

**Identifying Professional Development Opportunities and Supports for K-12 Principals and
Assistant Principals**

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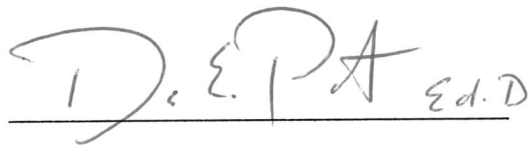
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Dedication

This work is for my incredible wife, Rebecca, and our two amazing kids, Owen and Emerson. Your unwavering support and love have been my greatest strength. Thank you for giving me the opportunity to follow my dream and providing me with the time and space to complete this work.

I also want to thank my parents, Tom and Patricia Seidenberger, for their constant guidance and encouragement. Their unwavering belief in my potential has been a source of inspiration. Additionally, my brother Drew has always been there for me, offering consistent and dependable support.

Acknowledgements

In the words of Theodore Roosevelt, "It is not the critic who counts; not the man who points out how the strong man stumbles, or where the doer of deeds could have done them better. The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena, whose face is marred by dust and sweat and blood." This quote reflects the highs and lows of my journey, and I am profoundly grateful to everyone who has been by my side, offering support through every challenge and success.

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Abstract

This research investigates the main sources of professional development and support for K-12 principals and assistant principals in Pennsylvania, encompassing various areas of training, including but not limited to SEL and building equitable school communities. The study explores whether school leaders receive specific professional development related to these areas and examines if the training goes beyond defining concepts and developing general awareness.

Using a mixed-methods approach, the research gathered data through a survey and structured interviews. The survey employed Likert scales and multiple-choice questions to collect quantitative data, while interviews provided qualitative insights. Findings reveal significant gaps in several training areas, including SEL and equity, highlighting that current programs often lack depth and practical application.

The study identifies a need for more comprehensive, ongoing, and accessible professional development opportunities. Recommendations include addressing barriers to equitable training, developing sustained training sessions, and implementing practical support systems. By addressing these gaps, school districts can better equip their leaders to meet the diverse needs of their school communities and promote continuous improvement.

This research enhances the understanding of the professional development needs of K-12 principals and assistant principals in Pennsylvania and offers actionable recommendations for improving the effectiveness and equity of professional development opportunities

CHAPTER I

Background

Professional development plays a crucial role in the growth and effectiveness of K-12 principals and assistant principals. These resources offer invaluable support and guidance, enabling principals and assistant principals to enhance their leadership skills, stay updated with educational trends, and improve overall school performance.

Professional development events and mentor relationships introduce principals to other educational leaders. Mentorship programs are of paramount importance for the professional growth and overall effectiveness of K-12 principals and assistant principals in their roles. These programs provide valuable support, guidance, and a platform for continuous learning, benefiting both individual school leaders and the educational institutions they serve.

Diversity, equity and inclusion professional development for K-12 principals and assistant principals is essential in fostering inclusive school environments and promoting equitable education for all students. Such training equips school leaders with the knowledge, skills, and strategies to effectively address issues related to diversity, equity, and inclusion. Training in cultural competence helps school leaders understand and appreciate the diverse backgrounds, experiences, and perspectives of students, staff, and families. This understanding is crucial for creating a welcoming and inclusive school culture.

Potential Outcomes

Implementing professional development opportunities and supports for K-12 principals and assistant principals can yield a variety of positive outcomes, impacting both individual leaders and the overall school environment. Providing these professional development opportunities and supports help principals and assistant principals to enhance their leadership skills, improve instructional practices, strategic planning, and goal setting, in addition to promoting equity and inclusion.

Professional development opportunities provide principals and assistant principals with the skills and knowledge necessary to be effective educational leaders. This may include training in instructional leadership, strategic planning, communication, and other key leadership competencies. These opportunities and supports can focus on improving instructional leadership, helping principals and assistant principals support teachers in implementing effective teaching strategies. Implementing new and effective strategies may lead to improved classroom practices and ultimately enhance student achievement.

Fiscal Implications

Professional development often requires access to technology, such as laptops, projectors, or other audio-visual equipment, as well as training materials, handouts, or resources. These costs may need to be budgeted for separately. There may also be administrative costs associated with organizing the professional development opportunities, such as scheduling, registration, and communication with participants (K-12 principals and assistant principals).

It's essential to carefully consider and budget for possible indirect costs associated with professional development opportunities for K-12 principals and assistant principals. While indirect costs may not be as apparent as direct expenses, they are crucial for ensuring the successful implementation and integration of new knowledge and skills into the school's leadership practices.

One specific option for professional development would be to partner with the Delaware Academy for School Leadership (DASL) through the University of Delaware. Below is a sample of the services that could be provided by DASL and the potential cost(s) that is associated with these services.

QUOTE - \$25,571 – Item #'s 1-3 Outlined below, including professional development and/or group coaching to be delivered in a monthly elementary PLC.

QUOTE - \$18,306 – Item # 4- Optional Leadership Coaching

Delaware Academy for School Leadership (DASL) Leadership Specialists will provide professional development and/or group coaching for the 2024-2025 elementary principal PLC. Topics areas TBD in consultation with the Director of Elementary Education and elementary principals. A project manager will be assigned to provide coordination of services provided. An add-on option is included for the Leadership Coaches to provide up to 105 hours of individual coaching across the elementary principals, to be divided up and delivered as needed/requested during this partnership.

SCOPE OF WORK- Initial partnership meeting with School District Administration

- Item # 1 – Scheduled for June 14, 2024, Determine Principal PLC schedule with topics
- Item # 2- DASL team will draft a Principal PLC schedule with suggested topics to share with district central administration for input by July 14, 2024. A proposed schedule will be agreed upon no later than July 31, 2024. DASL can be flexible with adapting PLC topics and group coaching to be delivered during the PLC, as the year progresses, based on the school district needs. Plan & facilitate monthly PD sessions and group coaching for elementary principals in a PLC format (up to ten sessions).
- Item # 3 - DASL Leadership Specialists will plan and facilitate monthly PD sessions that may include group coaching for principals in a PLC format during August, 2024 through May, 2025. The PD sessions or group coaching would be up to 3 hours per month.

OPTIONAL- Individual coaching available to each principal.

- Item # 4 – DASL team is available to each principal for individual coaching/consultation as requested or needs are identified for up to 105 hours to be divided up across all principals during the school year. Sessions can be scheduled with DASL Leadership Specialist in increments of 2 to 3 hours per coaching session. The project manager will track the use of this coaching service.

TIMEFRAME June 1, 2024 – June 30, 2025 (agreed upon by both parties)

Another option for professional development that pertains to equity and SEL is through the Howard Group. The Howard Group specializes in delivering professional development

services with a focus on equity to educators, school administrators, and district personnel. At least two workshops could be scheduled annually for the district management team.

In terms of fiscal implications, contracting with the Howard Group for full-day workshops ranges from \$9,000-12,000 depending on the presenter. Dr. Howard and his wife are national presenters, which would cost roughly \$12,000 per day whereas other presenters, who are not yet nationally known, receive \$9,000 per day.

Research Questions

1. What are the main sources of professional development and support for K-12 principals and assistant principals in Pennsylvania?
2. Have K-12 principals and assistant principals received specific professional development related to social-emotional learning (SEL) for school leaders?
3. Have K-12 principals and assistant principals received professional development specific to creating equitable school communities?
4. Has the professional development K-12 principals and assistant principals received gone beyond defining concepts and developing general awareness?

Summary

Mentorship programs are essential for K-12 principals and assistant principals to thrive in their roles as educational leaders. These programs provide a nurturing environment for learning, personal growth, and professional development, contributing to the overall success of the school community. By investing in mentorship, educational institutions can cultivate strong, confident, and effective leaders who positively impact students, teachers, and the broader educational landscape.

Diversity, equity and inclusion professional development for K-12 principals and assistant principals, educational institutions create a more inclusive and supportive learning environment. This training helps school leaders become effective advocates for equity and diversity, which, in turn, positively impacts the success and well-being of all students and staff.

CHAPTER II

Literature Review

Although school principals play a pivotal role in improving student learning and attaining educational outcomes, they work under strenuous conditions to deal with multifaceted transformational issues (Mestry, 2017, p. 4). “Fundamentally, principals should be empowered to effectively deal with challenges facing them in the 21st century” (Mestry, 2017). Mestry (2017) states that “there is a dire need for education authorities to introduce compulsory training and development programs for aspiring and practicing school leaders to lead and manage their schools successfully” (p. 3). Mestry (2017) also states that “some professionals consider continuing professional development as training, as a means of keeping abreast, or as a way of building a career” (p. 8).

According to Jayaweera et al. (2021) education is the driver in many countries around the world. “It is a fact that professionally developed, multi-skilled, and trained principals always manage their schools successfully and show better performance compared to other schools” (Jayaweera et al., 2021, p. 15). Jayaweera et al. (2021) believe there is a prevailing belief that success hinges on the enhancement of participants' competency and skills.

