which, in their view, increased the prestige of their position. These were:

. . . the right to graduate pupils on the basis of the principal's standards, the right to have orders or suggestions to teachers given only through the medium of principals, and the right to a voice in transfers and assignments of teachers connected with their schools . . . the right to direct teachers, enforce safeguards to protect the health and morals of pupils, supervise and rate janitors, require the cooperation of parents, and requisition educational supplies (45).

It was not until the early part of the twentieth century that positions in elementary school administration became common. In 1920, a small group of elementary school administrators met in Atlantic City and formed the Department

of Elementary School Principals of the National Education Association.

Gist (17) tells of the professional interest of early school administrators:

The principals of the country are showing an increasing interest in their professional responsibilities, in scientifically prepared studies in general, and particularly in the publications of the Department. This interest, enthusiasm, and professional activity of a practical, yet scientific type is most gratifying to all educators.

Of all the steps in the evolution of elementary school administration, none has been more significant than the releasing of the administrator from teaching duties (11). The stages of this development are: (1) One-Teacher, (2) Head-Teacher, (3) Teaching Principal, (4) Building Principal, and (5) Supervising Principal. The fact that most principals continued to have teaching duties was of great concern to officials at the Department of Elementary School Principals during the early years of that association.

The depression of the 1930s had a positive impact upon the growth of elementary school administration. The population had begun to shift toward the cities, and as the educational organizations became more complex, the need for principals increased. Soon the general population began to see the elementary principal as more of a necessity rather than a luxury.

World War II set the stage for the many changes which would come about following the war. In the decade after the war, there was a rapid expansion in the number of elementary schools in the United States. Elementary school enrollments jumped from twenty million in 1945 to twenty-eight million in 1955. Elementary administrators found themselves in a crisis precipitated by an unprecedented population boom and found themselves with limited human and material resources. There were too few professionally educated teachers, too few school buildings, and too few supplies.

The advent of the space age in 1957 brought additional problems. The National Education Act was passed in 1958 calling upon elementary school administrators to help solve what the public perceived as curriculum problems. While great strides were made to improve programs in elementary education during the 1950s, it was virtually impossible to keep pace with the times.

During the 1960s and 1970s, principals struggled with a myriad of problems. Some of the major ones focused on how to effect change in the schools, how to deal with teacher unions and collective bargaining, and how to choose from a vast expanse of instructional materials. Student enrollment, which had been increasing for so long, began to decline and reduction in the teaching force became a complex emotional issue.



## The Principalship in the '80s

How is today's elementary principalship viewed? Barth

(4) responds:

What kind of a ship is today's principalship? Since its emergence as a profession, the elementary school principalship has been defined, analyzed--and sometimes defamed. Most observers describe a function somewhere between educational leader of the school and innocuous middle manager who translates the policies of superintendent and school board into schoolhouse practices. The literature is replete with attempts to list the duties and responsibilities of a school principal. [See Appendix F.] Yet no description can adequately capture the satisfactions, frustrations, possibilities, and impossibilities of this highly personalized job.

There are numerous conceptions of the principalship.

Knezevich (31) suggests that "more and more the principal is recognized as an executive or administrator and the principalship as a constellation of positions" Dean (13) conceptualized the principal's office as providing ten important services for the school:

1. A communications center of the school
2. A clearinghouse for the transaction of school business
3. A counseling center for teachers and students
4. A counseling center for school patrons
5. A research division of the school, for the collection, analysis, and evaluation of information regarding activities and results

6. A repository of school records
7. The planning center for solving school problems and initiating school improvements
8. A resource center for encouraging creative work
9. A coordinating agency cultivating wholesome school and community relations
10. The coordinating center of the school enterprise

A number of other prescriptions are offered by Knezevich (31) as he details aspects of the principal's responsibilities:

The principal can no longer fulfill the role of the headmaster or of an instructional supervisor competent to counsel all teachers. The instructional leadership role of the principal is one of marshalling resources--human and material--that classroom teachers require to perform effectively.

He concludes his review of the functions of school principals with the following observation: "Little wonder that this is a demanding position as well as one of considerable significance in determining the direction of public education."

The literature on the principalship is voluminous. It describes everything from what principals do to what effects their work activities have on others. Let me first highlight what research tells us principals do.

Studies by Crowson and Porter-Gehrie (12), Morris (39), Peterson (42), and Wolcott (60) provide descriptions of the content and structure of typical workdays for school

principals. These researchers found that the administrative work of school principals is characterized by (1) a low number of self-initiated tasks, (2) numerous activities of short duration, (3) discontinuity caused by frequent interruptions, (4) face-to-face oral contacts with one other person, (5) great variation of tasks, (6) a hectic and fragmented flow of work, (7) many unimportant decisions, (8) few attempts at written communication, and (9) most events occurring in or near the principal's office.

According to the descriptive studies, principals spend most of their time working with teachers who have noninstructional needs and students who are discipline problems (42); overseeing extracurricular activities, organizational maintenance, and pupil control (36); attending to external requirements, logistics, and social pleasantries (53).

Peterson (42) reported that principals engage mainly in service, auditing, and advisory relationships and seldom become involved in classroom level activities. This obviously appears to be in sharp contrast with a fundamental axiom of the role--"The building administrator should be the instructional leader of the school" (27, 32, 47). Clearly, instructional leadership, if one can assume it involves curriculum development, staff development, and classroom observations, is not the central focus for most principals.

What impact do administrators have on the school organization? Duckworth (15), Smith (51), and Kalis (28) conclude that principals can enhance teacher morale if they pay close attention to items associated with the consideration dimension of the Leadership Behavior Description Questionnaire (18). Specifically, personal interaction and support from the principal has a positive impact on teachers, as does working closely with them on instructional matters (9). Holdaway (21) concludes that teacher job satisfaction and positive attitudes relate to a principal giving encouragement and support, removing irritants, and granting reasonable requests.

Hoy and others (23) found that the structure dimension of the Leadership Behavior Description Questionnaire also seems to be related to job satisfaction. They concluded that teachers generally desire and react favorably to administrative structure. However, it must be remembered that excessively tight supervision is counter-productive to job satisfaction. Lortie (33) found that teachers wanted principals to use their authority to facilitate teacher work. To the teachers, this meant they wanted the principal to "support them."

Coordination was also important in the school setting. Cohen (9) found that effective principals coordinate, discuss, and advise on instructional matters, while ineffective principals do none of these. Duckworth (15) reported that

coordination and control in schools does not occur in a highly structured environment. Rather, it occurs in the informal interactions between principals and teachers.

Studies by Brookover and Lezotte (8), Edmonds (16), and Rutter et al. (48) have stressed that effective school administrators are those who direct the activities of the group toward goal attainment. Other studies determined that certain specific leadership behaviors correlated positively with student achievement. Cotton and Savard (10) found generally higher achieving students where principals frequently observed or participated in classroom instruction, communicated clear expectations to staff, and set high standards for the instructional program.

#### Related Research on Teachers

Examining the ethos of an occupation and its members has its roots in research. Lortie (33), in his classic book, Schoolteacher, captured the ethos of America's teachers--that pattern of orientations and sentiments which is unique to them. Lortie described the need for this type of research as follows:

Despite their pivotal role, public schools have received relatively little sociological study. Schooling is long on prescription, short on description. That is nowhere more evident than in the case of the two million persons who teach in the public schools. . . . although books and articles instructing

teachers on how they should behave are legion, empirical studies of teaching work--and the outlook of those who staff the schools--remain rare.

His research was most revealing and has been used by educators throughout America for recruiting, selecting, and training teachers. Among his findings, for example, is that teachers frequently find a great sense of pride and accomplishment in their ability to help some particular student. Lortie described it as the spectacular case.

. . . the student in question was seriously problematic --in many instances others thought the student was beyond help . . . . The student was usually a boy and somehow stigmatized; he suffered from severe personal difficulties, ill health, or depreciated social position. The plot . . . features a dismal beginning, the teacher's persistence in the face of unfavorable prospects, and a happy ending in which the student is restored to normal functioning (33, p. 121).

Lortie also reported on what constituted a teacher's good day. The good day was "personal, concrete, indirect, and cathected." Additionally, good days frequently occurred when no one intruded on classroom events. An interview respondent seemed to describe it best.

A good day for me . . . is a smooth day. A day when you can close the doors and do nothing but teach. When you don't have to collect picture money or find out how many want pizza for lunch or how many want baked macaroni or how many want to subscribe to a magazine. If you could have a day without those extra duties--that would be a good day (33, p. 169).

This research study, as indicated in the introduction of this dissertation, has a similar rationale. There is a paucity of information which focuses upon the sentiments

principals attach to their work. What are the principal's joys and frustrations? What intrinsic and extrinsic rewards do they covet? What are their most important job responsibilities? This study was designed to address these and other questions and provide this much needed information to those who recruit, select, train, and support the elementary school principal.

JOURNAL ARTICLE I:

THE CARE AND FEEDING OF ELEMENTARY PRINCIPALS--  
WHERE DO WE BEGIN?



There are more than 50,000 elementary principals in America. Their responsibility is awesome. Given the mounting research evidence and deductive logic, one might posit that they must show the way if we are to be successful in the search for excellence. Yet, while countless researchers have investigated what principals do and how they do it, none of the recent inquiries have been concerned with the man or woman who occupies the position; nor have they attempted to see the world through their eyes. If we are to attract and retain highly competent elementary principals and provide for them the kind of environment in which they can be optimally productive, several questions need answers. We need to know what makes principals tick.

What makes them tick? What motivates a man or woman to accept the challenges of the principalship? What costs or disadvantages are associated with the job? What do they see as their most important tasks? What extrinsic and intrinsic rewards do they covet? The unanswered questions seemed endless. Given this inadequacy, we set out to conduct an exploratory research study designed to tell us more about the person who fills this key position. We hoped to provide broad insights into the ethos of the principalship so that future researchers would be better able to address the questions which plague those who select, train, and employ principals.

In February 1983, Iowa's 640 public elementary principals received a survey instrument and were asked to respond to 135 wide ranging questions. Slightly more than 70 per cent did. Presented below is a summary of the findings followed by a discussion of their implications for practice. Tables are provided in those areas where we thought the reader would be most interested.

First, we asked what motivated them to select the principalship. Their response was nearly unanimous; greater challenge and responsibility. More money, which many might expect to head the list was next, a strong motivator for only half the group. Of less importance was the prospect of acquiring more influence and freedom, in that order. Few were attracted to the position because of the prestige associated with it. Likewise, few saw the role as a stepping stone to a better job or viewed the principalship as a way to get out of the classroom.

Iowa's principals accepted their first principalship anywhere between age 21 and 56 and only about one-third entered teaching expecting to become a principal. Most became a principal at approximately age 30 and have served as a principal for slightly more than 13 years. Their range of experience is broad, stretching from one to forty years.

No career is perfect. We wondered what the group would see as the costs or disadvantages associated with the principalship. We asked that they estimate those costs in several key areas. It came as little surprise that income (or the lack of it) headed the list. More than nine of ten said that the salary attached to the principalship was, to some degree, a disadvantage. Not far behind was the price associated with being a public servant. Additional liabilities are shown in Table 1.

TABLE 1. Costs or Disadvantages Associated with the Principalship. (N = 451)

Costs	1	2	3	4	5	6	Mean
Salary	34	80	75	115	106	39	3.66
Being a "public servant"	49	92	83	92	96	37	3.46
Little Real Power	54	138	121	85	34	17	2.91
Not Enough Freedom/ Autonomy	64	134	115	88	34	14	2.86
Little Recognition	56	144	130	75	34	10	2.82

Scale: 1 = No Disadvantage to 6 = A Great Disadvantage

The notion that people derive satisfaction from their work achievements and are then motivated to accomplish even more is reasonably well accepted. We were interested in

knowing what the elementary school principal viewed as job satisfiers. What turns them on? What intrinsic or extrinsic rewards do they covet? Do they value a significant increase in salary, more frequent trips to national conventions, or media coverage for their school and its programs? No. No. And No! Principals want to be rewarded in a much more personal fashion. Their most acute sense of achievement comes from personally doing something to help a struggling child. They also exalted in the thrill of watching their staff pull

TABLE 2. Job Satisfiers for Principals. (N = 451)

Satisfiers	1	2	3	4	5	6	Mean
Helping a child succeed	1	0	2	24	130	291	5.58
Getting staff to pull together	2	5	7	55	144	234	5.32
Thank you note from a mother	1	4	21	63	163	198	5.17
Nice note from boss	1	6	24	61	153	203	5.16
Boss asks your advice on a problem	0	5	14	81	170	178	5.12
School board likes your idea and gives you money to implement a new program	3	13	19	79	163	173	5.01

Scale: 1 = Would Mean Very Little to Me to 6 = Would Mean a Great Deal to Me

together on a difficult task. Other key satisfiers are nice notes from a parent and boss, being asked for advice by the boss, and being provided money to implement a new program.

### Tasks

What do principals say they do that makes or breaks them? Seemingly, everyone else has decided what principals should do. But what tasks do the principals themselves view as critical to their success? What tasks should those entering the profession be prepared to deal with? Table 3 shows how principals viewed eight job responsibilities. Without question, principals see their most important job responsibility as supervision of instruction and teacher evaluation. Although not nearly as important as the former, managing their buildings in an orderly and efficient manner is also important, as is the development of curriculum. Who could disagree? At first blush, it was rather surprising that controlling student behavior and building morale were relatively low on their priority list, but not when you consider their choices.