Considerable transformations have occurred in recent decades, with educational providers now recognizing the imperative for children to attain elevated levels of achievement (Shantal et al., 2014). Achieving higher levels of competence and knowledge prepares children for the challenges they will face in the future. The rapidly evolving global landscape requires individuals to possess advanced skills and adaptability. “Administrative function combines activities such as school laws, economic planning, student administration, decision making and arranging work hours for the teachers. The financial function is equally important” (Shantal et al., 2014, p. 22). The school principal is anticipated to comprehend the social environment within which their school operates. They should maintain connections with various societal entities, including businesses, civil administration, parents, and other collaborative partners.

According to Shantal et al. (2021), principals “advocated for professional development courses as these provide quality field opportunities to practice theories of leadership learned and skills acquired under the guiding eyes of a mentor” (p. 5). The traditional role of a principal as a mere administrative building manager is no longer adequate to bring about significant enhancements in student achievement. The position has transformed into a highly intricate and challenging role, demanding robust instructional and leadership skills for effective execution (Cheney & Davis, 2011). Cheney and Davis (2011) stated that tracking and administering of any necessary on-the-job training to graduate principals is necessary.

New strategies and approaches may be necessary to enable principals and assistant principals to become more effective as school leaders (Byrne-Jimenez & Orr, 2007). These new strategies and approaches may provide these administrators with the ability to be visionary leaders within their organizations. Byrne-Jimenez and Orr (2007) stressed the importance of collaborative and supportive processes that look to foster personal growth, leadership efficacy, and organizational capacity.

Bezzina (1994) recommended approaches for principal leadership development that stress reflective, contextualized, collaborative ongoing learning. Arguments have been made that leadership focus should be on topics specifically related to areas in which school leaders experience the most. Two areas of professional development that are sorely lacking but incredibly important for K-12 principals and assistant principals fall in the categories of equitable schools and social-emotional learning (SEL) for school leaders.

According to Shantal et al. (2021), “evidence shows that school principals acquire their leadership practices from four main sources of their training: theory, practice, leadership, and networking. Over time, leadership practices are also gained from personal experiences” (p. 5). Given that career development is an ongoing journey, principals stand to gain from further training that specifically emphasizes adeptness with emerging technologies and their effective integration into the teaching and learning processes within their schools (Shantal et al., 2021).

Main Sources of Professional Development and Support

School leaders will need to operate in an era that is becoming increasingly more turbulent and less predictable (Pashiardis & Brauckmann, 2009). Operating as a school leader in this period of time presents significant challenges. This turbulent environment is often influenced by various factors which include but are not limited to technological advancements, societal changes and challenges, economic fluctuations, political shifts, and public health concerns. School leaders must be able to navigate these uncertainties while still providing effective educational leadership and maintaining a focus on academic success. Professional development sources must be tailored to help K-12 principals and assistant principals navigate these complexities effectively. Each professional development source must provide opportunities for growth, skill enhancement, and knowledge acquisition.

Professional development for experienced and inexperienced principals and assistant principals should vary in focus, depth and method of delivery. Sources of professional development need to be established in relation to these different stages of leadership (Sahlin, 2023). The reason for this is to cater to their unique needs and levels of expertise. Sahlin (2023) went on to state that experienced principals and assistant principals tend to require more development on strategic or instructional leadership skills while newer administrators appear to need professional development more technical issues, with one example being financial management.

An 'experienced school leader' is defined as a principal who has at least 5 years of experience in their current leadership position (Lazenby, 2020). Lazenby (2020) also states that less is known about the professional development of experienced principals than aspiring principals. Professional development programs often place a significant emphasis on new or emerging leaders. There is a common assumption that newer principals need more support and training to adapt to their roles, which may result in a disproportionate allocation of resources toward this group. The field of education is dynamic, and there may be a greater focus on

addressing the evolving challenges that newer school leaders face. Issues such as changes in educational policies, technological advancements, and shifts in pedagogical approaches may be more prominently addressed in professional development for newer leaders.

Mentorship and Coaching Programs

Mentoring models for K-12 principals and assistant principals recognizes that professional development of these school leaders requires opportunities to learn from other practicing administrators (Kiltz et al., 2004). Principal and assistant principal mentorship programs offer a range of benefits to both new and experienced principals, as well as to the educational institutions they lead. "Getting pre-service principal training right is essential. But equally important is the training and support school leaders receive after they're hired." (Wallace Foundation, 2023, p. 5) Mentorship and coaching programs are indeed essential for a variety of reasons, spanning personal, professional, and organizational levels. This level of support for school leaders helps to play a crucial role in fostering growth, development, and success for individual principals and assistant principals, their individual schools, and the organization as a whole.

"During mentoring, the mentee builds his or her professional identity and leadership model through interaction with other experienced leaders" (Lester et al., 2011, p. 137). Seasoned principals are able to share their knowledge, experience, and expertise with new or less-experienced principals and assistant principals. According to Kiltz et al. (2004), "mentoring requires a level of reflection that leads to personal growth for mentors as well as mentees" (p. 23). Reflecting on past decisions and their outcomes helps principals understand what worked well and what didn't. This important insight will enable them to make more informed decisions moving forward.

Mentors or coaches help newer school leaders improve their performance by offering constructive feedback, setting goals, and providing strategies for enhancement. This increased

performance leads to improved productivity and effectiveness in their respective roles. Based on different models and various literature resources, Hadchiti and Frenette (2021) developed a mentoring relationship practices model based on five relationship practices experienced by school principals during mentoring: coaching, supervision, counselling, tutoring and professional guidance. Table 1 presents the different practices school principals encounter, alongside the benefits derived from these practices.

Table 1

Mentoring Relationship Practices Model Review

Model of Hadchiti, et al.	Mentoring Relationship Benefits	Personal Benefits	Professional Benefits
Coaching	Personal self-efficacy	Maintenance of emotional well-being	Development of managerial skills and leadership
Supervision	Personal reflection	Self-evaluation	Clarifying work-related goals, feedback and evaluation of completed tasks
Counseling	Understanding the emotional dimensions	Managing stress, breaking isolation, guidance and emotional support	Managing conflict in the workplace

Tutoring	Acceptance of feedback	Social and emotional learning	Acquisition of knowledge in school management
Model of Hadchiti, et al.	Mentoring Relationship Benefits	Personal Benefits	Professional Benefits
Professional Guidance	Capacity to make the right decision	Managing emotions at work	Facilitating early integration into the workplace, facilitating networking and access to experts

Note. Adapted from “Benefits of Mentoring School Principals”, by R. Hadchiti and E. Frenette, 2015, *Psychology and Psychotherapy: Research Study*, p. 2 (<https://doi.org/10.31031/PPRS.2021.05.000608>). Copyright 2021 Roula Hadchiti.

Coaching is important because it offers a targeted and personalized approach to professional development and leadership enhancements. It is used to strengthen leadership capacities (Matthews et al., 2007). Effective coaching provides school leaders with ongoing opportunities to enhance their skills, learn strategies, and stay updated on the latest educational trends and best practices. Many principals and assistant principals have spoken highly of the quality of mentoring or coaching they have experienced and the value of working with other school leaders (Matthews et al., 2007).

Supervision is a crucial aspect of a principal or assistant principal’s role in the K-12 educational setting, providing a structured framework for overseeing and managing the operations, staff, and overall environment within a school.

Counseling is important for K-12 principals and assistant principals in the educational context for several reasons, as it offers crucial support and resources to help them navigate the complex and multifaceted aspects of their role. This relationship practice helps school leaders recognize signs of burnout and address them before they escalate. Learning how to manage workload, set boundaries, and practice self-care can mitigate the risk of burnout and sustain long-term effectiveness in their role. Counseling also supports K-12 principals and assistant principals in enhancing their decision-making and problem-solving abilities. It encourages them to consider diverse perspectives, analyze complex situations, and make informed and thoughtful decisions for the benefit of their school community.

Tutoring allows principals to continually expand their knowledge and skills in various domains of educational leadership. It provides access to new methodologies, best practices, and the latest research, ensuring that they stay updated and relevant in their roles. When a K-12 principal or assistant principal has access to tutoring, it allows for personalized professional development that is tailored to the specific needs, challenges, and goals of the school leader. Tutoring allows them to focus on areas where they require the most improvement or further expertise.

Professional guidance allows principals and assistant principals to benefit from the expertise and experiences of seasoned administrators. They are able to learn from others' successes and challenges, gaining valuable insights and avoiding potential pitfalls. Receiving professional guidance provides personalized advice and solutions that are specific to a school leaders context, challenges, and goals. This tailoring ensures that the guidance is relevant and applicable to the school leader's unique circumstances. This guidance also helps to support K-12 principals and assistant principals in strategic planning and aligning their vision with actionable goals. They are able to receive feedback and suggestions to refine their plans and ensure that they align with long-term objectives of their respective schools or organizations.