As with any busy and challenging job, the day is often too short. Some important duties get put off, go undone, or are completed in a less than satisfactory fashion. We wondered how the principals saw it and so we presented them

TABLE 3. The Principal's Important Job Responsibilities.  
(N = 451)

Responsibilities	1	2	3	% Choosing
Supervision of Instruction/ Teacher Evaluation	230	89	59	86
Building Manager	94	59	61	49
Curriculum Development	35	89	77	46
School-Community Relations	11	36	105	35
Emphasize Student Achievement	21	65	35	28
Control Student Behavior	18	49	37	24
Personnel Manager	15	23	34	16
Morale Builder	10	26	25	14

Scale: 1 = Most Important Job Responsibility    2 = Second  
Most Important Job Responsibility    3 = Third Most Important  
Job Responsibility

with a hypothetical situation. "Imagine that you magically found ten hours more per week to spend on your work. How would you spend that time?" By far and away the single greatest response was: "We would spend those extra hours working with teachers on curriculum and instructional matters." Followed by (1) "we would also like to spend more time in contact with students," (2) "we wish we had more time to discuss common problems with other principals," and (3) "we

would be interested in examining new research bearing on our work."

### Ideal School

Recently there's been a great deal of talk about an ideal school. We thought it would be interesting to ask those who have been in this business for more than fifteen years what constitutes, in their opinion, the ideal school. If they had their "druthers", what's the ideal school with respect to size, maturity of teaching staff, parental involvement, and other factors?

First, how about school size? How many pupils would attend the ideal elementary school? Most chose 300 to 400. How about the district? How big should it be? The answer was surprising. While the median size for an Iowa school district is 580 pupils, only slightly more than one out of ten said the ideal district size should be between 500 and 1,000 pupils. Most preferred districts with 3,500 or more pupils.

What about the staff, parents, and curriculum? It seems many principals see some advantage in working with staff members who are neither too youthful or veteran. The ideal teacher would have from four to eight years of teaching experience. What about parent involvement? Nearly three out of four chose the ideal level of involvement as "moderate"

rather than "very active". And finally, what about the general curricular focus of the ideal elementary school? Should the curriculum be more traditional and basic rather than innovative? While there is a substantial number who favor a traditional curriculum, there are just as many who don't. As a matter of fact there is a slight leaning toward the innovative mode. In light of recent national studies exalting the basic curriculum, it's interesting to note that many elementary principals do not embrace that concept.

#### Discussion

What does it all mean? What are the implications for those responsible for the care and feeding of principals? Principals come to their jobs looking for greater challenge and responsibility. Most find it but also discover many frustrations and problems. Some of these are beyond control--they come with the territory--but many can be addressed by those who sit in school board chairs and central offices, as well as by staff, parents, and community members.

Since the greatest attraction to the principalship is the challenge and responsibility that it offers, it certainly would behoove us to make certain we provide both. The challenge is inherent; the responsibility may not be. We need to be sure to provide an environment in which principals truly



do have responsibility for leadership rather than one where the central office makes most of the important decisions.

Iowa elementary principals are veteran administrators. Our data show that 64% of them have earned six or less graduate hours in the last five years. Some thought must be given to retraining and updating. Next, there's the matter of recognition and reward. Principals want recognition, and what they value costs little. They simply require someone--their boss, a parent, a central office person--to notice some of the special things they and their staff are accomplishing. It seems logical that recognition of their achievements will enhance both their job satisfaction and motivation. This in turn will cause them to work even harder creating a self-fulfilling prophecy. It's clear, too, that principals want and need to work with children. Common sense tells us anything that can be done to free up principals and get them out of their offices to interact with children will do wonders for them, the children, and the staff.

There were few surprises in principals' perceptions of what constitutes their most important job responsibilities. Teacher evaluation and supervision of instruction are on the lips and minds of nearly all those who seek excellence. It should be noted that while it is not discussed in this paper, the principals named these tasks as the ones most difficult to do well. Once again we are reminded of the need to beef up

preparation programs in this area. School districts must also increase their efforts to provide effective inservice programs.

Comparing what they see as critical job responsibilities with those important tasks neglected because of time constraints is eye opening. Principals rank curriculum development very high on their list as "important" and equally high on "what they need to spend more time on." Why? School buildings are very busy places. The principal's day is both hectic and fragmented (Crowson and Porter-Gehrie 1980; Morris 1981; and Wolcott 1973). It's all too easy to become so involved solving problems, maintaining order in the halls and on the playgrounds, and carrying out other administrative/custodial functions that there is little time left for examining the program of instruction and working on ways to improve it. Nine of ten principals told us they were frustrated by numerous interruptions and an inordinate amount of bureaucratic paperwork. Curriculum work apparently gets pushed to the back burner.

How can we help? First, can we relieve them of some of their less important responsibilities? Para-professionals, extra secretarial support, and volunteers might do wonders to enable them to have time to devote to curriculum and instruction. Second, school districts must commit adequate financial resources and time to curriculum development.

Teachers and principals need blocks of released time together. And it is not reasonable to load it on after the regular school day or on weekends.

My questions about the ideal school yielded some fairly surprising results. While there was no particularly strong sentiment as to ideal elementary school size, the principals definitely didn't see it as small (less than 200 pupils) or large (more than 600 pupils). Also revealing is the level of parental involvement in the schools. It was thought most principals would prefer parents to be very active in school affairs. While principals in the larger districts longed for more parental involvement than their colleagues in smaller districts, more than two-thirds of the principals said the ideal parent should be "moderately active." Perhaps it's possible that principals have had little training in dealing with parent groups or feel too much involvement is a hindrance to getting things done quickly.

#### Final Thoughts

Where do we begin the care and feeding of principals? In the two areas where we left them relatively unnurtured and unfed for the last two decades--training and recognition. While one might have a tendency to say, "Ho hum, I've heard that tune before," remember, this time it came from the

horses' mouths. If we are truly serious about improving schools, one would hope that we would stop talking about it and do it. We sometimes forget the simplest of truths, their success is our success.

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ARTICLE II:

THE UPS AND DOWNS OF ELEMENTARY ADMINISTRATION--  
THE PRINCIPAL'S VIEW

There is little doubt that principals make a difference. Given their crucial role, researchers have carefully scrutinized how they contribute to the general school environment, how they motivate teachers, and how they help children learn. Journals overflow with articles offering advice and admonition. Seldom, however, is there any attempt to see the world through their eyes. A recent study conducted at Iowa State University was designed to rectify that shortcoming. While we shall reflect this perception in the masculine gender, it is for ease of exposition and we hope our female colleagues will not be offended. Incidentally, the gender gap we found (90% male) should offend us all.

We asked the principals to respond to several questions designed to discover what makes a good as well as a bad day. Since job satisfaction seems important, we were interested in examining their wants and needs; job dissatisfiers as they saw them.

The rationale for examining the etiology of principals' ups and downs flows from a simple proposition; if the frustrations principals experience affect both their performance and student outcomes, and if their great days are great days for students and teachers, then pinpointing areas in which to reduce the former and enhance the latter should be invaluable. In February 1983, we mailed a survey instrument to Iowa's 640 public elementary school principals and asked

them to respond to 135 wide-ranging questions. More than 450 responded. Their ups and downs are highlighted below.

### Good and Bad Days

Lets first look at what makes for a bad day. Table 1 provides some clues as to what frustrates principals. At the very top of their list was a hectic, fragmented work day and bureaucratic paperwork. Many also indicated that they were seldom told they were doing a good job, were frustrated by an

TABLE 1. Factors Frustrating Principals. (N = 451)

Frustrations	1	2	3	4	5	6	Mean
Hectic Day	19	60	94	89	111	77	3.99
Paper Shuffling	23	80	92	107	108	40	3.70
Lack of Recognition	48	111	104	66	78	42	3.31
Secondary School Over-Emphasis	90	83	70	91	60	55	3.25
Isolation From Students	71	101	84	84	81	29	3.20
Winning Team - Few Fans	42	127	115	102	50	14	3.07

Scale: 1 = No Problem/Not True For Me to 6 = Significant Problem/ Very True For Me

over-emphasis on secondary schools, and by insufficient contact with students. Finally, more than a third indicated that although they felt students were achieving well "few people seem to appreciate it."

But what turns them on? What makes a good day is highlighted in Table 2. Principals, like teachers, treasure working with students and sharing in their success. More than nine of ten put that at the top of their joy list. Getting the staff to pull together on something that they had been

TABLE 2. Factors Contributing to a Principal's Good Day.  
(N = 451)

Good Day Factors	1	2	3	4	5	6
Interacting with students	10	2	0	17	110	310
Making a Difference for a Student	1	0	2	24	130	291
Energizing Staff	2	5	7	55	144	234
Thank-you Note From Parent	1	4	21	63	163	198
Nice Note From Boss	1	6	24	61	153	203
No Discipline Problems	14	17	40	87	110	175
In the Classroom	5	17	41	93	171	122
Helping a Teacher Improve	5	23	61	119	144	97

Scale: 1 = Not Part of a Good Day to 6 = Very Much Part of a Good Day



previously polarized on was also perceived as very satisfying. It is not surprising that a thank you note from a parent is part of a good day. It removes one of the frustrators identified earlier--lack of recognition. Ditto for a note from the boss. The last three segments of a good day tie together. A discipline-free day is enjoyable since it frees the principal to spend time in the classroom helping teachers, which in turn helps them to feel they make a difference.

We also asked the principals to think back over the last year or so and recall some special accomplishments on the job. About one in three indicated great pride in successfully implementing a new type of program or curricular improvement. Next on the list was establishing and maintaining esprit or a faculty sense of accomplishment. Increased student achievement and helping teachers become more effective in the classroom also produced feelings of great satisfaction for the principals.

But what about regrets? Most of us have done things that we later regretted. We wondered if the elementary principals had also. While there was no common regret, not dealing forcefully enough with a substandard teacher surfaced with the most regularity. Also cited were interpersonal conflict, not helping someone with a problem when they could or should have, and mistakes in selecting staff.

## Wants and Needs

We were interested in knowing what factors (i.e. salary, working conditions, levels of student achievement, etc.) principals linked to their job dissatisfaction. We took an indirect approach asking the group to tell us what attractions would lead them to take a principalship in another district.

First, how about salary? We asked the group to assume that they received a job offer from a district similar to the one in which they were now working, and asked how many more thousands per year would constitute "an offer you couldn't refuse?" The range of responses was broad. Some would take a similar job in another district at no increase in salary. Others felt so good about their school and community that they said they weren't even sure if they would move for an increase of twenty thousand dollars. An adamant few said simply that they wouldn't move--not for any amount of money. The average principal, however, would have to receive an offer of nearly six thousand dollars more per year to consider moving on the basis of money alone. Is money a major dissatisfier? Apparently, not for most.

We provided each principal with another list of possible dissatisfiers to choose from. It may be seen in Table 3. There were few surprises. More than eight of ten of those who supervise more than one school strongly prefer a one building

assignment. Also not surprising was the item which ranked second--the building budget. The level of student achievement was, to some degree, dissatisfying to eight of ten principals. While nearly half reported little problem with the philosophical mesh between themselves and their boss, about one in four had a relatively serious problem with it. Finally, the principals generally long for more innovative programs and of course, may be dissatisfied with a traditional or basic skill approach.

TABLE 3. Factors Contributing to the Principal's Sense of Job Dissatisfaction. (N = 451)

Job Factors	1	2	3	4	5	6	Mean
One building assignment (N. A. = 255)	29	13	17	20	43	64	4.22
Larger Building Budget	73	56	72	103	101	36	3.48
High Level of Student Achievement	84	52	70	109	98	31	3.40
More Innovative Programs	70	58	90	118	77	29	3.36
Better Philosophical Mesh With Boss	139	70	77	59	53	44	2.88
More Traditional Programs	115	91	126	75	28	6	2.61

Scale: 1 = Not At All Attractive to Me to 6 = Extremely Attractive to Me

## Discussion

The principalship, like any other line of work, has its subjective side. Principals have obviously attached particular sentiments to several facets of their work, finding some rewarding and others frustrating. They view some work activities with a sense of pride and accomplishment, others with regret and embarrassment. But what of their frustrations and problems? While some of these just seem to come with the territory, there are others which can be addressed by those who work in central offices and sit in school board chairs, as well as by parents, staff, and community members.

Recognizing principals' accomplishments would be a great place to start. Superintendents need to be out and about in the school buildings. They need to be looking for things principals are doing well and recognize those achievements both verbally and in writing. Members of boards of education need to do the same. Anything the media could do to counterbalance the seemingly endless negative feedback to the schools would do wonders in eliminating an important frustrator. While an over-emphasis on the secondary school does not seem to be a problem for everyone, one of four principals perceive it as a fairly significant one. We're all aware of the highly visible nature of secondary school activities, but we must carefully guard against sending a

message that implies that the people and mission of our elementary schools are unimportant or less important than secondary schools and programs.

Successfully accomplishing the above would dramatically affect half of the top six frustrators; "lack of recognition," "secondary schools over-emphasis," and "winning team - few fans." Incidentally, these may all tie together. Principals appear to be saying "notice us--we're important, too." Unfortunately, the problem is worse for those in the larger school districts. Our research indicated that large district principals felt significantly more frustrated in this regard than did principals in smaller districts.

It's hardly surprising that the school day is found to be highly frustrating because of its hectic, fragmented nature. This is consistent with several research studies (Crowson and Porter-Gehrie 1980; Morris 1981; and Wolcott 1973). But what about the paper shuffling? While there is a certain amount of minutia which must be attended to, the implications for state departments of education, local boards of education, and central office personnel are apparent--keep it to a minimum. It's a constant frustrator for principals. Keeping that red tape to a minimum would also help lessen principals' isolation from students. The less time spent on clerical tasks and administrative reports allows for more time to be spent in contact with students.

Asking principals to tell us about what makes them feel really great was most revealing. Principals want to work with children and want to make a difference. The implications for those who work with and support the elementary school principal seem clear. Recognize what the principal does well, tell him about it, and help him work with students.