According to Kiltz et al. (2004), Learner-Centered Leadership indicates that renewed attention is given to the primary role of teaching and learning in the development of school leadership expertise. This idea involves steering the focus of educational leadership toward education and learning. School leaders, namely principals and assistant principals, must develop the capacity for self-awareness and reflection in order to promote a sense of self inquiry amongst the school community. The principalship must alter the role from management to leadership. Without this focus on learning, there is considerable risk that the daily press of management tasks and a crisis mentality will override the school leader's attention (Kiltz et al., 2004).

When developing a Learner-Centered Leadership program within an organization, professional development must reflect specific leadership actions that are specific and implicit to a learner-centered approach (Kiltz et al., 2004). Kiltz et al. (2004) identified specific leadership actions that must take place:

1. The leader translates guiding ideas into educational practices that engage all members of the community.
2. The leader designs effective learning processes so that individuals and organizations learn.
3. The leader provides relevant school data that can be used as a tool for developing a learning community that strives to improve.
4. The leader surfaces mental models that people bring to the world and helps faculty and staff identify strengths and weaknesses of these models.
5. Leadership embraces a deeper understanding and learning about one's own work and practice.

According to Kiltz et al. (2004), to create a learner-centered leadership professional development program, a mentoring model must be formalized in order to develop collaboration and learning. "With this as the framework and definition, effective mentoring relationships require a level of trust, respect, ethics and communication" (Kiltz et al., 2004, p. 27). The authors

wrote that four different stages must exist in mentoring models in order to create effective mentoring relationships.

In the first stage, the participants (mentor and mentee) are prepared for the process. The focus of this stage is on developing characteristics like trust, communication and understanding among the participants so that positive relationships flourish and the capacity to mentor becomes prevalent (Kiltz et al., 2004). The objective is to build relationships that go beyond mentor and mentee. This requires training for mentors that allows them to see that good administrators do not necessarily make good mentors (Kiltz et al., 2004).

The second stage between the mentor and the mentee look to identify expectations throughout the mentoring process. “Both the mentors and the mentored need to lay out expectations for the experience, come to a consensus about the actual experience and set realistic expectations that both sides will be able to honor” (Kiltz et al., 2004, p. 25). Establishing clear and mutually agreed-upon expectations between mentors and mentees is fundamental for a successful and productive mentoring relationship. Clearly defined expectations ensure that both, the mentor and mentee, are on the same page regarding the purpose, goals, and scope of the mentoring relationship.

The third stage focuses on the growth and learning that is to take place. The mentor and mentee work through specific issues or problems that the mentee is looking to solve. “In situations where the mentor does not have the knowledge or expertise, the mentoring relationship becomes an opportunity for both to learn as they seek resources to resolve challenges (Kiltz et al., 2004, p. 26). When a mentor and mentee both prioritize growth and learning, it sets the stage for a highly effective and enriching relationship. Both are committed to continually expanding their knowledge, skills, and perspectives. They encourage each other to embrace the many learning opportunities that exist.

The final stage is characterized by closure and redefinition. “Collectively, the mentor and the mentee reflect on the learning and celebrate the growth and success” (Kiltz et al., 2004, p. 28).

When school leaders are afforded the opportunity to share stories and issues, it allows them to learn from each other's experiences, strategies, and solutions. These opportunities promote the exchange of best practices, innovative ideas, and effective approaches to common challenges that are faced in these roles.

Professional Learning Communities

Networking is an essential tool used to support principals and teachers at all stages of their professional career, and members involved in professional networks stand to benefit greatly (Strachan, 2003). It is necessary for programs to foster and sustain increased international collaboration with other universities. Additionally, it is suggested that mentor principals maintain communication with trainee principals even beyond the designated tutoring periods (Strachan, 2003).

Principals participating in their own Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) are crucial as it contributes to the overall effectiveness and improvement of the school environment. McCracken (2017) states that "a formal approach to connecting with colleagues is possible through the formation of a professional learning community (PLC)" (p. 45). PLCs are forged around a mutual commitment to staff and student learning. The core mission of a PLC is to craft an organizational vision, define the responsibilities and expectations of group members, and establish outcome-driven objectives for progress. McCracken (2017) also noted that "by engaging in a process which includes gathering and analyzing evidence, developing and implementing strategies, analyzing effects, and applying knowledge in a continuous cycle of improvement, principals experience authentic learning and growth" (p. 47).

Strand and Emstad (2020) explored the topic of Principal Professional Learning Communities (PPLCs) and how being a part of one "may foster strong leadership for school development and teacher learning" (p. 112).

Strand and Emstad (2020) emphasized that:

it is fundamental for the design of the PPLC to change from encouraging participants to merely build on their own experiences to encouraging them to elucidate those experiences with leadership theory and by actively using student learning data in their own development as leaders. (p. 115)

Studying student learning data is essential to professional growth. Analyzing student learning data allows principals to make informed decisions about instructional strategies, resource allocation, and other key aspects of school management. This data-driven approach helps in developing effective practices to enhance student outcomes.

According to Strand and Emstad (2020), many studies revealed the importance of participating in PPLCs is crucial for school leaders to grasp the concept of a PLC. This understanding, in turn, heightens their awareness of the essential elements necessary to establish and sustain a successful PLC. “By participating in PPLCs, school leaders gain insight into building a learning culture, which is important for developing PLCs in their own schools” (Strand & Emstad, 2020, p. 114). They also felt that involvement in a PPLC supports principals and in evaluating and enhancing their leadership skills. This is achieved through collaborative reflection with peers, particularly on matters related to facilitating teaching, fostering cooperation, and promoting student achievements, aspects that might otherwise be addressed in isolation within their daily responsibilities. “By contributing to and supporting each other in a PPLC, the leaders performed better than they could have done alone” (Strand & Emstad, 2020, p. 118).

Tupponce (2018) examined how principal professional learning communities (PPLCs) can bridge the gap between the districts' goals and priorities and the ways schools are addressing them. “Principals examined their own practices in specific areas of observation and feedback, how they used their leadership teams to support next steps, and how they created opportunities for professional development” (Tupponce, 2018, p. 75).

Tupponce (2018) indicated that:

a common learning experience like the PPLC is a valuable tool for principal learning and development. Principals reported that the development of relational trust was an essential reason why principals valued collaboration, and why they supported each other in the PPLC. (p. 73)

A PPLC provides a forum for collaborative problem-solving. Principals and assistant principals are able to share challenges, brainstorm solutions, and draw on the collective expertise of their peers. This collaborative approach can lead to more effective strategies for addressing issues within the school environment.

Improved Educational Outcomes

Principals shape the academic settings of schools (Steinberg & Yang, 2021). The professional development they receive is critical for improving educational outcomes in schools. When principals and assistant principals are provided with opportunities for growth, training, and skill enhancement, it positively impacts their leadership abilities, which ideally translates into better outcomes for students.

Well-trained principals and assistant principals can provide strategic leadership within the school. This involves setting a clear vision, goals, and direction for the educational institution. Training equips school leaders with the skills to support and enhance the teaching and learning processes. can foster a positive instructional environment, guide curriculum development, and ensure effective teaching methods. Principals and assistant principals with proper training can analyze and use data effectively to make informed decisions. This includes using student performance data to identify areas for improvement and implement targeted interventions.

Pennsylvania's Inspired Leadership (PIL) Induction Program

In the year 2007, the Pennsylvania Public School Code underwent an amendment to deliver targeted professional development to principals and assistant principals, with the ultimate goal of placing highly effective school leaders in every Pennsylvania school. This transformative policy, commonly referred to as Act 45, instructed the Pennsylvania Department of Education

(PDE) to institute a principal induction program dedicated to enhancing school leaders' competencies and, consequently elevating student achievement. The professional development requirements under Act 45 were updated, emphasizing formal coursework through the National Institute for School Leadership (NISL) to address newly established leadership standards and introduce the PIL induction program for newly appointed principals (Steinberg & Yang, 2021). Starting in January 2008, the Pennsylvania Inspired Leadership (PIL) induction program became a prerequisite for all principals newly appointed to their positions. Completion within the first five years of service is mandatory. The establishment of a principal induction program with a focus on improving student achievement reflects the recognition of the critical role that effective school leadership plays in the quality of education.

The PIL induction program is a standards-based professional education program offered by the Pennsylvania Department of Education. Burk (2012) stated that in order to support the needs of new building level leaders, professional development must support an understanding of the goal of the experience. The PIL induction program requires that newly hired principals complete targeted in-service professional development tied to newly established state leadership standards within the first five years of employment (Steinberg & Yang, 2021). This induction program also necessitates that principals complete two NISL courses, carefully crafted to align with the three fundamental leadership standards set forth by Act 45 (see Table 2 for Pennsylvania's Core Leadership Standards). Pennsylvania's incorporation of NISL coursework into the PIL induction program reflects its commitment to the state's newly implemented standards- centric approach to school leadership. Steinberg and Yang (2021) identified principal professional development having the greatest impact on teacher effectiveness when principals completed PIL induction during their first two years in the principalship. The three Pennsylvania Core Leadership Standards are identified and defined in Table 2.