What do principals take pride in? Elementary principals take pride not only in their own personal achievements but in their school's status. They feel proud when their efforts aid the implementation of a new program or improve one already in place. There were over twice as many references to programs than to any other specific source of pride indicating that building programs provide the principal with special opportunities to attain fulfillment. Once again, the message is clear for those who are in a supporting role. Give the principal the freedom and latitude to develop programs that will provide a special identity for the children and staff with which he works.

Another way in which we gain insights into a principal's self-monitoring process is to examine how they describe their mistakes. By far the largest category of errors cited involve personnel and the supervisory process. Although the number of errors cited was not especially large, it is interesting to note that the single greatest response has teacher evaluation as its focus. This seems to be one more piece of evidence

that there is a never-ending need for principals to receive training in the teacher performance evaluation process.

Finally, what types of dissatisfiers caused the current job holders to think about a different principalship in another district? Certainly, the responses to the money question were not indicative of any widely-held feeling. The amount of money one would need to move to a different district is a very personal matter. On the other hand, administering more than one building is a source of tremendous frustration and most with multiple-building assignments want to be relieved of that responsibility.

#### Final Thoughts

We set out to describe some of the sentiments principals attach to their work--their joys and frustrations, and the factors contributing to their satisfaction on the job. We found some central tendencies sufficiently strong to be described as "modal" for our Iowa elementary school principals. They seek recognition, they want to work with kids, and they want to make a difference. Assuming we are committed to the basic proposition that we're all in this together, then it behooves all who strive for excellence in education to diligently attempt to meet the needs of the elementary school principal. It seems worth the effort.

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ARTICLE III:

THE ELEMENTARY PRINCIPAL--A SELF PORTRAIT

It's been ten years since Harry Wolcott (1973) shadowed Ed Bell and helped us to see the elementary principal's world through his eyes. The past decade has been marked by a virtual explosion of research explicating and clarifying what principals do that makes a difference in schools. Yet, it seems that an important piece of the puzzle is still missing. While we know the important tasks elementary principals perform and how they spend their time, we really have no "feel" for the position or for those who serve in the more than 50,000 elementary schools across the country. What do we mean by "feel?" Every job is more than the sum of its "nuts n' bolts." While every position has a technical side, it also has a rich human side. Its role incumbents share common joys and frustrations, as well as preferences, orientations and sentiments related to their role. Thanks to Lortie (1975), who painted a portrait of the teacher, we have a better understanding of the ethos of teachers which has been helpful in improving both preparation and the quality of their work life. What follows is a portrait of the elementary principal; the paint and brush were supplied by the elementary principals of Iowa.

In painting the portrait, we borrowed from Lortie and also received his assistance (1). Our Survey instrument was comprehensive; it included more than 135 items. While we make

no claim that the Iowa principal is "typical," we feel that we can use our brush rather confidently since our sample was relatively large (451) and representative (70%) (2). We've decided to call our typical principal Lynn to spare the reader (and the writers) the agonies of "he/she" (3). Who is Lynn? What beliefs, aspirations, joys, frustrations, wants and needs does Lynn have? The portrait is provided below. While we will paint with broad strokes, we'll occasionally use a finer brush.

Who or what is Lynn Typical? Lynn's resume (Table 1) tells us a great deal. First, Lynn is a middle-aged, upward mobile male with two or three children. If you ask Lynn what the major task of the principal is you're most likely to hear "supervision of instruction." But if you listen very closely, you'll also hear, "It's a tough task." If you provide a laundry list of achievements and ask Lynn to indicate which was most significant, you'll most likely see a curriculum project.

Typical had plenty of teaching experience and chose the principalship primarily because of the challenge and responsibility, but also because of the added money. Lynn has not moved around much and probably is not striving to climb the career ladder. Examine the resume. It tells us quite a bit about Lynn and about the principalship.

TABLE 1. Resume of Lynn Typical, Elementary Principal,  
Anyplace, Iowa

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Age: 46  
 Sex: Male (90%)  
 Marital status: Married (92%)  
 Degree: Masters  
 Parents Education: Less than Lynn's (97%)  
 Decision to Teach: During college (45%)  
 Teaching Experience: 5 years  
 Became a Principal For: Challenge, Responsibility, Money  
 Experience as a Principal: 15 years  
 Number of Principalships: 1 or 2  
 Number of Students Supervised: 360  
 School Type: Urban (142), Suburban (74), Rural (232)  
 Instructional Program: Somewhat Traditional  
 Major Task: Supervision of Instruction  
 Toughest Task: Supervision of Instruction  
 Significant Accomplishments: Curriculum Projects  
 Career Goal: Elementary Principal (64%)

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Now that we have the backdrop, let's fill in some other details. Let's examine what makes for a bad or good day, as Lynn sees it. Most days start early and include about ten hours on the job. A significant portion of that day is

frustrating because of constant interruptions, shuffling of paper, and the time crunch. Lynn's major gripe sounds something like this: "I chose this profession because I like working with kids. It is my major source of satisfaction. But I don't get to spend much quality time with students anymore. I seem to spend a great deal of my time on discipline and paperwork. It's really frustrating."

That's not all that frustrates the Lynns who work in Iowa's elementary schools. First, 25% have the responsibility for two or more buildings. Most feel totally overloaded. It's hardly surprising; they are cheated out of contact with students, find it difficult to establish the necessary relationship with staff and parents, and spend a great deal of their time scurrying around "fighting fires." There are also some common complaints from those who supervise one building. The first, revolves around what might be called "the squeaky wheel." They wonder why they often seem to be playing second fiddle to the high school. The second complaint is probably shared with other public servants--while they feel they're doing a great job and are proud of their school, many say that they are constantly bombarded by flak from the media and community members, and are seldom told they are doing a good job, even by their bosses. Finally, while it was not a complaint, when we asked Lynn what costs or disadvantages were associated with the principalship, salary was "numero uno."

Lynn may occasionally meet or live near college friends and others who seemingly make considerably more money while encountering considerably less flak. Lynn feels the job is a critical one, but neither the compensation or status reinforce that belief.

Lynn's wants and needs are neither complex nor surprising: (1) less time spent on discipline and more time for students, (2) time to work on curriculum or other projects, (3) time to observe in the classroom, (4) time for discussing common concerns with other principals and (5) uninterrupted time to do the things that need to be done which include, by the way, keeping abreast of new developments in education. Time is obviously a precious commodity. If ten more hours were magically added to the day, Lynn said it would be spent "working with teachers on instructional matters" and "spending time with students." More time, however, won't solve all of Lynn's problems. When asked to look back over the last year or so and recall if "there was something you didn't do that you wish you had," one of every ten indicated feeling some regret over not being forceful enough when dealing with a marginal or poor teacher.

What else did we learn about Lynn? First, a word about priorities. We gave Lynn a number of tasks and asked which were most important. Supervision of instruction/teacher evaluation was the overwhelming first choice, followed by

building management and curriculum development. Lynn said supervision was the toughest task, while controlling student behavior was the least enjoyable. Emphasizing student achievement and, surprisingly, school community relations, were the most enjoyable.

How does Lynn learn and grow? What or who is most helpful? At the very top of the list are other elementary principals, followed by professional reading (one of five ranked it first) and Lynn's teachers. There was some scatter; some principals also valued workshops while others prized state or national conventions.

Lynn chose the principalship since it apparently afforded more responsibility and freedom. But does it really? "Yes" for six of ten, "no" for one of five, and "somewhat" for the remainder. But it depends. Most have ample freedom in evaluating teachers, but some are constrained when it comes to making decisions about hiring or dismissing staff, and others (particularly in large districts) have little say about their budget (4). If you ask Lynn what task requires the most freedom, the response rings loud and clear--teacher selection. What area demands the least autonomy or freedom? Selection of curriculum materials; it was the first choice of less than 5% of the principals.

But how about the bottom line? How is Lynn's morale? How satisfied is the typical principal? We asked Lynn, "If

you had it to do over again would you become an elementary principal?" Forty-seven reported they "probably would not." We asked them why. They pointed a finger at money, stress, and a lack of power. The morale report card, however, actually seems quite positive. Given that there is considerable unrest in workplaces across the nation, and considering that these are tough times for educators, it seems safe to conclude that most principals are quite satisfied with their jobs. Given that only 31 of 451 were worried about job security, they also appear to be quite secure in those jobs. The job also consumes a significant portion of their lives. We gave our Lynns a pie with eight pieces, and told them to assume that the pie represented their total life space. We asked, "How many pieces of the pie belong to your work?" Most indicated four, five or six pieces.

Finally, what is it about the job that really turns Lynn Typical on? What fills the elementary principal's bucket? Is it more money, the limelight, or something intrinsic? While we gave Lynn several choices, one was a clear first choice; "seeing a child who was having social or academic problems begin to improve because of something you did." Lynn, like colleagues in the classroom, treasures that feeling of achievement that comes with helping students succeed. Next on the satisfier list--"getting the staff to pull together." The next three choices were revealing, nearly



80% of the principals indicated that they get a bang out of thank you notes from parents, receiving a hand written note from the boss for a job well done, or having that boss seek their counsel on a problem because he or she knew that Lynn was on top of it. While there were other satisfiers, only half of the principals said they would be turned on by recognition from a civic organization, and less than 40% by an interview with the media concerning something special happening in the school.

### Reflections

What, then, does the portrait reveal and what are the implications? For parents and all others who share a compelling interest in education, it should be comforting to learn that experienced and dedicated educators have been entrusted with the responsibility for ensuring that future Americans are well educated. They should also be pleased that the portrait depicts what appears to be a solid, stable individual.

The portrait has implications for those responsible for training principals. Lynn Typical graduated from college in 1960. Given the tremendous advancement in our technology and the general ineffectiveness of staff development, it seems safe to conclude that Lynn needs retraining. One would also

guess that future training can not be administered in small doses; those who press for excellence in education appear to be quite impatient. Quick fixes will not suffice. They are like band-aids on broken legs; they obscure the underlying issue. Colleges of education, intermediate agencies, professional associations, and school districts and their boards must recognize this need and join forces to plan and implement an effective, long-range staff development program for all principals.

Last, but certainly not least, Lynn's self-analysis underlines the high value placed on time spent with students and much dissatisfaction with inordinate amounts of paperwork. Lynn obviously needs time to be an effective supervisor and to lead the curriculum development effort. While the academic community has glorified the value of academic learning time, instructional leadership time is seldom mentioned. Perhaps it is presumptuous to suggest what bosses should do to help Lynn have more quality time, but at least we might raise the level of awareness for those in central offices. Perhaps a gentle reminder to central office folks, relative to the importance principals attach to hiring their own staff, might also be helpful. Why shouldn't it be important to the principals? The age-old adage holds for a school as it does for a corporation, "If you are going to hold me responsible for

reaching a goal, let me pick the people who will help me reach that goal." Who could disagree?

### Final Thoughts

At a recent professional meeting, I noticed a number of elementary principals wearing buttons on their lapels. Closer inspection revealed that the button communicated a simple message, "Principals are human too!" While at the time I thought it rather humorous, perhaps the message was quite profound. While we must continue to conduct empirical research into what makes a difference in schools and what leadership behaviors are associated with gains in student achievement, we must remember that the men and women responsible for school management and leadership are living, breathing human beings. Identifying "nuts n' bolts" without a feel for our key people and what makes them tick won't, in the long run, be productive. Hopefully, this portrait will help to provide that "feel." Surely, we will need a full thrust of leadership from our elementary principals as we push toward world-class performance in our schools.

## Footnotes

- (1) My Thanks to Dan Lortie, Professor, the University of Chicago, for his help with the study.
- (2) For a summary of all the data, please write Dr. Jim Sweeney, Associate Professor, N229 Quadrangle, Iowa State University, Ames, Iowa, 50011.
- (3) The typical principal is referred to as "Lynn" to avoid sexual stereotyping and for ease of exposition. Where I discussed "the principals" it was to provide the reader with additional information.
- (4) Statistical analysis revealed that the symptoms of bureaucracy (paperwork, decreased autonomy, lack of recognition, discipline and staff problems) were significantly more prevalent in larger school districts.

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## DISCUSSION

## Summary

Purpose

The expressed purpose of this study was to examine the ethos of the Iowa elementary school principal. By ethos, the investigator was suggesting that there was a pattern of preoccupations, orientations, beliefs, and sentiments which was unique to elementary school principals and which distinguished them from members of other educational groups. It was my hope to be able to provide this much needed information to colleges, universities, professional organizations and local school officials so that the tasks of recruiting, selecting, training, and supporting the Iowa elementary school principal could be carried out with much greater precision.

Methods and procedures

In February 1983, Iowa's 640 public elementary school principals received a survey instrument and were asked to respond to 135 wide ranging questions. Slightly more than 70% (N = 451) did. While it was not the intent of this study to prove or disprove a set of hypotheses, some statistical tests

were employed to help acquire a richer understanding of the data.

### Limitations

It is noted that certain limitations must be associated with this study. Specifically, the investigation involved only public elementary school principals in Iowa. Therefore, we cannot say it represents the preoccupations, orientations, beliefs, and preferences of private or parochial school principals, nor that of principals practicing in other geographic areas of our nation. Also, the investigation took place in February 1983. What was an accurate portrayal of the ethos of the elementary school principal at that particular point in time, may not be so today.

### Findings

The major findings of this investigation are as follows:

(1) The typical Iowa elementary school principal is 46 years old, male, married, and has two children. He has a master's degree, which is considerably more education than either of his parents. He taught for five years and has been a principal for fourteen.

(2) The major motivation to select the principalship was that it offered greater challenge and responsibility than teaching. More money was also a motivator for half the principals in Iowa. Of less importance was the likelihood of acquiring more influence and freedom.

(3) The major costs or disadvantages associated with the principalship were the salary and that of being a "public servant." Also viewed as disadvantages were the lack of power, freedom, autonomy, and recognition.