Table 2*Pennsylvania Leadership Standards*

Core Standards	
Core Standard I	Knowledge and skills to think and plan strategically creating an organizational vision around personalized student success.
Core Standard II	An understanding of standards-based systems theory and design and the ability to transfer that knowledge to the leader's job as an architect of standards-based reform in the school.
Core Standard III	The ability to access and use appropriate data to inform decision-making at all levels of the system.

Note. Adapted from The Framework for Principal Preparation Program Guidelines. (2008). PDF Document

In the first NISL course, World-Class Schooling, principals gain access to strategic planning tools required to implement a vision focused on exceptional teaching and student achievement. The course's curriculum corresponds with the first two core leadership standards. Meanwhile, the second course, Driving for Results, empowers principals with the training needed to assess school data, including student achievement data, for the purpose of identifying the needs of the school, teachers, and individual students. The curriculum for Driving for Results aligns with the third core leadership standard (Steinberg & Yang, 2021). The successful fulfillment of the PIL induction program is directly linked to the maintenance of their administrative licenses. In the event that newly appointed principals do not complete the PIL program, their license renewal is jeopardized, resulting in the inability to continue their employment as K-12 principals

or assistant principals. Furthermore, the two NISL courses comprising the PIL induction program are specifically designed to underscore the competencies that Pennsylvania and PDE policymakers deemed essential for the success of early-career principals (Steinberg & Yang, 2021).

Burk (2012) stated:

Induction programs for new building level leaders are required to support the knowledge, skills and dispositions through formalized experiences grounded in problem-solving and investigation of the “real work” of principals. Induction programs, which include mentoring, need in-depth explorations regarding support for the development of knowledge and skills directly related to building leadership in the accountability era. (p. 57)

Burk (2012) also stated that the emphasis on induction and mentoring requirements for school principals and assistant principals has only recently emerged as a focal point for enhancing school performance. Given that this focus is relatively new, there is a lack of uniformity in standards and expectations among program providers. Due to principal preparation programs falling short in imparting the necessary knowledge, skills, and qualities required for a well-prepared entry into the principalship, it has become the responsibility of induction and mentoring programs to cultivate these essential attributes. The PIL induction courses provide these essential attributes to help new school leaders develop the necessary skills and knowledge to effectively lead their buildings.

Steinberg and Yang (2021) observed that the PIL induction program yielded improvements in math student achievement by enhancing the quality of the teaching workforce. More specifically, the PIL induction program resulted in an increase of 0.01-0.03 student-level standard deviations in math performance, and these improvements correlate with an enhancement of approximately 0.20 standard deviations in teacher effectiveness in math. Steinberg and Yang (2021) also identified notable improvements in the effectiveness of math teachers that were

observed in Pennsylvania's urban school districts, particularly in schools with a higher percentage of economically disadvantaged and minority students. These observations suggest that the benefits of principal professional development were not evenly spread across the state's schools. Additionally, the impact of such development was most prominent in schools that served Pennsylvania's most economically disadvantaged students.

Improve Teaching and Learning Practices

The role of K-12 principals and assistant principals in school operations and performance is of paramount importance. Research widely supports that principals directly affect student learning outcomes and the overall success of the school. According to Marzano et al. (2005), school leaders' actions are responsible for approximately 25% of the total effect of student learning in their schools. K-12 principals and assistant principals also have "direct and indirect influence on the success or failure of organizational management, internal relations, external relations, and administrative responsibilities in the schools they lead" (Grissom & Loeb, 2011, p. 125).

"Principals play a fundamental role in seeking the success of Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) within their school" (Johnson & Voelkel, 2019, p. 88). Principals and assistant principals can set the tone by establishing a clear vision for the purpose and goals of PLCs within their school. This vision should align with the overall educational objectives of the institution. Johnson and Voelkel (2019) also state that principals play a pivotal role in guaranteeing the effectiveness of PLCs within their school. "Prerequisite to PLC success, however, is the principal's ability to establish and foster conditions supportive of the joint work of teachers across departments or grade levels within the school" (Johnson & Voelkel, 2019, p. 89).

Effective PLCs hinge significantly on the support and expertise provided by building principals and assistant principals. Insufficient backing from school leaders may create obstacles that hinder the success of PLCs, leading to challenges such as teachers' limited comprehension of

collaborative tasks and disruptions to traditional teacher autonomy. “The principal is a key element in eliminating such barriers as a part of supporting and sustaining high-functioning PLCs” (Johnson & Voelkel, 2019, p. 90).

Build Leadership Capacities

Principals and assistant principals play a pivotal role in shaping the educational experience within their schools. Effective leadership can positively impact student achievement, teacher, morale, and overall school culture. By enhancing the leadership capacity of K-12 principals and assistant principals, schools are more likely to see improvements in academic outcomes and other important aspects of education.

Matthews et al. (2007) describe a state-wide approach to building leadership capacities in Victorian (Australia) schools. They describe this approach as being complex, yet coherent, where the coherence is met in a variety of ways and methods. To begin, the adhesive that fosters unity revolves around the collective mission to establish a leadership culture spanning the entire leadership system. This culture is anchored in professional dialogues that employ a shared language (Matthews et al., 2007). Next, the discourse concerning school and leadership advancement is actively promoted across all facets of the educational framework. This framework acts as a conduit, bolstering and disseminating leadership practices throughout the entire system (Matthews et al., 2007). Lastly, a well-defined vision delineates the traits of proficient leadership and development learning, and this vision is universally comprehended within the system (Matthews et al., 2007).

Matthews et al. (2007) went on to describe a culture of reflective leadership that contributes to building leadership capacity. They described how the Deputy Secretary of Education within the Office of Government Schools Education (Victoria, Australia) guides learning through their education system. The Deputy Secretary of Education communicates various strategies that raise the levels of understanding regarding school leadership. Matthews et

al. (2007) identified the following strategies utilized by the Deputy Secretary of Education in Victoria, Australia:

1. Newsletter for all principals and assistant principals that details the work being done and the developments within the education system. The Deputy Secretary also highlights noteworthy publications which are believed to be important and worth reading.
2. Regional workshops led by the Deputy Secretary of Education.
3. Networking meetings of principals and assistant principals. These school leaders are organized into 64 different networks across nine administrative regions in Victoria.
4. The Department of Education in Victoria holds consultative meetings with principals from each of the nine regions, where there will be state-wide structured reading activities on key issues. Each of the 1600 principals in Victoria will receive free books that coincide with these key issues (p. 52).

A multi-layered system of school leadership has been implemented within the schools of Victoria, aimed at building leadership capacity.

Matthews et al. (2007) stated:

The coherence and impact of the different school improvement programs are due largely to the conversation which has been sustained across schools, regional offices and the central office to develop a collective understanding of the challenges confronting the government school system (p. 52).

Leadership at the education system level that drives school reforms originates for the Deputy Secretary and his senior level team is marked by its qualities of being “focused, analytical, challenging, and visible (Matthews et al., 2007, p. 53). “The vision and objectives are clear; development strategies are evidence-based and designed to meet priorities for improvement; communication is continuous, and consultation embedded (Matthews et al., 2007, p. 54). The

objective of this method in building leadership capacity is for all school leaders to move in the same direction, benefiting from the same guidance.

Matthews et al. (2007) identified a common language about leadership and school improvement and how that common language is becoming prevalent across Victoria. The Office of Government School Education developed and subsequently shared with every principal and assistant principal a framework for leadership, “Developmental Learning Framework for School Leaders.” This framework defines what school leadership looks like and how it should be implemented to build an expected level of leadership capacity. Within Table 3, the Developmental Learning Framework for School Leaders is presented, featuring its domains and capabilities.

Table 3

Developmental Learning Framework for School Leaders

Developmental Learning Framework for School Leaders – domains and capabilities	
Leadership Domains	Leadership Capabilities
Technical An effective leader demonstrates the capacity to optimize the school’s financial, human and physical resources through sound management practices and organizational systems that contribute to the achievement of the school's vision and goals.	Thinks and plans strategically Aligns resources was desired outcomes Holds self and others to account
Human An effective leader demonstrates the ability to foster a safe, purposeful and inclusive learning environment, and a capacity to develop constructive and respectful	Advocates for all students Develops relationships Develops individual and collective capacity

relationships with staff, students, parents and other stakeholders.	
Educational An effective leader demonstrates the capacity to lead, manage and monitor the school improvement process through a current and critical understanding of the learning process and Its implications for enhancing high quality teaching and learning in every classroom in the school.	Shapes pedagogy Focuses on achievement Promotes enquiry and reflection
Leadership Domains	Leadership Capabilities
Symbolic An effective leader demonstrates the capacity to model important values and behavior to the school and community, including a commitment to creating and sustaining effective professional learning communities within the school, and across all levels of the system.	Develops and manages self Aligns actions with shared values Creates and shares knowledge with them
Cultural An effective leader demonstrates an understanding of the characteristics of effective schools and a capacity to lead the school community how in promoting a vision of the future, underpinned by common purposes and values that will secure the commitment and alignment of stakeholders to realize the potential of all students.	Shapes future Develops a unique school culture Sustains partnerships and networks

Note. The Office of Government School Education. (2008). *Developmental learning framework for school leaders.*

<https://www.education.vic.gov.au/Documents/school/teachers/management/leadership/leadershipframework.pdf>

The Office of Government School Education acknowledged that the prerequisite for successful execution of the school improvement goals exists when there is effective leadership at every tier of the school system. “The increased investment in leadership development was based on a comprehensive and deliberate suite of strategies aimed at improving the quality and performance of our leaders” (Matthews et al., 2007, p. 56). These strategies certainly include leadership opportunities for aspiring and current school principals and assistant principals.

Meet Evolving Educational Needs- Social Emotional Learning (SEL)

The field of education is dynamic, and new research and best practices in SEL are constantly emerging. Continuous professional development ensures that educators stay informed about the latest developments and can integrate new insights into their teaching.

Superville (2021) stated:

And the principal’s responsibilities—attending to students’ academic and social-emotional well-being; building relationships with staff, students, parents, and the broader community; engendering trust with stakeholders; making sound management decisions while also juggling their personal lives—demonstrate that they’re prime candidates who would benefit from a firm understanding and practice of SEL (p. 34).

Principals and assistant principals can and should enhance their leadership skills to positively impact social-emotional learning. Superville (2021) also wrote that acquiring expertise and training in SEL competencies equips principals to enhance their leadership capabilities, strengthen relationships throughout the school, and forge more robust connections with parents and communities.

While there is a broad recognition of the significance of promoting social and emotional well-being in K–12 schools, most initiatives have predominantly centered on bolstering students’ mental health, often neglecting the well-being of teachers and administrators. “Burnout rates are high in the education field, especially among principals. This is almost certainly thanks to unprecedented pressure to meet aggressive student achievement standards, on top of coping with

constant change and working harmoniously with diverse stakeholders” (Mahfouz et al., 2022, p. 78).

According to Mahfouz et al. (2022) “almost all professional development programs focus on helping principals improve school performance (curricula, initiatives, pedagogical strategies), but few focus on developing skills to support their own well-being” (p. 79). Unlike the business world, education systems do not actively promote SEL programs for their school leaders. Specific professional development initiatives should be designed to nurture the social and emotional well-being of principals, equipping them with the skills essential for proficiently guiding the implementation of SEL.

Superville (2021) recommended that school districts be proactive in their approach to making sure their school leaders are “emotionally and mentally ready” (p. 36) to take on the challenges of SEL.

1. Baseline Data- Districts could offer a quick mandatory, anonymous 5-10 question survey for principals on SEL competencies. The outcome will help school districts develop and modify professional development opportunities and supports for their K-12 principals and assistant principals.
2. Provide Ongoing Professional Development on SEL- Tailored, continuous, and integrated professional development, along with dedicated resources, can enhance principals' comprehension of SEL. Given the abundance of available products, districts should meticulously choose those supported by evidence and a proven track record of enhancing outcomes for both staff and students.
3. Create “Wellness Days”- Principals' wellness days, akin to sick days, reinforce the commitment of school systems to prioritize mental and social-emotional health. Additionally, districts can integrate a dedicated wellness section into their newsletters or organize wellness weeks to promote the significance of fostering a healthy environment for school leaders.

4. Establish Support Groups- Building trust and fostering relationships are essential cornerstones in the domain of SEL. Consider forming cohorts of principals who share similar contexts or perspectives. For instance, leaders of elementary or Title I schools can collaborate to support one another in navigating on-the-job challenges, thereby mitigating feelings of isolation (p. 37).

Superville (2021) described various professional development “programs such as Soul of Leadership are trying to fill the SEL knowledge gap for school leaders” (p.38). These programs may incorporate “mindfulness techniques such as meditation, journaling, and yoga, along with practices like deep breathing exercises and wellness skills” (Superville, 2021, p. 39). The overarching aim is to empower school leaders, including both principals and assistant principals, to boost effectiveness and maintain long-term commitment to their roles.

The Soul of Leadership facilitators invest considerable time in aiding principals and assistant principals to refine their listening abilities. The program employs a technique called open and honest questioning, where school leaders deliberate on current dilemmas. Instead of prescribing solutions, peers use probing questions to unearth the root causes or attain a clearer grasp of the issues at hand. “Participants also reported feeling more hope, optimism, and efficacy, and they appreciated the ability to share with colleagues and adapt what they were learning for their buildings” (Superville, 2021, p. 40).

SEL encompasses a wide range of skills, including self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making. These skills are complex and require ongoing learning and practice to master. Regular professional development sessions provide a consistent framework for implementing SEL strategies and interventions. This helps maintain a cohesive approach throughout the school or district. Continuous professional development also helps to enable educators to adapt their SEL strategies to meet the changing needs of their students.

SEL is influenced by cultural factors, and educators need ongoing training to develop cultural competence in implementing SEL strategies. This ensures that SEL is relevant and inclusive for all students. SEL and cultural competence are interconnected in several ways, each influencing and enhancing the other. SEL emphasizes self-awareness as a fundamental skill. Cultural competence involves understanding one's own cultural identity. The intersection lies in encouraging individuals to explore and appreciate their cultural backgrounds, fostering a deeper understanding of themselves and others.

The integration of SEL and cultural competence in educational settings creates a comprehensive approach that supports the development of well-rounded individuals capable of navigating a diverse and interconnected world. This approach requires ongoing professional development for school leaders because it fosters inclusive, empathetic, and culturally responsive learning environments.

Meet Evolving Educational Needs- Equitable School Communities

Professional development for K-12 principals and assistant principals focused on creating equitable school communities is vital to overall success of the school environment. Their understanding and commitment to equity set the tone for the entire institution. Professional development empowers them to lead with a focus on fairness, inclusivity, and justice.

Nagl (2023) wrote that “it is the responsibility of a school’s leadership team to spearhead diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) initiatives to ensure everyone—from students and families to teachers and staff members—feels valued and heard” (p. 44). A thriving learning environment is enriched by the inclusion of diverse perspectives, making diversity a vital component in schools. “The principal of a school plays a key role in developing the culture. Establishing an atmosphere that values diversity is done when leadership models respectful behaviors and makes a genuine, honest effort to positively include all students” (Nagl, 2023, p. 45).

Infusing diversity, equity, and inclusion into continuous professional learning for school leaders is essential. Equipping principals and assistant principals with this training is equally vital

for the effective implementation of practices that promote equity and inclusion, thus impacting student learning outcomes positively.

According to Mavrogordato (2019), “school leaders become arbiters of educational opportunity by shaping how policies are implemented within their buildings” (p. 65). School leaders should interpret policies through an equity lens. They can ensure that policies are not only understood but also analyzed for their potential impact on different student populations. This involves considering how policies may affect students from diverse backgrounds and taking proactive steps to address any potential disparities. Mavrogordato (2019) also stated that “school leaders focused on implementing policies from a social justice approach can create an environment of opportunity that could lead to equity as an outcome” (p. 66).

School leaders can participate in workshops and conferences specifically focused on social equity in education. These events often feature expert speakers, interactive sessions, and opportunities for networking with other professionals committed to equity. In addition to workshops and conferences, school leaders may find professional development opportunities through professional organizations or institutions. Many organizations and institutions offer online courses and webinars on social equity topics. School leaders can take advantage of these flexible learning opportunities to deepen their understanding of key issues and gain practical strategies for promoting equity in their schools.

Effective Implementation of Policies and Initiatives

In swiftly evolving societies, the aims, and objectives of schools, as well as the pathways to attain them, are not always evident. Keeping pace with policy adjustments is a critical responsibility for school leaders in today's rapidly changing society. As such, schools are facing immense pressure to adapt, and it falls upon school leadership to skillfully navigate and manage the processes of change. School leaders can learn how to implement policies effectively by participating in workshops and seminars that specifically focus on policy implementation. These

events may be organized by educational organizations, institutions, or professional development providers.

Legal and Regulatory Compliance

K-12 principals and assistant principals should have a strong understanding of legal and regulatory requirements. Educational institutions are subject to numerous federal, state, and local laws and regulations. Student safety, special education, and nondiscrimination are just a few of the topics that school leaders must be familiar with to be compliant with the various laws. Principals must ensure their schools comply with these requirements to avoid legal issues and maintain a safe and inclusive learning environment.

Title II funds, part of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), can be used to support principal development. The specific allowable uses of these funds may vary by state and local school districts. Title II funds can be used to establish or enhance professional development programs specifically designed for school leaders, including principals and assistant principals. These programs may focus on leadership skills, effective instructional practices, and other essential competencies.