(4) Principals derived their greatest sense of satisfaction from helping a struggling child succeed and seeing their staff pull together on a difficult problem. Other satisfiers were simply receiving thank you notes from a parent or their boss.

(5) Without question, supervision of instruction and teacher evaluation were perceived as the principals' most significant job responsibilities. Other tasks which were important were managing their buildings in an orderly and efficient manner, and the development of curriculum. If principals were magically provided with ten extra hours per week to spend on their work, they would work with teachers on curriculum and instructional matters.

(6) Iowa elementary principals see the ideal school as having 300 to 400 pupils, teachers with four to eight years of teaching experience, parents who are moderately active in

school affairs, and a curriculum which is slightly more innovative than basic.

(7) The major factor which contributed to the principals' sense of dissatisfaction was a multiple building assignment. Of the 106 principals in our sample that supervised two or more buildings, it was a source of great frustration. Other dissatisfiers were a relatively small building budget, lack of student achievement, and a poor philosophical mesh with their bosses.

(8) Principals believe that they have ample freedom in evaluating teachers. They long for much more freedom, however, when it comes to hiring and dismissing them.

### Implications

An analysis of the demographics associated with the Iowa elementary school principal is revealing. Graduation from college took place nearly 25 years ago. It seems safe to conclude that there is much to be gained from retraining. Colleges of education, area education agencies, professional associations, and school districts must recognize this need and develop and implement an effective, long-range staff development program for all principals.

Since the greatest attraction to the principalship is the challenge and responsibility that it offers, it's critical



that both continue to be provided. Certainly the position remains challenging. However, our data indicated that in some school districts the opportunity for leadership has diminished. Central offices and school boards, in some instances, are making important decisions for the principal, thus removing a major job attraction.

The matter of recognition and reward seems to be a never ending concern. It's important to remember, however, that the ways in which principals most prefer to be recognized cost little. They simply require someone--their boss, a parent, a central office person--to notice some of the special things they and their staff are accomplishing.

It's clear, too, that principals want and need to work with children. Common sense tells us that we must do whatever we can to allow principals to get out of their offices to interact with children. The message for state departments of education, local boards of education, and central office personnel is to keep the red tape to a minimum. Keeping down the minutia would also allow more time for principals to interact with staff and focus on the development of curriculum.

Freedom and autonomy are important to principals. While they feel they have plenty in evaluation of staff, the opposite is true for the hiring of staff. It is important for central office personnel to remember that if they're going to

hold the principal accountable for achieving certain educational goals, they must also be willing to allow the principal to select the people that will help reach those goals.

#### Concluding Statement

If one believes the findings of only a handful of the research studies conducted in recent years, it is easy to conclude that the building principal may be the single most crucial person in education today. Principals do make a difference. If we genuinely strive to meet the needs of the principal, there is little question of who the real benefactors will be--it is, of course, the children.

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This dissertation represents the thoughts and contributions, both tangible and intangible, of many individuals. To thank them here is a particularly pleasant task.

First, I wish to dedicate this dissertation to my parents, Ralph and Ann Vittengl. Their never ending support of my efforts over the years has been, and remains, an immense source of inspiration.

To say that this whole effort would not have been possible without the encouragement, patience, and sacrifice of my wife, Diana, and my children, Jeffrey and Beth, is dramatic understatement. Their unequivocal support was never in question. Their tolerance and good humor about my frequent absences from home, especially while the writing was taking place, was heartwarming.

I owe a tremendous debt to Dan Lortie for his assistance in the formulation of our basic research constructs. His generous sharing of ideas, as well as the survey instruments associated with his work on Schoolteacher and an N.I.E. study of the suburban principal, were at the foundation of this investigation. His vast research skill undoubtedly helped me avoid numerous pitfalls and saved countless hours.

Appreciation goes also to Gaylord Tryon and Bob Fitzsimmons for their critique of the survey instrument. Their suggestions were on target and perceptive. I am grateful to The Iowa Association of Elementary and Middle School Principals (now the Educational Administrators of Iowa) for their official endorsement and financial support of the study. Thanks, too, go to my colleagues, the elementary school principals of Iowa. It is literally true that I couldn't have done it without them.

I am mindful of all the assistance received from those associated with the Professional Studies Department at Iowa State University. I thank them not only for their help with this research, but for providing a complete educational experience that was exhilarating. There is no question that the individuals and program at Iowa State have dramatically enhanced my skills as a school administrator and provided me with a renewed sense of purpose and direction. I was particularly lucky to receive the erudite support of Ross Engel in the early stages of this project, as well as that of Richard Warren, whose skill is unmatched in making the world of statistics and research so sensible. Those serving on my Committee from outside the department and offering valuable guidance and support when it was most needed were William Underhill and Donald Schuster.

Finally, I don't know where to begin to say thank you to Jim Sweeney. To say that he gave unselfishly of his time and talent is insufficient. Characterizing his skill at writing and editing as superb is simply inadequate. Recognizing him as an outstanding teacher and scholar is to offer but faint praise. Perhaps I can come nearest to portraying his impact on me by recalling the time in one of his lectures when he jokingly told the class, "Pay attention, this will change your life!" Little could he know the significance of those words for me. I owe him more than I can ever repay.

APPENDIX A: LETTER OF TRANSMITTAL

College of Education  
Educational Administration  
N229 Quadrangle  
Ames, Iowa 50011  
Telephone 515-294-5450

IOWA STATE  
UNIVERSITY

February 1983

Dear Colleague:

It is generally accepted that the principal is the key figure within the elementary school building because he or she is in a position to make decisions which impact significantly upon students and teachers.

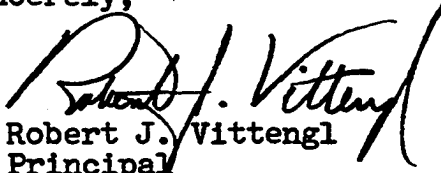
There are approximately 700 elementary school principals in Iowa and despite the obvious importance of the position and its effect on young people, there is little information about the individual who serves as an elementary school principal in Iowa or elsewhere. Why did they enter the profession? What are their hopes and dreams? What do they see as a good day, and more importantly what do they see as common problems or dissatisfactions? This study is designed to improve upon this shortcoming. I hope to provide information which will be helpful to our principal's groups, school boards and superintendents, and all of those who support us in our role as elementary school principal.

Accompanying this letter is a survey instrument I would like to ask you to complete. I think you will find it both interesting and thought provoking. If you take your time and give some thought to your answers, the whole survey should take you little more than 15 minutes. When the data is analyzed, it will be disseminated at association meetings and conferences or I will supply it personally upon request.

Even though I do not believe you will find the questions personally sensitive, your confidentiality will be assured. Although the survey instrument is sent to you by name, no attempt will be made to match names with responses in the data analysis. The data will be analyzed and reported as aggregate data.

If you have any questions or concerns about the instrument or study itself, please don't hesitate to call me at 515-347-5411. Thanks in advance for your time and thoughtful answers. It is my sincere hope that this study will benefit all of us who serve as elementary school principals in Iowa.

Sincerely,

  
Robert J. Vittengl  
Principal

Enclosures

APPENDIX B: LETTER OF ENDORSEMENT

**Iowa Association of Elementary and Middle School Principals**

2900 Grand Avenue • Des Moines, Iowa 50312 • (515) 288-9741

February 1983

To Iowa Elementary School Principals:

Bob Vittengl, an IAEMSP member from East Union of Afton, is conducting a research project that focuses attention on the position of elementary school principal. This study is a sociological perspective that deals with such areas as personal characteristics; your major areas of satisfaction and dissatisfaction as school principals; your goals and professional aspirations; and your philosophies and beliefs as elementary principals.

We believe the study has merit and urge your cooperation and support in completing the enclosed questionnaire.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Gaylord Tryon".

Gaylord Tryon  
Executive Director

GT:pj

APPENDIX C: FOLLOW-UP LETTER



IOWA STATE  
UNIVERSITY

February 1983

Dear Colleague:

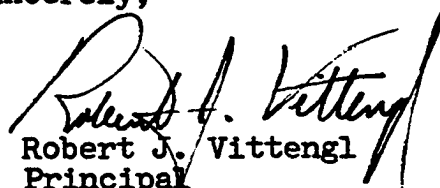
About ten days ago we sent you a letter and a survey instrument which dealt with the individual who serves as an elementary school principal in Iowa.

As you will perhaps recall, we're focusing upon several areas in our study, but most importantly what the individual elementary principal perceives as problem areas or dissatisfactions. We will analyze our data and provide information which we hope will be helpful to our principal's groups, school boards and superintendents, and all of those who support us in our role as elementary school principal.

If you've set the instrument aside, we're wondering if you might take a few minutes to complete and return it now.

Your time and thoughtful answers are greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

  
Robert J. Vittengl  
Principal

APPENDIX D: THE INSTRUMENT AND  
PRESENTATION OF DATA  
(N = 451)

## 1. What is your age?

Mean: 46.07 Years

S. D.: 8.45

Range: 26-65 Years

## 2. What is your sex?

Male: 403 89.56%

Female: 47 10.44%

## 3. What is your marital status?

Married: 413 91.78%

Never Married: 20 4.44%

Separated or Divorced: 13 2.89%

Widowed: 4 0.89%

## 4. How much schooling did your father and mother have?

## A. Less than eighth grade

Father:	77	17.23%	Mother:	39	8.78%
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## B. Completed eighth grade

Father:	109	24.39%	Mother:	82	18.47%
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## C. Partial high school

Father:	49	10.96%	Mother:	52	11.71%
---------	----	--------	---------	----	--------

## D. Completed high school

Father:	136	30.43%	Mother:	166	37.38%
---------	-----	--------	---------	-----	--------

## E. Partial college training

Father:	35	7.83%	Mother:	75	16.89%
---------	----	-------	---------	----	--------

## F. Completed college or university

Father:	17	3.80%	Mother:	24	5.41%
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## G. Completed graduate or professional training

Father:	24	5.36%	Mother:	6	1.35%
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## 5. How many children do you have?

None:	40	8.87%
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One:	37	8.20%
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Two:	167	37.03%
------	-----	--------

Three:	125	27.72%
--------	-----	--------

Four:	56	12.42%
-------	----	--------

Five or More:	26	5.77%
---------------	----	-------

Mean:	2.43
-------	------

S. D.:	1.24
--------	------

6. How would you classify yourself in regard to your political philosophy?

Democrat:	119	26.39%
Republican:	157	34.81%
Independent:	134	29.71%
No Preference:	41	9.09%

7. Going back some in time, when did you make the definite decision to become a teacher?

During grade school:	35	7.81%
During high school:	129	28.80%
After high school but before college:	53	11.83%
During college:	200	44.64%
After college:	31	6.92%

8. When you decided to enter teaching, did you expect to stay in it or did you expect to move into administration or other work?

Expected to stay in teaching:	258	57.59%
Expected to become a principal:	144	32.14%
Didn't expect to stay in education:	45	10.05%

9. If you had it to do over again, would you enter teaching?

Yes: 341 77.50%

No: 99 22.50%

If no, why not?

Not enough money:	45
Little opportunity to advance:	4
Stress/pressure too great:	6
Little Status:	5
Little Satisfaction:	3
Would enter business:	10
Other:	18
Not applicable:	343

10. How long did you teach - or do other work - before becoming a principal?

Mean: 8.46 Years

S. D.: 5.53 Years

Mode: 5 Years

Range: 1 - 39 Years

11. Were you ever an elementary school teacher?

Yes: 363 81.21%

No: 83 18.79%

If yes, how many years?

Mode: 5 Years

12. How old were you when you first became a principal?

Mean: 31.75 Years

S. D.: 5.96 Years

Mode: 30 Years

Range: 21 - 56 Years

13. How many years have you been an elementary school principal?

Mean: 13.44 Years

S. D.: 7.47 Years

Mode: 15 Years

Range: 1 - 40 Years

14. How many different principalships have you held?

Mean: 2.00

S. D.: 1.05

Mode: 1.00

Range: 1 - 6

15. Have you ever held a principalship or assistant/vice principalship other than that of an elementary school?

No: 330 73.50%

Yes: 119 26.50%

If yes, which kind/s of school?

Junior High School: 71

Middle School: 25

Senior High School: 41

16. If you had it to do over again, would you become an elementary school principal?

Certainly would:	264	59.06%
Probably would:	134	29.98%
Probably not:	47	10.52%
Certainly not:	2	0.45%

If not, why not?

Not enough money:	8
Too much stress:	6
Would enter business:	6
Little real power:	5
Other:	22



## 17. Please describe your present principalship.

## Number of buildings responsible for

1:	341	76.29%
2:	89	19.91%
3:	12	2.69%
4:	3	0.67%
5:	2	0.45%

## Number of students responsible for

0 - 100:	5
101 - 200:	29
201 - 300:	109
301 - 400:	151
401 - 500:	108
501 - 600:	28
601 + :	12
Mean:	362
S. D.:	118.95

## Grade levels included in your building

K - 3:	10	2.22%
K - 4:	29	6.43%
K - 5:	71	15.74%
K - 6:	254	56.10%
K - 8:	35	7.54%

Number of years in this position?

Mean: 8.59 Years

S. D.: 6.46 Years

Mode: 2 Years

Range: 1 - 31 Years

18. How would you characterize the community which your school serves?

Urban: 142 31.70%

Suburban: 74 16.52%

Rural: 232 51.79%

19. How would you characterize the instructional program in your building/s?

TRADITIONAL/ BASIC	1	2	3	4	5	6	INNOVATIVE/ EXPERIMENTAL
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1: 36

2: 115

3: 144

4: 106

5: 41

6: 4

Mean: 3.03

S. D.: 1.13

20. How would you characterize your teaching staff?

YOUTHFUL    1   2   3   4   5   6    VETERAN

1: 0

2: 12

3: 77

4: 147

5: 160

6: 53

Mean: 4.37

S. D.: 0.99

21. On the average, how many hours do you spend at school EACH WEEK?

Mean: 47.36 Hours

S. D.: 4.73 Hours

Mode: 45 Hours

Range: 20 - 65 Hours

How many additional hours do you spend in school related activities EACH WEEK?