Fuller et al. (2017) wrote that states are permitted to “target funds on efforts to improve the quality of school leaders as well as efforts to improve the recruitment, preparation, placement, support, and retention of effective principals or other school leaders” (p. 105). Any ESSA funds that are earmarked for school leadership professional development must be research-based prior to the expenditure of federal funds (Herman et al., 2016). States must identify specific research that is associated with positive outcomes in order.

According to Herman et al. (2016), states must provide research evidence from one of four tiers. Tier I relates to strong evidence based on research using experimental designs; Tier II, moderate evident based on research using quasi-experimental methods; Tier III, promising evidence based on research that is correlational in nature; and Tier IV, a logical rationale based on research and the existence of current research/ evaluation efforts on the strategy or activity

(Herman et al., 2016). Anything related to school improvement must include evidence from Tiers I through III.

Fuller et al. (2017) asserts that ESSA provides funding that states and districts can use to “prepare, recruit, retain school leaders as well as provide mentoring, coaching, and professional development to principals” (p. 106). ESSA specifically includes school leaders in the written law, identifying leadership issues as a specific need to improve upon. States can target funds on efforts to improve the quality of school leaders as well as “efforts to improve the recruitment, preparation, placement, support, and retention of effective principals or other school leaders in high-needs schools” (Herman et al., 2016, p. 4). States can also expend funds to provide professional development to school leaders and target additional funds to leaders in high-need schools (Herman et al., 2016). In short, ESSA provides funds that states, and local educational agencies can use to target the improvement of school leaders in several ways and specifically target leaders in high-need schools.

Resource Allocation

Principals and assistant principals can seek professional development opportunities in budgeting and resource management. Training programs, workshops, and courses can provide valuable insights into effective strategies for allocating resources in education. School leaders can attend educational leadership conferences that feature sessions or workshops on budgeting and resource management. These conferences often bring together experts and practitioners to share insights and best practices. Professional development organizations for school leaders and administrators offer training sessions, workshops, and resources related to budgeting, financial planning, and resource allocation.

Intermediate Units and the Pennsylvania Department of Education have offered training sessions, workshops, and resources to help school leaders enhance their budgeting and resource management skills. These resources are especially important when developing a plan for the usage of state and federal funds.

Steinberg and Yang (2021) wrote about the “reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) in 2015, which is now known as Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), which provides incentives to states and local school districts to invest in principal professional development” (p. 58). State education agencies, such as the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) have the flexibility to allocate as much as three percent of the ESSA funds for the enhancement of principal professional development, encompassing activities such as preservice programs, the implementation of varying pay structures, and support for the onboarding of new principals and assistant principals.

CHAPTER III

Methodology

The literature review chapter of this capstone project serves as a roadmap, highlighting the various avenues through which K-12 principals and assistant principals can enhance their skills and seek assistance for improvement. Chapter II uncovers a blend of learning options, such as mentorship and coaching, in addition to professional learning communities collaborating to enhance the effectiveness of school leaders in their roles.

The literature review serves as a compass, guiding the research journey towards a deeper understanding of the diverse array of professional development opportunities and supports available to K-12 principals and assistant principals. By delving into scholarly articles, research studies, and educational resources, the literature review chapter illuminates the multifaceted nature of professional growth in educational leadership.

The professional development opportunities and supports explored in the literature review serve as vital tools for the researcher in crafting a robust and effective professional development structure for K-12 principals and assistant principals. By synthesizing insights from these various types of professional development methods, the researcher can develop a comprehensive and research-based professional development structure that equips K-12 principals and assistant principals with the necessary knowledge, skills, and support needed to enhance their professional practice, cultivate a positive school culture, and promote the success and well-being of both staff and students.

This chapter sets the stage for a comprehensive exploration into the realm of professional development opportunities for K-12 principals and assistant principals. At its core, the research study seeks to identify the various supports available to school leaders, with the overarching objective of enhancing their professionalism and efficacy in educational leadership roles. In crafting the methodology for this research study, a deliberate shift occurred from the initial literature review to a focused investigation aimed at addressing specific research questions. This

transition was crucial in honing the research focus and diving deeper into the professional development opportunities and supports available to K-12 principals and assistant principals.

By integrating both qualitative and quantitative data collection and analysis methods, this mixed-methods approach enabled the researcher to triangulate findings, cross-validate results, and gain a more holistic understanding of the research problem. It provided multiple perspectives, enhanced the credibility of the findings, and enriched the overall depth of the study. This approach was particularly beneficial in action research, as it facilitated both understanding the context and identifying potential interventions or changes.

Purpose

The action research project aimed to address four key research questions by employing a systematic approach to data collection and analysis. Each research question was carefully crafted to address specific aspects of professional development opportunities for K-12 principals and assistant principals, aiming to shed light on key areas of interest and concern within the educational landscape.

The researcher employed a mixed-methods approach, utilizing both survey questions and one-to-one interviews, to gather comprehensive information from K-12 principals and assistant principals across various school districts in Pennsylvania.

Survey questions were crafted to provide a broad overview of the professional development landscape, allowing participants to share their experiences, preferences, and perceptions regarding available supports and opportunities. These surveys were distributed electronically, enabling efficient data collection from a wide pool of participants spanning different geographic locations and demographic backgrounds in the state of Pennsylvania.

In addition to surveys, one-to-one interviews were conducted to gain a deeper understanding of the nuances of professional development experiences and perspectives. These interviews offered a more intimate setting for participants to share their insights, challenges, and aspirations in greater detail. By engaging in direct dialogue with school leaders, the researcher

was able to capture rich, qualitative data that complemented the quantitative findings from the surveys.

These four research questions acted as guiding lights, shedding light on specific facets of the professional development terrain for K-12 principals and assistant principals in Pennsylvania:

1. What are the main sources of professional development and support for K-12 principals and assistant principals in Pennsylvania?
2. Have K-12 principals and assistant principals received specific professional development related to social-emotional learning (SEL) for school leaders?
3. Have K-12 principals and assistant principals received professional development specific to creating equitable school communities?
4. Has the professional development K-12 principals and assistant principals received gone beyond defining concepts and developing general awareness?

The first research question was designed to explore the main sources of professional development available to school leaders, recognizing the diverse array of avenues through which they can enhance their skills and knowledge. This question also sought to provide insight into the breadth and diversity of resources accessible to K-12 principals and assistant principals. By understanding the primary sources of professional development, the study desired to provide a comprehensive overview of the resources and supports accessible to principals and assistant principals.

The second question focused on whether K-12 principals and assistant principals had received specific professional development related to social-emotional learning (SEL) for school leaders. This question aimed to assess the extent to which SEL, an increasingly important aspect of education, was being addressed in their training and development efforts.

The third question examined whether school leaders had received professional development specific to creating equitable school communities. By exploring this topic, the

research aimed to gauge the level of emphasis placed on equity and inclusivity in professional development initiatives for educational leaders.

In an era marked by increasing emphasis on holistic student development and equity in education, questions two and three have emerged as critical focal points for professional growth. By investigating whether principals and assistant principals in Pennsylvania have received professional development on SEL and equitable school communities, the objective of the study was to assess the extent to which these important areas are being addressed in their training and development efforts.

Finally, the fourth question probed whether the professional development received by K-12 principals and assistant principals had gone beyond merely defining concepts and developing general awareness. The demands placed on educational leaders are becoming increasingly complex and multifaceted, making it essential that professional development initiatives offer practical, actionable insights and strategies. By examining whether professional development opportunities have transcended generalities and provided tangible, applicable guidance, the study sought to assess the effectiveness and relevance of existing opportunities and supports.

Going beyond surface-level learning is crucial for meaningful change because it allows us to go deeper into specific issues and concepts, understand root causes, and develop sustainable solutions. Surface-level learning may provide a superficial understanding of a topic or problem, but it often fails to address underlying complexities or systemic issues. Meaningful change requires a comprehensive understanding of the factors at play and the ability to critically analyze and evaluate them.

By crafting research questions that address these specific aspects of professional development, the action research project aimed to provide insights into the landscape of educational leadership development. Through systematic inquiry and analysis, the study sought to inform the design and implementation of future professional development initiatives, ultimately

empowering K-12 principals and assistant principals to lead with vision, efficacy, and equity in their respective school communities.

The literature review chapter presented a comprehensive snapshot of the myriad professional development opportunities and supports available to K-12 principals and assistant principals. It painted a vivid picture of mentorship programs, coaching initiatives, professional learning communities, workshops, conferences, and other resources designed to nurture the growth and development of educational leaders.

A noticeable pattern emerged within this array of options. Despite the abundance of professional development opportunities, many remained underutilized over time. While there are numerous programs and initiatives available, they often fall victim to sporadic engagement or limited long-term commitment. Principals and assistant principals may attend a workshop or conference, participate in a coaching session, or join a professional learning community intermittently, but sustaining active involvement over time appears to be a challenge.

This lack of ongoing engagement with professional development opportunities poses a significant barrier to the continuous growth and improvement of school leaders. Without sustained investment in their professional development, K-12 principals and assistant principals may struggle to stay up to date on emerging trends, best practices, and innovative strategies in educational leadership. Moreover, the sporadic nature of engagement may hinder the development of deep, meaningful relationships within mentorship programs or professional learning communities, limiting the potential for collaborative learning and support.

By fostering a culture of ongoing professional development, educational institutions can empower K-12 principals and assistant principals to thrive in their roles as educational leaders, driving meaningful change and creating positive outcomes for students, staff, and communities alike.

Setting and Participants

Principals and assistant principals from several school districts across Pennsylvania participated in this research study. To ensure confidentiality, these districts are identified as District A, District B, District C, District D, District E, and District F. Each district granted permission for their school leaders to voluntarily engage in the study.

District A, located in a central region of the state, spans a diverse 75-square-mile area that includes suburban, urban, and rural environments. With a budget of \$302.3 million for the 2023–24 fiscal year, District A serves over 12,100 students across eleven elementary schools, three middle schools, and three high schools. The district employs 70 administrators, including 32 principals and assistant principals, all of whom hold advanced degrees, reflecting their commitment to professional growth and leadership.

District B, situated about 20 miles north of a major city, covers 42 square miles and serves a large community with over 98,000 residents. The district operates 13 elementary schools, three middle schools, one high school, and a credit recovery school. It employs around 2,000 staff members and educates approximately 13,000 students annually. The district's administrative team includes 28 principals and assistant principals, distributed across the various educational levels.

District C is a rural-suburban area covering 67 square miles and serves about 5,000 students across four schools: an elementary school, an intermediate school, a middle school, and a high school. The district is spread across several townships and boroughs, and it has 11 principals and assistant principals. Leadership teams include one principal and one assistant principal at the elementary level, one principal and two assistant principals at the intermediate level, one principal and two assistant principals at the middle school, and one principal and three assistant principals at the high school.

District D serves a student population of 3,897 across six schools, including four elementary schools and two secondary schools. Each elementary school is led by one principal, while the secondary schools are managed by one principal and two assistant principals each.

District E includes two elementary schools, an intermediate school, a middle school, and a high school. With a student enrollment of 3,101 and a staff of 628, the district is known for its innovative programs aimed at improving student learning. It has five principals and four assistant principals, with one principal and two assistant principals at the high school, and one principal and one assistant principal at both the middle and intermediate schools.

District F is situated in a metropolitan area with a large population. It employs approximately 565 professional staff and 505 support personnel. The district's staff actively participates in workshops, conferences, and specialized training sessions through the Employee Development Program. The district is recognized for its staff members' contributions to state, national, and international conferences, as well as their roles as adjunct college professors and published authors.

Research Plan

Before commencing the action research process, a thorough literature review was completed. Earlier in this chapter, four research questions were identified to serve as a guide to the literature review. The primary objective of this review was to unveil the array of professional development methods accessible to K-12 principals and assistant principals.

Sahlin (2023) emphasizes the increasing significance of school leadership in enhancing educational quality, underlining the continuous requirement for professional development among school leaders. Nevertheless, there remains a gap in comprehension concerning the professional advancement of seasoned principals. Traditionally, the majority of principal training programs have concentrated on catering to the requirements of aspiring or newly appointed principals, neglecting the support necessary for the professional growth of experienced principals. Various thoughts exist regarding the best methods for training both future and current K-12 principals and assistant principals. Principals must embrace a mindset of continuous lifelong learning to effectively navigate the challenges of modern, dynamic educational environments.

A comprehensive research plan was devised to address all four research inquiries. Within the plan, Table 4 was crafted to outline each research question, detailing the necessary data type (quantitative or qualitative) to be collected, the associated data sources, and the timeline for data collection.

Table 4

Data Collection Plan and Timeline

Research Question	Type of Data to be Collected	Data Source	Timeline
What are the main sources of professional development and support for K-12 principals and assistant principals in Pennsylvania?	Quantitative Qualitative	K-12 Principal and Assistant Principal Survey Structured One-to-One Interview with K-12 Principal or Assistant Principal	January-March
Have K-12 principals and assistant principals received specific professional development related to social-emotional learning (SEL) for school leaders?	Quantitative Qualitative	K-12 Principal and Assistant Principal Survey Structured One-to-One Interview with K-12 Principal or Assistant Principal	January-March

Research Question	Type of Data to be Collected	Data Source	Timeline
Have K-12 principals and assistant principals received professional development specific to creating equitable school communities?	Quantitative Qualitative	K-12 Principal and Assistant Principal Survey Structured One-to-One Interview with K-12 Principal or Assistant Principal	January-March
Has the professional development K-12 principals and assistant principals received gone beyond defining concepts and developing general awareness?	Qualitative Quantitative	K-12 Principal and Assistant Principal Survey Structured One-to-One Interview with K-12 Principal or Assistant Principal	January-March

This research study adopted a mixed-methods approach, blending quantitative data derived from a 22-question survey along with qualitative data obtained through individual interviews. These interviews comprised six questions and involved various K-12 principals and assistant principals.

The administration of the 22-question survey took place electronically using a Google Form. K-12 principals and assistant principals were given the opportunity to voluntarily complete the survey at a time convenient for them. It was crucial to allow participants to answer the survey

questions at their convenience to ensure maximum participation and accurate responses. By accommodating their schedules, participants could dedicate adequate time and focus, resulting in more honest answers. This approach also acknowledges the demands of their professional roles, fostering a positive research experience and enhancing the reliability of the data collected.

The initial 10 questions of the 22-question survey aimed to elicit participants' perspectives on the professional development opportunities and support systems available to them as K-12 principals or assistant principals. The primary objective of this questionnaire was to provide participants with an opportunity to express their sentiments regarding the professional development opportunities and support structures tailored to their roles. Through their responses, along with those of peers in similar positions, researchers sought to gain a deeper understanding of the professional development landscape for school leaders.

Within the first section, participants encountered statements concerning professional development opportunities and support mechanisms available to them. Participants were tasked with assessing their satisfaction levels regarding these aspects of their roles as school leaders. Participants were instructed to consider whether the professional development opportunities and support systems provided them with more than expected, met their expectations, left them undecided, fell short of expectations, or significantly disappointed them. They were encouraged to select the corresponding option: "Very Satisfied," "Satisfied," "N" (Neither Satisfied nor Dissatisfied), "Dissatisfied," or "Very Dissatisfied," respectively.

Furthermore, participants were reminded to bear in mind their satisfaction levels concerning the professional development opportunities and support systems available to them as K-12 principals and assistant principals. Ultimately, participants were urged to be candid and truthful, providing an authentic portrayal of their sentiments regarding the professional development opportunities and support systems available to them.

Before engaging in the study, school district administration received an informed consent form. Approved by the Institutional Review Board (Appendix A), this form outlined the following initial topics to be addressed in the 22-question survey:

- Satisfaction with the frequency of professional development opportunities provided to enhance leadership skills.
- Satisfaction with the level of support received from the district or organization for professional growth and development.
- Satisfaction with the balance between online and in-person professional development options.
- Satisfaction with opportunities to network and collaborate with other principals and assistant principals during professional development events.
- Satisfaction with the alignment between individual professional development goals and offerings provided by the district/organization.
- Satisfaction with opportunities to learn about emerging trends and best practices in education through professional development.
- Satisfaction with the flexibility of scheduling professional development activities to accommodate responsibilities as a K-12 principal or assistant principal.
- Satisfaction with the relevance of professional development sessions attended.
- Satisfaction with the clarity of goals and objectives in professional development programs participated in.
- Satisfaction with the variety of professional development opportunities available as a K-12 principal or assistant principal.

The subsequent section, comprising the final 12 questions of the 22-question survey, sought to capture participants' viewpoints on the professional development opportunities and support structures specifically designed for K-12 principals and assistant principals. Participants

were tasked with providing responses to the ensuing multiple-choice questions, which delved into diverse facets of professional development.

Participants were explicitly informed that their feedback was integral to the researcher's comprehension of their lived experiences concerning professional development. Within this section, participants were instructed to carefully consider each question and select the option or options that most accurately reflected their experiences or preferences. Their candid responses were anticipated to shed light on the aspects of professional development they found meaningful and impactful, thereby contributing to the enhancement of their professionalism.

The 22-question survey also featured more specific topics, including:

- Common sources of professional development and support utilized by K-12 principals or assistant principals.
- Preferred mode of professional development
- Methods typically used to seek out professional development opportunities.
- Essential components of effective professional development for K-12 principals.
- Factors influencing decisions to participate in specific professional development opportunities.
- Alignment criteria for professional development.
- Receipt of professional development specifically focused on social-emotional learning (SEL) for school leaders.
- Importance of ongoing professional development focused on social-emotional learning (SEL) for school leaders.
- Receipt of training on strategies to address systemic inequities within schools.
- Importance of ongoing professional development focused on creating equitable school communities.
- The extent to which professional development goes beyond defining concepts and developing general awareness.