Mean: 4.88 Hours

S. D.: 3.33 Hours

Mode: 5 Hours

How many days per year do you work? (Exclude regularly scheduled paid holidays and paid vacation days.)

Mean: 217.96 Days

S. D.: 15.13 Days

Mode: 210 Days

22. Which is the highest degree which you presently hold?

Bachelors:	3	0.67%
Masters:	375	83.33%
Specialist:	54	12.00%
Doctorate:	18	4.00%

23. How many graduate hours have you earned in the last five years?

0 - 6 Hours Earned:	287	63.92%
7 - 12 Hours Earned:	63	14.03%
13 - 18 Hours Earned:	25	5.57%
19 - 24 Hours Earned:	17	3.79%
25 or More Hours Earned:	49	10.91%

24. At what approximate age are you planning to retire from education?

Mean:	61.71 Years
S. D.:	4.22 Years
Mode:	65 Years

25. Listed below are several descriptors that principals have used to tell us how they spend a good deal of their time. Please tell us which three of these responsibilities you believe are the most important for you in your job. Place a "1" beside that responsibility which you believe is most important, a "2" beside that which is second most important, and a "3" beside the third most important.

<u>Categories</u>	<u>1's</u>	<u>2's</u>	<u>3's</u>
A. Building Manager	94 21.41%	59	61
B. Control Student Behavior	18 4.10%	49	37
C. Curriculum Development	35 7.97%	89	77
D. Emphasize Student Achievement	21 4.78%	65	35
E. Morale Builder	10 2.27%	26	25
F. Personnel Manager	15 3.42%	23	34
G. School-Community Relations	11 2.51%	36	105
H. Supervision of Instruction/ Teacher Evaluation	230 52.40%	89	59
I. Other	5 1.13%	3	4

26. Look at the above descriptors "A" through "I" again. Considering all these responsibilities . . .

Which do you consider to be the most difficult to do well?

A. Building Manager:	6	1.36%
B. Control Student Behavior:	11	2.48%
C. Curriculum Development:	81	18.33%
D. Emphasize Student Achievement:	8	1.81%
E. Morale Builder:	25	5.66%
F. Personnel Manager:	23	5.20%
G. School-Community Relations:	28	6.34%
H. Supervision of Instruction:	253	57.24%
I. Other:	7	1.58%

Which do you consider to be the most enjoyable?

A. Building Manager:	47	10.61%
B. Control Student Behavior:	9	2.03%
C. Curriculum Development:	44	9.93%
D. Emphasize Student Achievement:	99	22.35%
E. Morale Builder:	78	17.61%
F. Personnel Manager:	23	5.19%
G. School-Community Relations:	83	18.74%
H. Supervision of Instruction:	50	11.29%
I. Other:	10	2.26%

Which do you consider to be the least enjoyable?

A. Building Manager:	43	9.93%
B. Control Student Behavior:	198	45.73%
C. Curriculum Development:	35	8.08%
D. Emphasize Student Achievement:	3	0.69%
E. Morale Builder:	7	1.62%
F. Personnel Manager:	25	5.77%
G. School-Community Relations:	19	4.39%
H. Supervision of Instruction:	98	22.63%
I. Other:	5	1.16%

27. Thinking back over the last year or so, what work achievement is the source of greatest pride to you?

Curriculum Improvement:	78
Creating Good Climate/Morale:	45
Student Achievement:	33
Helping Teachers Do Better:	24
Introduction and Use of Computers:	22
Improving Student Behavior:	21
Improvement of Special Education Program:	14
Uncoded Other:	166
No Answer:	48

28. Again looking back over the last year or so, is there something you did which you wish you hadn't done? Or . . . is there something you didn't do which you wish you had? In other words, did you feel you made a mistake which you now regret?

None, They Didn't Make Any:	73
Didn't Deal Forcefully Enough with a Poor Teacher:	38
They Did, But They Can't Think of Any:	33
Regret an Interpersonal Interaction:	21
Didn't Help Someone with a Problem When They Should or Could Have:	9
Made a Hiring Mistake:	8
Error in Handling Master Contract:	3
Uncoded Other:	123



29. We're interested in knowing what for you would constitute a really good day--the kind that leaves you feeling great about how things are going. Listed below are several things principals have told us that are often found in one of their good days. Please circle the number which best corresponds to your feeling about each statement.

<u>WOULD NOT BE</u> A PART OF A GOOD DAY FOR ME.	1	2	3	4	5	6	<u>WOULD BE</u> A PART OF A GOOD DAY FOR ME.			
					<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>6</u>
A. A day in which I don't have to see any children for disciplinary purposes.					14	19	40	87	110	175
Mean:	4.76									
S. D.:	1.34									
B. A day which allows me to work at my desk without interruption for a couple of hours.					35	79	100	118	63	54
Mean:	3.57									
S. D.:	1.43									
C. A day in which I'm provided with some new educational challenge.					6	10	25	100	192	117
Mean:	4.81									
S. D.:	1.04									

	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>6</u>
D. A day in which I move about the building and interact with the children.	10	2	0	17	110	310
Mean:	5.55					
S. D.:	0.91					
E. A day when I can meet with other principals to discuss matters of mutual concern.	8	25	83	124	137	73
Mean:	4.28					
S. D.:	1.20					
F. A day when I observe in the classrooms.	5	17	41	93	171	122
Mean:	4.72					
S. D.:	1.13					
G. A day when I have an evaluation conference and can offer suggestions for improvement to teachers.	5	23	61	119	144	97
Mean:	4.48					
S. D.:	1.18					
H. A day when I have a staff meeting.	3	36	96	179	112	24
Mean:	3.96					
S. D.:	1.02					

30. Elementary school principals have told us that while they are usually satisfied with their jobs, there are occasions when they feel unfulfilled or frustrated in their role as an elementary principal. Listed below are several reasons principals have given as to why they feel unfulfilled or frustrated. Please circle the number which best corresponds to your feelings about each statement.

NO PROBLEM/ NOT TRUE FOR ME	1	2	3	4	5	6	SIGNIFICANT PROBLEM/VERY TRUE FOR ME		
				<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>6</u>
A. I'm seldom told I'm doing a good job.				48	111	104	66	78	42
Mean:	3.31								
S. D.:	1.50								
B. I have little opportunity to keep abreast of new developments in education.				56	126	106	92	55	15
Mean:	3.02								
S. D.:	1.33								
C. I don't have enough opportunity to interact with teachers.				79	131	88	90	47	15
Mean:	2.86								
S. D.:	1.38								
D. There seem to be so many interruptions, I'm seldom able to start and end a task as quickly as I would like.				19	60	94	89	111	77
Mean:	3.99								
S. D.:	1.43								

	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>6</u>
E. I don't have enough contact with students.	71	101	84	84	81	29
Mean:	3.20					
S. D.:	1.52					
F. Working with people is very imprecise. I have great difficulty in seeing if I've accomplished anything or not.	69	119	126	80	41	15
Mean:	2.89					
S. D.:	1.30					
G. I have to spend an inordinate amount of time managing student behavior.	97	160	98	54	34	7
Mean:	2.53					
S. D.:	1.25					
H. I have to spend an inordinate amount of time dealing with incompetent staff.	133	173	88	37	13	6
Mean:	2.20					
S. D.:	1.11					
I. I'm forced to spend an inordinate amount of time dealing with a myriad of bureaucratic paperwork.	23	80	92	107	108	40
Mean:	3.70					
S. D.:	1.37					

	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>6</u>
J. They don't pay me what I'm worth.	104	117	81	69	42	34
Mean: 2.84						
S. D.: 1.54						
K. The job that I do as a principal is generally unrecognized by my boss.	104	131	62	72	45	28
Mean: 2.79						
S. D.: 1.53						
L. I'm responsible for more than one building. It's difficult to keep them running smoothly and occasionally I'm in the wrong place at the wrong time. (NA = 294)	31	20	27	15	29	31
Mean: 3.55						
S. D.: 1.82						
M. My boss expects too much from me.	163	161	68	29	20	6
Mean: 2.11						
S. D.: 1.18						
N. Many parents in my building's attendance area have unrealistic expectations for their children.	98	175	93	53	22	8
Mean: 2.44						
S. D.: 1.20						

	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>6</u>
O. There seldom seems to be enough money to buy the things we need for our school.	101	129	87	62	44	27

Mean: 2.78

S. D.: 1.49

P. Our school children seem to be accomplishing quite a lot and very few people seem to appreciate it.	42	127	115	102	50	14
--	----	-----	-----	-----	----	----

Mean: 3.07

S. D.: 1.27

Q. I'm assigned extra duties which have little to do with what a principal should be doing.	165	126	60	45	38	13
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Mean: 2.34

S. D.: 1.42

R. Our district seems to have its priorities turned around--too much emphasis is placed at the secondary level.	90	83	70	91	60	55
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Mean: 3.25

S. D.: 1.66

31. When you decided to become a principal, you probably expected it to be better than what you were doing at the time. Listed below are several factors principals have said were significant for them as they thought about the principalship. Circle the number which best corresponds to the importance you attached to each factor.

	1	2	3	4	5	6			
WAS NOT AT ALL IMPORTANT TO ME							WAS EXTREMELY IMPORTANT TO ME		
				<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>6</u>
A. Higher salary				19	17	64	124	136	89
Mean:				4.35					
S. D.:				1.28					
B. More influence				24	38	68	122	126	70
Mean:				4.11					
S. D.:				1.37					
C. Greater challenge				9	11	19	81	167	162
Mean:				4.94					
S. D.:				1.12					
D. Greater responsibility				10	12	24	80	173	150
Mean:				4.88					
S. D.:				1.15					
E. More prestige				34	54	89	124	99	46
Mean:				3.76					
S. D.:				1.40					

	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>6</u>
F. More freedom	37	43	64	95	126	83
Mean:	4.06					
S. D.	1.51					
G. Stepping stone to a better job	116	98	84	67	48	34
Mean:	2.85					
S. D.:	1.58					
H. Wanted to get out of the classroom	166	103	70	54	27	26
Mean:	2.45					
S. D.:	1.54					



32. Principals tell us they have several sources for ideas or information which help them to make their schools better and/or more productive. Out of the list of sources below, please mark the three most important sources for you. Put a "1" beside that source which is most important, a "2" beside the second most important source, and a "3" beside the third most important.

	<u>1's</u>	<u>2's</u>	<u>3's</u>
College courses	16 3.65%	11	24
Consultants from outside the system	33 7.52%	24	42
State conferences	39 8.88%	46	39
Central office staff	7 1.60%	11	23
Parents or other community contacts	5 1.12%	13	21
Elementary teachers	65 14.81%	56	44
Superintendents	6 1.37%	5	8
Professional reading	80 18.22%	68	73
National professional conventions	25 5.70%	28	37
Local workshops	26 5.92%	39	34
AEA consultants	15 3.42%	37	21
Other elementary school principals	112 25.51%	99	66
Secondary principals	0 0.00%	0	2
Other	10 2.28%	1	3

33. Do you consider the elementary school principalship your final occupational goal?

Yes: 285 63.90%

No: 161 36.10%

If No, which position is your ultimate goal?

Elementary teacher:	1
Secondary teacher:	0
College teacher:	19
Secondary principal:	2
Supervisor or member of central office staff:	13
Director of elementary education:	25
Assistant superintendent of schools:	6
Superintendent of schools:	42
Other:	45

34. How secure do you feel in your present principalship-- that is do you have any worries about losing your job? Please circle the number which best corresponds to your feeling.

VERY INSECURE/ LOTS OF WORRIES	1	2	3	4	5	6	VERY SECURE/ NO WORRIES
-----------------------------------	---	---	---	---	---	---	----------------------------

1: 12

2: 19

3: 40

4: 62

5: 144

6: 171

Mean: 4.83

S. D.: 1.29

35. Some principals have told us that they would like to have greater freedom/autonomy in certain areas. Listed below are a few of those areas. Please circle the number which best corresponds to your feeling in each area.

HAVE PLENTY OF FREEDOM/ AUTONOMY	1	2	3	4	5	6	WOULD LIKE MUCH GREATER FREEDOM/AUTONOMY
--	---	---	---	---	---	---	--

	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>6</u>
A. Use of monies within your building/s.	131	136	51	49	55	28

Mean: 2.66

S. D.: 1.58

B. Interviewing and hiring staff for your building/s.	167	129	35	33	35	51
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Mean: 2.54

S. D.: 1.72

	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>6</u>
C. Dismissal of staff in your building/s.	122	128	61	50	37	50

Mean: 2.78

S. D.: 1.67

D. Evaluation of teachers.	243	132	25	19	16	14
----------------------------	-----	-----	----	----	----	----

Mean: 1.83

S. D.: 1.25

E. Implementation of particular classroom organizational patterns (self-contained, departmentalization, etc.)	151	161	82	28	14	13
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Mean: 2.18

S. D.: 1.22

F. Selection of curriculum materials.	124	142	86	51	32	14
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Mean: 2.48

S. D.: 1.35

Of those listed above, A through F, which one do you feel is the most important for a principal to have great freedom/autonomy in?

A:	42	9.68%
B:	238	54.84%
C:	25	5.76%
D:	63	14.52%
E:	44	10.10%
F:	22	5.07%

36. Elementary school principals have shared with us several ways in which they were rewarded or recognized for doing a good job as a principal. Please examine each of the following and indicate how you would feel about being recognized/rewarded in that manner. Please circle the appropriate number.

	WOULD MEAN VERY LITTLE TO ME						WOULD MEAN A GREAT DEAL TO ME					
	1	2	3	4	5	6	1	2	3	4	5	6
						<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>6</u>	
A. Receiving a substantial increase in salary.						9	27	59	91	133	130	
Mean:	4.56											
S. D.:	1.30											
B. Having the students in your building/s increase their scores on a standardized achievement test by a significant amount.						6	13	31	81	166	150	
Mean:	4.87											
S. D.:	1.12											
C. Have a mother write you a letter thanking you for all you've done for her child.						1	4	21	63	163	198	
Mean:	5.17											
S. D.:	0.92											
D. Having the school board tell you they like the idea you've presented and, yes, you can have the \$5,000 to implement it in your school.						3	13	19	79	163	173	
Mean:	5.01											
S. D.:	1.05											

	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>6</u>
E. Having the media contact you and ask to come to interview you about something special that's going on in your school.	19	37	69	153	91	81

Mean: 4.12

S. D.: 1.33

F. Seeing a child who was having social and academic problems begin to improve probably because of something you did.	1	0	2	24	130	291
---	---	---	---	----	-----	-----

Mean: 5.58

S. D.: 0.65

G. Receiving a hand-written note from your boss thanking you for the fine way you handled a problem for him/her.	1	6	24	61	153	203
--	---	---	----	----	-----	-----

Mean: 5.16

S. D.: 0.96

H. Having your boss suggest that you've been working very hard and s/he thinks you should make plans to take a week off and go to a national convention all expenses paid.	15	27	48	111	107	139
--	----	----	----	-----	-----	-----

Mean: 4.53

S. D.: 1.36

	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>6</u>
I. Being formally recognized by a local civic organization as an outstanding educator.	22	32	40	89	131	132

Mean: 4.50

S. D.: 1.43

J. Finally getting your staff to pull together on something on which they were previously polarized.	2	5	7	55	144	234
--	---	---	---	----	-----	-----

Mean: 5.32

S. D.: 0.88

K. Having your boss seek out your opinion on a perplexing educational problem because s/he believes you're on top of it.	0	5	14	81	170	178
--	---	---	----	----	-----	-----

Mean: 5.12

S. D.: 0.89

37. Principals tell us that they differ in the amount of influence they have within the school district. Where would you place yourself in comparative influence in district-wide policy?

Top third: 213 47.54%

Middle third: 167 37.28%

Lower third: 68 15.18%

38. Regarding collective bargaining, please indicate the extent to which you would characterize your staff as being militant.

NO BARGAINING UNIT = 0

NO MILITANCY	1	2	3	4	5	6	GREAT DEAL OF MILITANCY
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0: 20

1: 35

2: 108

3: 104

4: 100

5: 55

6: 21

Mean: 3.07

S. D.: 1.45



39. Some people say that tenure and contractual arrangements today make it almost impossible for principals to have real influence over faculty. How do you see it?

IT'S A REAL PROBLEM--MY INFLUENCE IS VERY LIMITED	1	2	3	4	5	6	IT'S NOT A PROBLEM-- I HAVE AS MUCH INFLUENCE AS I NEED
--	---	---	---	---	---	---	--

1: 16

2: 61

3: 72

4: 104

5: 144

6: 51

Mean: 4.01

S. D.: 1.34

40. If you could magically find ten hours more per week to spend on your work (magically in that it would not take away from your private life), how would you spend the time? What single activity would you be most likely to use it on? Check just one.

Engage in discussion with other principals or attend meetings dealing with principal problems:	45	10.02%
Improve management procedures in my office:	15	3.34%
Join with central office people on district-wide matters:	7	1.56%
Meet and work with parents and others in the community:	25	5.57%
Spend time in contact with students:	131	29.18%
Study and inquire into new research bearing on my work:	42	9.35%
Work with teachers on instructional matters:	178	39.64%
Other:	6	1.33%

41. Listed below are things principals have told us they see as costs or disadvantages associated with the principalship when compared to alternative careers they might have followed. Please circle the number which best corresponds to the degree of disadvantage you attach to each factor when you think of other careers you might have pursued.

	NO DISADVANTAGE							A GREAT DISADVANTAGE			
		1	2	3	4	5	6				
						<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>6</u>
A. Salary					34	80	75	115	106	39	
	Mean:	3.66									
	S. D.:	1.43									
B. Being a "public servant"					49	92	83	92	96	37	
	Mean:	3.46									
	S. D.:	1.50									
C. Not enough freedom/autonomy					64	134	115	88	34	14	
	Mean:	2.86									
	S. D.:	1.28									
D. Little real power					54	138	121	85	34	17	
	Mean:	2.91									
	S. D.:	1.27									
E. Little recognition					56	144	130	75	34	10	
	Mean:	2.82									
	S. D.:	1.21									

	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>6</u>
F. Little personal satisfaction	131	178	68	45	22	5
Mean:	2.25					
S. D.:	1.18					
G. Limited number of relationships with other adults	95	145	74	68	50	12
Mean:	2.70					
S. D.:	1.39					



	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>6</u>
D. Younger teaching staff	106	76	106	87	56	11
Mean:	2.87					
S. D.:	1.43					
E. More mature teaching staff	114	98	121	75	26	8
Mean:	2.60					
S. D.:	1.29					
F. Larger building budget	73	56	72	103	101	36
Mean:	3.48					
S. D.:	1.57					
G. Higher socio-economic level of students	122	83	82	90	55	11
Mean:	2.78					
S. D.:	1.47					
H. High level of student achievement	84	52	70	108	98	31
Mean:	3.40					
S. D.:	1.57					
I. One building assignment	29	13	17	20	43	64
N. A.:	255					
Mean:	4.22					
S. D.:	1.85					

	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>6</u>
J. Better philosophical mesh with boss	139	70	77	59	53	44
Mean:	2.88					
S. D.:	1.71					
K. Metropolitan area	239	72	47	36	34	13
Mean:	2.08					
S. D.:	1.46					
L. Suburban area	137	52	58	88	74	34
Mean:	3.03					
S. D.:	1.71					
M. Rural area	144	55	75	83	57	25
Mean:	2.83					
S. D.:	1.62					
N. More innovative programs	70	58	90	118	77	29
Mean:	3.36					
S. D.:	1.48					
O. More traditional programs	115	91	126	75	28	6
Mean:	2.61					
S. D.:	1.28					

43. A topic of frequent discussion focuses upon what characteristics would make up the IDEAL elementary school. We're interested in knowing what would constitute your ideal elementary school. Look at the following questions and respond as appropriate.

A. How many students would attend your IDEAL elementary school?

100 - 200:	6	1.34%
200 - 300:	104	23.16%
300 - 400:	169	37.64%
400 - 500:	128	28.51%
500 - 600:	38	8.46%
600 or more:	4	0.89%

B. How many students would be enrolled in the whole school district?

100 - 500:	6	1.34%
500 - 1,000:	64	14.25%
1,000 - 1,500:	77	17.15%
1,500 - 2,500:	80	17.82%
2,500 - 3,500:	82	18.26%
3,500 or more:	139	30.96%

C. What would be the average number of years of experience for your ideal teaching staff?

1 - 3 Years:	4	0.89%
4 - 8 Years:	256	57.02%
9 - 14 Years:	180	40.09%
15 or More Years:	9	2.00%



D. What level of involvement would you choose for the parents of your ideal elementary school?

Very active in school affairs:	125	27.72%
Moderately active in school affairs:	305	67.63%
Relatively inactive in school affairs:	21	4.66%
Inactive in school affairs:	0	0.00%

E. What would be the general curricular focus of the IDEAL elementary school? Circle the number which best corresponds to your feeling.

TRADITIONAL/ BASIC	1	2	3	4	5	6	INNOVATIVE/ EXPERIMENTAL
1:	11						
2:	64						
3:	138						
4:	161						
5:	62						
6:	6						
Mean:	3.49						
S. D.:	1.02						

44. Let's say a circle cut into eight even pieces represents your total "life space"--all your major interests and activities. How many pieces of the circle would you say "belong" to your work as a principal?

1 piece out of 8:	4	0.89%
2 pieces out of 8:	16	3.57%
3 pieces out of 8:	82	18.30%
4 pieces out of 8:	130	29.02%
5 pieces out of 8:	124	27.68%
6 pieces out of 8:	81	18.08%
7 pieces out of 8:	10	2.23%
8 pieces out of 8:	1	0.22%
Mean:	4.43	
S. D.:	1.21	

APPENDIX E: TABLES PRESENTING  
STATISTICAL TEST RESULTS

TABLE 1. Comparison of sentiments for principals from Iowa's 15 largest school districts with principals from all remaining districts on question 16 (If you had it to do over again, would you become an elementary school principal?) using a t-test (N = 447)

District Size	N	Mean	S. D.	t-value	Probability
Large	136	3.46	0.70	-0.27	0.7906
Small	311	3.48	0.70		

Scale: 1 = Certainly Not    2 = Probably Not    3 = Probably Would  
 4 = Certainly Would

TABLE 2. Comparison of responses for principals from Iowa's 15 largest school districts with principals from all remaining districts on question 21 (On the average, how many hours do you spend at school EACH WEEK?) using a t-test (N = 447)

District Size	N	Mean	S.D.	t-value	Probability
Large	135	47.09	5.03	-0.78	0.4337
Small	312	47.47	4.60		

TABLE 3. Comparison of responses for principals from Iowa's 15 largest school districts with principals from all remaining districts on question 21 C. (How many days per year do you work?) using a t-test (N = 426)

District Size	N	Mean	S.D.	t-value	Probability
Large	126	221.02	16.25	2.73**	0.0066
Small	300	216.67	14.46		

\*\*p < .01.

TABLE 4. Comparison of feelings of frustration for principals from Iowa's 15 largest school districts with principals from all remaining districts on question 30 A. (I'm seldom told I'm doing a good job.) using a t-test (N = 449)

District Size	N	Mean	S.D.	t-value	Probability
Large	136	3.53	1.40	2.01*	0.0455
Small	313	2.96	1.29		

Scale: 1 = No Problem/Not True for Me to 6 = Significant Problem/Very True for Me

\* $p < .05$ .

TABLE 5. Comparison of feelings of frustration for principals from Iowa's 15 largest school districts with principals from all remaining districts on question 30 B. (I have little opportunity to keep abreast of of new developments in education.) using a t-test (N = 450)

District Size	N	Mean	S.D.	t-value	Probability
Large	137	3.15	1.40	1.41	0.1605
Small	313	2.96	1.30		

Scale: 1 = No Problem/Not True for Me to 6 = Significant Problem/Very True for Me



TABLE 6. Comparison of feelings of frustration for principals from Iowa's 15 largest school districts with principals from all remaining districts on question 30 G. (I have to spend an inordinate amount of time managing student behavior.) using a t-test (N = 450)

District Size	N	Mean	S.D.	t-value	Probability
Large	137	2.92	1.45	4.45**	0.0001
Small	313	2.36	1.11		

Scale: 1 = No Problem/Not True for Me to 6 = Significant Problem/Very True for Me

\*\*p < .01.

TABLE 7. Comparison of feelings of frustration for principals from Iowa's 15 largest school districts with principals from all remaining districts on question 30 H. (I have to spend an inordinate amount of time dealing with incompetent staff.) using a t-test (N = 450)

District Size	N	Mean	S.D.	t-value	Probability
Large	137	2.47	1.15	3.33**	0.0009
Small	313	2.09	1.09		

Scale: 1 = No Problem/Not True for Me to 6 = Significant Problem/Very True for Me

\*\*p < .01.

TABLE 8. Comparison of feelings of frustration for principals from Iowa's 15 largest school districts with principals from all remaining districts on question 30 I. (I'm forced to spend an inordinate amount of time dealing with a myriad of bureaucratic paperwork.) using a t-test (N = 450)

District Size	N	Mean	S.D.	t-value	Probability
Large	137	4.29	1.24	6.25**	0.0001
Small	313	3.45	1.35		

Scale: 1 = No Problem/Not True for Me to 6 = Significant Problem/Very True for Me

\*\*p < .01.

TABLE 9. Comparison of feelings of frustration for principals from Iowa's 15 largest school districts with principals from all remaining districts on question 30 K. (The job that I do as a principal is generally unrecognized by my boss.) using a t-test (N = 442)

District Size	N	Mean	S.D.	t-value	Probability
Large	136	3.10	1.49	2.83**	0.0049
Small	306	2.65	1.53		

Scale: 1 = No Problem/Not True for Me to 6 = Significant Problem/Very True for Me

\*\*p < .01.

TABLE 10. Comparison of feelings of frustration for principals from Iowa's 15 largest school districts with principals from all remaining districts on question 30 Q. (I'm assigned extra duties which have little to do with what a principal should be doing.) using a t-test (N = 447)

District Size	N	Mean	S.D.	t-value	Probability
Large	137	2.31	1.37	-0.24	0.8135
Small	310	2.35	1.45		

Scale: 1 = No Problem/Not True for Me to 6 = Significant Problem/Very True for Me

TABLE 11. Comparison of sentiments for principals from Iowa's 15 largest school districts with principals from all remaining districts on question 34 (How secure do you feel in your present principalship--that is do you have any worries about losing your job?) using a t-test (N = 448)

District Size	N	Mean	S.D.	t-value	Probability
Large	136	5.04	1.19	2.33*	0.0203
Small	312	4.74	1.32		

Scale: 1 = Very Insecure/Lots of Worries to 6 = Very Secure/No Worries

\* $p < .05$ .

TABLE 12. Comparison of desire for greater autonomy for principals from Iowa's 15 largest school districts with principals from all remaining districts on question 35 A. (Use of monies within your building/s.) using a t-test (N = 450)

District Size	N	Mean	S.D.	t-value	Probability
Large	137	2.74	1.67	0.79	0.4314
Small	313	2.62	1.55		

Scale: 1 = Have Plenty of Freedom/Autonomy to 6 = Would Like Much Greater Freedom/Autonomy

TABLE 13. Comparison of desire for greater autonomy for principals from Iowa's 15 largest school districts with principals from all remaining districts on question 35 B. (Interviewing and hiring staff for your building/s.) using a t-test (N = 450)

District Size	N	Mean	S.D.	t-value	Probability
Large	137	3.58	2.00	9.19**	0.0001
Small	313	2.09	1.36		

Scale: 1 = Have Plenty of Freedom/Autonomy to 6 = Would Like Much Greater Freedom/Autonomy

\*\*p < .01.



TABLE 14. Comparison of desire for greater autonomy for principals from Iowa's 15 largest school districts with principals from all remaining districts on question 35 C. (Dismissal of staff in your building/s.) using a t-test (N = 448)

District Size	N	Mean	S.D.	t-value	Probability
Large	137	3.69	1.83	8.17**	0.0001
Small	311	2.38	1.42		

Scale: 1 = Have Plenty of Freedom/Autonomy to 6 = Would Like Much Greater Freedom/Autonomy

\*\*p < .01.

TABLE 15. Comparison of desire for greater autonomy for principals from Iowa's 15 largest school districts with principals from all remaining districts on question 35 D. (Evaluation of teachers.) using a t-test (N = 449)

District Size	N	Mean	S.D.	t-value	Probability
Large	136	2.22	1.45	4.45**	0.0001
Small	313	1.66	1.11		

Scale: 1 = Have Plenty of Freedom/Autonomy to 6 = Would Like Much Greater Freedom/Autonomy

\*\*p < .01.

TABLE 16. Comparison of desire for greater autonomy for principals from Iowa's 15 largest school districts with principals from all remaining districts on question 35 E. (Implementation of particular classroom or organizational patterns such as self-contained, departmentalization, etc.) using a t-test (N = 449)

District Size	N	Mean	S.D.	t-value	Probability
Large	136	2.31	1.39	1.47	0.1409
Small	313	2.12	1.13		

Scale: 1 = Have Plenty of Freedom/Autonomy to 6 = Would Like Much Greater Freedom/Autonomy

TABLE 17. Comparison of desire for greater autonomy for principals from Iowa's 15 largest school districts with principals from all remaining districts on question 35 F. (Selection of curriculum materials.) using a t-test (N = 449)

District Size	N	Mean	S.D.	t-value	Probability
Large	136	3.29	1.43	9.02**	0.0001
Small	313	2.13	1.16		

Scale: 1 = Have Plenty of Freedom/Autonomy to 6 = Would Like Much Greater Freedom/Autonomy

\*\*p < .01.

TABLE 18. Comparison of sentiments for principals from Iowa's 15 largest school districts with principal's from all remaining districts on question 37 (Principals tell us they differ in the amount of influence they have within the school district. Where would you place yourself in comparative influence in district-wide policy?) using a t-test (N = 448)

District Size	N	Mean	S.D.	t-value	Probability
Large	135	1.89	0.75	4.16**	0.0001
Small	313	1.58	0.69		

Scale: 1 = Top Third      2 = Middle Third      3 = Lower Third

\*\*p < .01.

TABLE 19. Comparison of sentiments for principals from Iowa's 15 largest school districts with principals from all remaining districts on question 38 (Regarding collective bargaining, please indicate the extent to which you would characterize your staff as being militant.) using a t-test (N = 443)

District Size	N	Mean	S.D.	t-value	Probability
Large	133	2.95	1.26	-1.25	0.2123
Small	310	3.14	1.53		

Scale: 0 = No Bargaining Unit      1 = No Militancy      to      6 = Great Deal of Militancy

TABLE 20. Comparison of sentiments for principals from Iowa's 15 largest school districts with principals from all remaining districts on question 39 (Some people say that tenure and contractual arrangements today make it almost impossible for principals to have real influence over faculty. How do you see it?) using a t-test (N = 448)

District Size	N	Mean	S.D.	t-value	Probability
Large	134	3.81	1.42	-2.10*	0.0367
Small	314	4.10	1.30		

Scale: 1 = It's a Real Problem--My Influence is Very Limited to  
 6 = It's Not a Problem--I have as Much Influence as I Need

\*p < .05.

TABLE 21. Comparison of sentiments concerning ideal school situations for principals from Iowa's 15 largest school districts with principals from all remaining districts on question 43 B. (How many students would be enrolled in the whole district?) using a t-test (N = 448)

District Size	N	Mean	S.D.	t-value	Probability
Large	136	5.55	0.89	14.09**	0.0001
Small	312	3.76	1.36		

Scale: 1 = 100 - 500    2 = 500 - 1,000    3 = 1,000 - 1,500  
 4 = 1,500 - 2,500    5 = 2,500 - 3,500    6 = 3,500 or More

\*\*p < .01.



TABLE 22. Comparison of sentiments concerning ideal school situations for principals from Iowa's 15 largest school districts with principals from all remaining districts on question 43 D. (What level of involvement would you choose for the parents of your ideal elementary school?) using a t-test (N = 451)

District Size	N	Mean	S.D.	t-value	Probability
Large	137	3.31	0.54	2.25*	0.0247
Small	314	3.19	0.51		

Scale: 1 = Inactive in school affairs    2 = Relatively inactive in school affairs  
 3 = Moderately active in school affairs    4 = Very active in school affairs

\* $p < .05$ .

TABLE 23. Comparison of sentiments concerning ideal school situations for principals from Iowa's 15 largest school districts with principals from all remaining districts on question 43 E. (What would be the general curricular focus of the IDEAL elementary school? using a t-test (N = 442)

District Size	N	Mean	S.D.	t-value	Probability
Large	133	3.62	1.18	1.79	0.0736
Small	309	3.43	0.95		

Scale: 1 = Traditional/Basic to 6 = Innovative/Experimental

TABLE 24. Comparison of sentiments for principals from Iowa's 15 largest school districts with principals from all remaining districts on question 44 (Let's say a circle cut into eight even pieces represents your total "life space"--all your major interests and activities. How many pieces of the pie would you say "belong" to your work as a principal?) using a t-test (N = 448)

District Size	N	Mean	S.D.	t-value	Probability
Large	136	4.31	1.21	-1.44	0.1509
Small	312	4.49	1.21		

TABLE 25. Analysis of variance among principals characterizing themselves as working in an urban, suburban, or rural community for question 9 (If you had it to do over again, would you enter teaching?) (N = 439)

Source	DF	SS	MS	F
Community Type	2	0.6345	0.3172	1.82
Error	436	76.0397	0.1744	

Scale: 1 = Yes      2 = No

Means:	Urban	(N = 141)	1.18
	Suburban	(N = 72)	1.21
	Rural	(N = 226)	1.26

TABLE 26. Analysis of variance among principals characterizing themselves as working in an urban, suburban, or rural community for question 16 (If you had it to do over again, would you become an elementary school principal?) (N = 446)

Source	DF	SS	MS	F
Community Type	2	0.4724	0.2362	0.48
Error	443	216.7562	0.4892	

Scale: 1 = Certainly Not      2 = Probably Not      3 = Probably  
 Would      4 = Certainly Would

Means: Urban	(N = 142)	3.43
Suburban	(N = 73)	3.53
Rural	(N = 231)	3.48

TABLE 27. Analysis of variance among principals characterizing themselves as working in an urban, suburban, or rural community for question 24 (At what approximate age are you planning to retire from education?) (N = 424)

Source	DF	SS	MS	F
Community Type	2	43.7484	21.8742	1.22
Error	423	7535.5699	17.8992	
Means:				
Urban	(N = 138)	61.78		
Suburban	(N = 67)	62.37		
Rural	(N = 219)	61.46		

TABLE 28. Analysis of variance among principals characterizing themselves as working in an urban, suburban, or rural community for question 43 D. (What level of involvement would you choose for the parents of your ideal elementary school?) (N = 448)

Source	DF	SS	MS	F
Community Type	2	5.2569	2.6284	10.13**
Error	445	115.5198	0.2595	

Scale: 1 = Inactive in school affairs    2 = Relatively inactive in school affairs  
 3 = Moderately active in school affairs  
 4 = Very active in school affairs

Means:	Urban	(N = 142)	3.32
	Suburban	(N = 74)	3.38
	Rural	(N = 232)	3.13

\*\*p < .01.

TABLE 29. Analysis of variance among principals characterizing themselves as working in an urban, suburban, or rural community for question 30 A. (I'm seldom told I'm doing a good job.) (N = 446)

Source	DF	SS	MS	F
Community Type	2	7.3750	3.6875	1.63
Error	443	1004.3043	2.2671	

Scale: 1 = No Problem/Not True for Me to 6 = Significant Problem/Very True for Me

Means: Urban	(N = 141)	3.48
Suburban	(N = 74)	3.35
Rural	(N = 231)	3.19



TABLE 30. Analysis of variance among principals characterizing themselves as working in an urban, suburban, or rural community for question 30 B. (I have little opportunity to keep abreast of new developments in education.) (N = 447)

Source	DF	SS	MS	F
Community Type	2	6.7383	3.3691	1.90
Error	444	788.0805	1.7749	

Scale: 1 = No Problem/Not True for Me to 6 = Significant Problem/Very True for Me

Means: Urban	(N = 142)	3.19
Suburban	(N = 74)	3.03
Rural	(N = 231)	2.91

TABLE 31. Analysis of variance among principals characterizing themselves as working in an urban, suburban, or rural community for question 30 G. (I have to spend in an inordinate amount of time managing student behavior.) (N = 447)

Source	DF	SS	MS	F
Community Type	2	22.0067	11.0034	7.19**
Error	444	679.3355	1.5300	

Scale: 1 = No Problem/Not True for Me to 6 = Significant Problem/Very True for Me

Means: Urban	(N = 141)	2.85
Suburban	(N = 74)	2.47
Rural	(N = 232)	2.35

\*\*p < .01.

TABLE 32. Analysis of variance among principals characterizing themselves as working in an urban, suburban, or rural community for question 30 H. (I have to spend an inordinate amount of time dealing with incompetent staff.) (N = 447)

Source	DF	SS	MS	F
Community Type	2	0.5603	0.2801	0.22
Error	444	559.6723	1.2605	

Scale: 1 = No Problem/Not True for Me to 6 = Significant Problem/Very True for Me

Means: Urban	(N = 141)	2.26
Suburban	(N = 74)	2.19
Rural	(N = 232)	2.19

TABLE 33. Analysis of variance among principals characterizing themselves as working in an urban, suburban, or rural community for question 30 K. (The job I do is generally unrecognized by my boss.)  
(N = 439)

Source	DF	SS	MS	F
Community Type	2	23.5158	11.7579	5.11**
Error	436	1002.3566	2.2990	

Scale: 1 = No Problem/Not True for Me to 6 = Significant Problem/Very True for Me

Means: Urban	(N = 140)	3.09
Suburban	(N = 73)	2.85
Rural	(N = 226)	2.58

\*\*p < .01.

TABLE 34. Analysis of variance for amounts of freedom/autonomy among principals characterizing themselves as working in an urban, suburban, or rural community for question 35 D. (Evaluation of teachers.) (N = 446)

Source	DF	SS	MS	F
Community Type	2	15.6749	7.8374	5.09**
Error	443	682.0470	1.5396	

Scale: 1 = Have Plenty of Freedom/Autonomy to 6 = Would Like Much Greater Freedom/Autonomy

Means: Urban	(N = 142)	2.01
Suburban	(N = 73)	2.77
Rural	(N = 231)	1.96

\*\*p < .01.

TABLE 35. Analysis of variance for amounts of freedom/autonomy among principals characterizing themselves as working in an urban, suburban, or rural community for question 35 E. (Implementation of particular classroom organizational patterns such as self-contained, departmentalization, etc.) (N = 446)

Source	DF	SS	MS	F
Community Type	2	4.1866	2.0933	1.41
Error	443	657.3672	1.4838	

Scale: 1 = Have Plenty of Freedom/Autonomy to 6 = Would Like Much Greater Freedom/Autonomy

Means: Urban	(N = 142)	2.31
Suburban	(N = 73)	2.21
Rural	(N = 231)	2.10

TABLE 36. Analysis of variance for amounts of freedom/autonomy among principals characterizing themselves as working in an urban, suburban, or rural community for question 35 E. (Selection of curriculum materials.) (N = 446)

Source	DF	SS	MS	F
Community Type	2	140.8821	70.4411	45.99**
Error	443	678.4744	1.5315	

Scale: 1 = Have Plenty of Freedom/Autonomy to 6 = Would Like Much Greater Freedom/Autonomy

Means: Urban	(N = 142)	3.19
Suburban	(N = 73)	2.77
Rural	(N = 231)	1.96

\*\*p < .01.

TABLE 37. Analysis of variance among principals characterizing themselves as working in an urban, suburban, or rural community on question 37 (Principals tell us they differ in the amount of influence they have within the school district. Where would you place yourself in comparative influence in district-wide policy?) (N = 445)

Source	DF	SS	MS	F
Community Type	2	8.5221	4.2611	8.39**
Error	442	224.5250	0.5080	

Scale: 1 = Top Third      2 = Middle Third      3 = Bottom Third

Means: Urban	(N = 141)	1.82
Suburban	(N = 73)	1.82
Rural	(N = 231)	1.54

\*\*p < .01.



TABLE 38. Analysis of variance among principals characterizing themselves as working in an urban, suburban, or rural community on question 39 (Some people say that tenure and contractual arrangements today make it almost impossible for principals to have real influence over faculty. How do you see it?) (N = 446)

Source	DF	SS	MS	F
Community Type	2	3.4671	1.7335	0.96
Error	443	803.5126	1.8137	

Scale: 1 = It's a Real Problem--My Influence is Very Limited  
to 6 = It's Not a Problem--I have as Much Influence as I Need

Means: Urban	(N = 142)	3.88
Suburban	(N = 72)	4.03
Rural	(N = 232)	4.08

TABLE 39. Analysis of variance among principals characterizing themselves as working in an urban, suburban, or rural community for question 43 E. (What would be the general curricular focus of the IDEAL elementary school? (N = 439))

Source	DF	SS	MS	F
Community Type	2	10.3658	5.1829	5.05**
Error	436	447.3698	1.0261	

Scale: 1 = Traditional/Basic to 6 = Innovative/Experimental

Means: Urban	(N = 138)	3.65
Suburban	(N = 73)	3.66
Rural	(N = 228)	3.35

\*\*p < .01.

TABLE 40. Analysis of variance among principals characterizing themselves as working in an urban, suburban, or rural community for question 44 (Let's say a circle represents your total "life space"--all your major interests and activities. How many pieces of the pie would you say "belong" to your work as a principal?) (N = 445)

Source	DF	SS	MS	F
Community Type	2	0.8034	0.4017	0.27
Error	442	648.4909	1.4671	
Means:				
Urban	(N = 140)	4.37		
Suburban	(N = 74)	4.47		
Rural	(N = 231)	4.46		

TABLE 41. Pearson product-moment correlation coefficients for question 29 (We're interested in knowing what for you would constitute a really good day--the kind that leaves you feeling great about how things are going.) items A through H (N = 445)

ITEM	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
A		.22**	.06	.21**	.13**	.11*	.07	.07
B	.22**		.13**	.01	.09	.01	.03	.07
C	.06	.13**		.48**	.11*	.25**	.37**	.19**
D	.21**	.01	.48**		.19**	.46**	.35**	.17**
E	.13**	.09	.11*	.19**		.21**	.13	.22**
F	.11*	.01	.25**	.46**	.21**		.52**	.24**
G	.07	.03	.37**	.35**	.13	.52**		.30**
H	.07	.07	.19**	.17**	.22**	.24**	.30**	

Legend: A = A day in which I don't have to see any children for disciplinary purposes. B = A day which allows me to work at my desk without interruption for a couple of hours. C = A day in which I'm provided with some new educational challenge. D = A day in which I move about the building and interact with the children. E = A day when I can meet with other principals to discuss matters of mutual concern. F = A day when I observe in the classrooms. G = A day when I have an evaluation conference and can offer suggestions for improvement to teachers. H = A day when I have a staff meeting.

\*p < .05.

\*\*p < .01.

TABLE 42a. Legend for Table 42b.

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Legend: A = I'm seldom told I'm doing a good job. B = I have little opportunity to keep abreast of new developments in education. C = I don't have enough opportunity to interact with teachers. D = There seem to be so many interruptions, I'm seldom able to start and end a task as quickly as I would like. E = I don't have enough contact with students. F = Working with people is very imprecise. I have great difficulty in seeing if I've accomplished anything or not. G = I have to spend an inordinate amount of time managing student behavior. H = I'm forced to spend an inordinate amount of time dealing with incompetent staff. I = I'm forced to spend an inordinate amount of time dealing with a myriad of bureaucratic paperwork. J = They don't pay me what I'm worth. K = The job that I do as a principal is generally unrecognized by my boss. L = I'm responsible for more than one building. It's difficult to keep them running smoothly and occasionally I'm in the wrong place at the wrong time. M = My boss expects too much from me. N = Many parents in my building's attendance area have unrealistic expectations for their children. O = There seldom seems to be enough money to buy the things we need for our school. P = Our school children seem to be accomplishing quite a lot and very few people seem to appreciate it. Q = I'm assigned extra duties which have little to do with what a principal should be doing. R = Our district seems to have its priorities turned around--too much emphasis is placed at the secondary level.

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TABLE 42b. Pearson product-moment correlation coefficients for question 30 (Elementary School principals have told us that while they are usually satisfied with their jobs, there are occasions when they feel UNFULFILLED OR FRUSTRATED in their role as an elementary principal.) items A through R (N = 449)

ITEM	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
A		.12*	.12*	.10*	.16**	.25**	.16**	.14**	.19**
B	.12*		.29**	.24**	.25**	.19**	.19**	.15**	.25**
C	.12*	.29**		.32**	.50**	.20**	.14**	.19**	.23**
D	.10*	.24**	.32**		.32**	.20**	.23**	.22**	.40**
E	.16**	.25**	.50**	.32**		.26**	.15**	.22**	.25**
F	.25**	.19**	.20**	.20**	.26**		.22**	.26**	.13**
G	.16**	.19**	.14**	.23**	.15**	.22**		.30**	.23**
H	.14**	.15**	.19**	.22**	.22**	.26**	.30**		.22**
I	.19**	.25**	.23**	.40**	.25**	.13**	.23**	.22**	
J	.29**	.23**	.06	.16**	.19**	.09	.23**	.13**	.20**
K	.63**	.14**	.14**	.16**	.07	.18**	.15**	.12**	.23**
L	.05	.02	-.02	-.01	.01	.05	.01	.03	.04
M	.27**	.22**	.17**	.23**	.12**	.07	.21**	.17**	.28**
N	.14**	.17**	.13**	.26**	.16**	.15**	.30**	.22**	.25**
O	.11*	.24**	.13**	.25**	.18**	.10*	.12*	.19**	.23**
P	.33**	.19**	.16**	.31**	.23**	.29**	.23**	.22**	.27**
Q	.09	.20**	.10*	.24**	.03	.04	.09*	.07	.23**
R	.32**	.18**	.15**	.20**	.24**	.17**	.16**	.18**	.31**

\* $p < .05$ .

\*\* $p < .01$ .

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	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R
A	.29**	.63**	.05	.27**	.14**	.11*	.33**	.09	.32**
B	.23**	.14**	.02	.22**	.17**	.24**	.19**	.20**	.18**
C	.06	.14**	-.02	.17**	.13**	.13**	.16**	.10*	.15**
D	.16**	.16**	-.01	.23**	.26**	.25**	.31**	.24**	.20**
E	.19**	.07	.01	.12**	.16**	.18**	.23**	.03	.24**
F	.09	.18**	.05	.07	.15**	.10*	.29**	.04	.17**
G	.23**	.15**	.01	.21**	.30**	.12*	.23**	.09*	.16**
H	.13**	.12**	.03	.17**	.22**	.19**	.22**	.07	.18**
I	.20**	.23**	.04	.28**	.25**	.23**	.27**	.23**	.31**
J		.38**	.07	.21**	.12*	.21**	.24**	.22**	.31**
K	.38**		.03	.41**	.14**	.22**	.33**	.19**	.37**
L	.07	.03		-.02	-.02	-.03	-.05	-.09	-.04
M	.22**	.41**	-.02		.27**	.26**	.22**	.38**	.28**
N	.12*	.14**	-.02	.27**		.27**	.31**	.18**	.22**
O	.21**	.22**	-.03	.26**	.27**		.38**	.28**	.37**
P	.24**	.33**	-.05	.22**	.31**	.38**		.27**	.38**
Q	.22**	.19**	-.09	.38**	.18**	.28**	.27**		.24**
R	.31**	.37**	-.04	.28**	.22**	.37**	.38**	.24**	

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TABLE 43. Pearson product-moment correlation coefficients for question 32 (When you decided to become a principal you probably expected it to be better than what you were doing at the time. Listed below are several factors principals have said were significant for them as they thought about the principalship.) items A through H (N = 449)

ITEM	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
A		.23**	.19**	.16**	.20**	.18**	.12**	.04
B	.23**		.43**	.46**	.47**	.31**	.05	.01
C	.19**	.43**		.74**	.29**	.26**	.16**	-.01
D	.16**	.46**	.74**		.41**	.33**	.11*	.02
E	.20**	.47**	.29**	.41**		.47**	.21**	.16**
F	.18**	.31**	.26**	.33**	.47**		.19**	.25**
G	.12**	.05	.16**	.11*	.21**	.19**		.32**
H	.04	.01	-.01	.02	.16**	.25**	.32**	

Legend: A = Higher salary      B = More influence      C =  
 Greater Challenge      D = Greater responsibility      E = More  
 prestige      F = More freedom      G = Stepping stone to a better  
 job      H = Wanted to get out of the classroom

\* $p < .05$ .

\*\* $p < .01$ .



TABLE 44a. Legend for Table 44b.

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Legend: A = Receiving a substantial increase in salary.  
B = Having the students in your building/s increase their scores on a standardized achievement test by a significant amount. C = Have a mother write you a letter thanking you for all you've done for her child. D = Having the school board tell you they like the idea you've presented and, yes, you can have the \$5,000 to implement it in your school. E = Having the media contact you and ask to come to interview you about something special that's going on in your school. F = Seeing a child who was having social and academic problems begin to improve probably because of something you did. G = Receiving a hand-written note from your boss thanking you for the fine way you handled a problem for him/her. H = Having your boss suggest that you've been working very hard and s/he thinks you should make plans to take a week off and go to a national convention all expenses paid. I = Being formally recognized by a local civic organization as an outstanding educator. J = Finally getting your staff to pull together on something on which they were previously polarized. K = Having your boss seek out your opinion on a perplexing educational problem because s/he believes you're on top of it.

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TABLE 44b. Pearson product-moment correlation coefficients for question 36 (Elementary school principals have shared with us several ways in which they were rewarded or recognized for doing a good job as a principal. Please examine each of the following and indicate how you would feel about being rewarded/recognized in that manner.) items A through K (N = 449)

ITEM	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
A		.21**	.05	.24**	.12*	.05	.18**	.24**	.23**
B	.21**		.26**	.22**	.14**	.23**	.18**	.07	.11*
C	.05	.26**		.25**	.26**	.42**	.41**	.21**	.24**
D	.24**	.22**	.25**		.35**	.33**	.33**	.33**	.32**
E	.12*	.14**	.26**	.35**		.17**	.30**	.16**	.46**
F	.05	.23**	.42**	.33**	.17**		.36**	.19**	.17**
G	.18**	.18**	.41**	.33**	.30**	.36**		.38**	.37**
H	.24**	.07	.21**	.33**	.16**	.19**	.38**		.36**
I	.23**	.11*	.24**	.32**	.46**	.17**	.37**	.36**	
J	.06	.24**	.33**	.32**	.23**	.41**	.33**	.19**	.26**
K	.20**	.22**	.37**	.41**	.36**	.29**	.45**	.32**	.36**

\*p < .05.

\*\*p < .01.

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	J	K
A	.06	.20**
B	.24**	.22**
C	.33**	.37**
D	.32**	.41**
E	.23**	.36**
F	.41**	.29**
G	.33**	.45**
H	.19**	.32**
I	.26**	.36**
J		.42**
K	.42**	

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APPENDIX F: JOB DESCRIPTION OF AN  
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PRINCIPAL

NEWTON COMMUNITY SCHOOL DISTRICT  
Newton, Iowa

POSITION DESCRIPTION

TITLE: Principal (Elementary School)

QUALIFICATIONS:

1. A Master's Degree or higher, with a major in educational administration.
2. A valid state certificate to practice as a school principal.
3. A minimum of three years successful experience in public school administration, preferably at the elementary level.
4. A minimum of four years successful experience as a classroom teacher, preferably at the elementary level.
5. Such alternatives to the above qualifications as the Board may find appropriate and acceptable.

REPORTS TO: Superintendent of Schools through the Director of Curriculum and Instruction

SUPERVISES:

1. Teachers, secretaries, and paraprofessionals.
2. Food Service personnel and custodians in cooperation with their supervisors.
3. Other resource and service personnel while serving in assigned school.

## POSITION GOAL:

By use of leadership, supervisory, and administrative skills, to manage assigned school so as to promote the educational development of each student as well as the professional development of each staff member.

## PERFORMANCE RESPONSIBILITIES:

1. Establish, maintain, and be accountable for an effective learning environment in the school.
2. Establish and maintain high standards of student conduct and enforce discipline as necessary, according due process to the rights of students.
3. Promote positive action toward the realization of school objectives through efficient procedures, curriculum, extracurricular programs, and the establishment of staff, student, and community committees.
4. Develop and implement a staff-improvement program for teachers in the building. Serve as a catalyst for creative thinking and action.
5. Assume the responsibility for the observance and implementation of Board policies and administrative regulations.
6. Assist in the screening, hiring, training, assigning, and evaluating of all personnel assigned to the school.
7. Assume responsibility for the safety and administration of all personnel and the facility; exercise decisive leadership in crisis situations.
8. Report to appropriate central office administrators regarding the needs of the school with respect to personnel, finance, curriculum, facilities, equipment, and supplies.
9. Prepare or supervise the preparation of reports, records, lists, and all other paper work required by state law as appropriate to the school's administration.
10. Prepare and submit the school's budgetary requests and monitor the expenditure of funds.

11. Define and delegate appropriate supervisory responsibility for ALL school activities. Plan for the proper conduct of participants and spectators at all public events.

12. Delegate authority to responsible personnel to assume responsibility for the school in the absence of the principal.

13. Plan and supervise fire drills and an emergency preparedness program.

14. Recommend and participate in the removal of an employee whose work is unacceptable.

15. Assist in administering the negotiated agreement.

16. Design and implement a building-level communication system which effectively meets the needs of the staff and students.

17. Keep abreast of trends, promising ideas, and research in the profession by attending professional meetings, reading professional literature and discussing problems of mutual interest with others in the field.

18. Exercise leadership in establishing and clarifying short and long-range educational goals.

19. Perform such other tasks and assume such other responsibilities as may be assigned by the Superintendent.

**TERMS OF EMPLOYMENT:**

Two hundred and fifteen (215) days. Salary to be established by the Board.

**EVALUATION:**

Performance of this position will be evaluated annually in accordance with provisions of the Board policy on evaluation of administrative personnel.