- Inclusion of opportunities for collaboration and sharing best practices with other principals and assistant principals.

The final 12 questions also included a range of multiple-choice answers, allowing participants to select one or multiple responses depending on the question. In Table 5, the breakdown of questions from Appendix B of Survey #1 is presented.

Table 5

Breakdown of Questions: Survey #1

Question(s)	Type of Question	Purpose
1-10	Likert Scale Questions: Collected quantitative data on satisfaction level of participants related to current and prior professional development opportunities	Data to answer research questions 1-4
11-13	Multiple Choice Questions: Collected quantitative data on participant's preferred mode and common source of professional development opportunities	Data to answer research question 1
14 and 15	Multiple Choice Questions: Collected quantitative data on factors and essential components that influence their decisions to participate in specific professional development opportunities	Data to answer research question 1
16-20	Multiple Choice Questions: Collected quantitative data on professional development opportunities provided to	Data to answer research questions 2 and 3

	participants that relate to social-emotional learning (SEL) and creating equitable school communities	
21 and 22	Multiple Choice Questions: Collected quantitative data on whether or not the professional development received by the participants went beyond defining concepts and if these opportunities have lent themselves to professional collaboration	Data to answer research question 4

As part of the mixed-methods approach employed in this research, qualitative data was gathered through a series of one-to-one interviews with a range of K-12 principals and assistant principals. The following six questions posed to the participants were crafted to elicit feedback in an open-response format.

1. In your experience, how effective are the current professional development opportunities in addressing or supporting the unique challenges and responsibilities that K-12 principals and assistant principals face?
2. What types of professional development formats or delivery methods do you find most effective and engaging for your own learning? Please explain why you prefer these formats.
3. From your perspective, how well do the current professional development offerings align with the evolving demands and trends in education? Are there any emerging areas that you believe should be addressed more comprehensively?

4. Have you participated in any professional development that focused on social-emotional learning (SEL) for school leaders? If so, can you describe the content of the training and how it has influenced your approach as a principal/ assistant principal?
5. Have you participated in any professional development experiences that focused on equity, diversity, and inclusion in education. How did this training contribute to your understanding and ability to create an inclusive and equitable school community?
 - a. If the above answer is 'No'- In terms of fostering equity, diversity, and inclusion in your school, what specific knowledge or skills would you like to develop through professional development? How do you envision this training positively influencing your school community?
6. Reflecting on your experience, how can your district or organization better support your continued learning and development as a K-12 school leader, even outside formal professional development sessions?

Engaging in one-to-one interviews with current K-12 principals and assistant principals offered a personalized avenue to delve into their professional journeys. These interviews explored their past experiences with professional opportunities, probing into whether they've undergone training in SEL and DEI. Furthermore, these one-to-one interviews provided valuable insights into their expectations and preferences for future professional development opportunities. In Table 6, the breakdown of questions from Appendix C of the open-ended one-to-one interviews is presented.

Table 6*Breakdown of Questions: Structure One-to-One Interviews*

Question	Type of Question	Purpose
1	Open-ended question: Collected qualitative data on assessing the effectiveness of the current professional development the participant(s) have received	Data to answer research question 1
2	Open-ended question: Collected qualitative data on the participant(s) preferred methods of professional development	Data to answer research question 1
3	Open-ended question: Collected qualitative data on the alignment of the professional development received by participant(s) with current educational trends	Data to answer research questions 1 and 4
4	Open-ended question: Collected qualitative data related to whether or not the participant(s) have received professional development in the area of SEL	Data to answer research question 2
5	Open-ended question: Collected qualitative data on assessing the participant(s) past professional development experiences	Data to answer research question 3

	related to diversity, equity, and inclusion	
6	Open-ended question: Collected qualitative data on participant(s) suggestions for future professional development opportunities	Data to answer research questions 1 and 4

The one-to-one interviews were conducted virtually using Zoom. Prior to each session, participants were asked for their permission to record, capturing responses to the six open-ended questions. These interviews were scheduled at times convenient for participants' schedules.

The objective of conducting these one-to-one interviews, aimed at collecting qualitative data, was to procure intimate and candid insights through conversational engagement. The researcher aimed to prompt authentic responses regarding participants' professional development journeys in their roles as K-12 principals or assistant principals.

Financial Implications

Ongoing professional development for K-12 principals and assistant principals may carry significant financial implications that extend beyond the surface costs of training programs. While the direct expenses of accessing technological resources and managing administrative tasks are evident, it's equally crucial to recognize and budget for the indirect costs associated with such initiatives.

Providing access to technological resources is essential for effective professional development. Laptops, projectors, interactive whiteboards, and other audio-visual equipment enable dynamic and interactive learning experiences. These tools facilitate the delivery of training materials, encourage collaboration among participants, and support multimedia presentations and real-time data analysis. However, investing in technological resources involves both upfront and ongoing costs. Procuring hardware and software, along with maintenance, upgrades, and

technical support, constitutes significant financial commitments that must be factored into the budget for professional development programs.

In addition to technology expenses, administrative costs represent another substantial financial consideration. Tasks such as registration, scheduling, and communication with administrators are essential for organizing and managing professional development initiatives. Registration processes may involve developing online registration systems, managing participant databases, and processing payments or reimbursements. Scheduling sessions, workshops, or conferences requires coordinating availability among multiple stakeholders and securing suitable venues or virtual platforms. Effective communication with administrators ensures clarity regarding program objectives, expectations, and logistics. These administrative tasks demand dedicated personnel, resources, and time, all of which incur costs that should be accounted for in the professional development budget.

However, beyond these direct expenses, it's vital to recognize and address the indirect costs associated with professional development. Indirect costs refer to the less obvious but equally significant financial implications that arise because of investing in training and development initiatives. For example, the time principals and assistant principals spend participating in professional development activities represents an opportunity cost. While engaged in training sessions or workshops, school leaders are temporarily diverted from their regular responsibilities, potentially affecting productivity and operational efficiency. Balancing the benefits of investing in professional growth with the potential loss of productivity requires careful consideration and strategic planning.

The University of Delaware's Delaware Academy for School Leadership (DASL) offers a specific option for professional development tailored to K-12 school administrators. DASL collaborates with educators to enhance student and school outcomes. One notable feature is their coaching program, which provides participants with a platform for sharing ideas and concerns, all of which is facilitated by experienced DASL administrators. This coaching offers valuable input

and support before decision implementation, aiming to optimize K-12 school leadership performance. The focus lies on self-awareness, goal setting, action planning, and measuring success regarding systems and organizational dynamics. Through DASL's coaching program, district leaders can refine their leadership skills and strategies, fostering continuous improvement within their educational communities.

DASL Leadership Specialists will deliver professional development and/or group coaching sessions for a district's K-12 principals and assistant principals Professional Learning Community (PLC). The specific topics for these sessions can be determined in consultation with the district's central administration.

As an additional option, the Leadership Coaches can provide up to 105 hours of individual coaching across K-12 principals and assistant principals. This coaching can be tailored to meet the specific needs of each principal and assistant principal and will be divided and delivered as requested throughout the partnership.

The scope of work includes an initial partnership meeting with the school district's central administration. The following items outline the key activities and options available:

- Item #1- Determination of Principal PLC schedule with topics
- Item #2- Drafting of Principal PLC schedule with suggested topics: The DASL team will propose a schedule to district central administration. DASL will remain flexible to adapt PLC topics and group coaching sessions based on evolving school district/ school needs.
- Item #3- Planning and facilitation of monthly PD sessions and group coaching: DASL Leadership Specialists will conduct monthly PD sessions, potentially incorporating group coaching. Each session will last up to 3 hours.
- Item #4- Optional individual coaching: DASL offers individual coaching/consultation to each principal as needed, totaling up to 105 hours during the school year. Coaching

sessions, lasting 2 to 3 hours each, can be scheduled with a DASL Leadership Specialist.

The project manager will monitor the utilization of this coaching service.

Validity

It is up to the researcher and research participants who attempt to build validity into the different phases of the research from data collection through to data analysis and interpretation (Zohrabi, 2013). Ensuring the quality and credibility of data collected throughout the research project necessitates the comprehensive consideration of content validity, internal validity, and external validity.

During the data collection phase, it is crucial to prioritize the assessment of content validity. This form of validity ensures that all questions posed, whether quantitative or qualitative, are pertinent and aligned with the identified problems in the mixed methods study (Zohrabi, 2013). Through systematic evaluation of measurement instruments, content validity serves to mitigate bias in data collection. It ensures that all relevant aspects of the construct being measured are adequately represented, reducing the risk of underrepresentation or overrepresentation of certain aspects. Unclear questions can lead to confusion among respondents, resulting in inaccurate or inconsistent responses. By identifying and rectifying unclear questions, researchers can ensure that respondents fully understand what is being asked, thereby enhancing the clarity and comprehensibility of the instrument. Clear and unambiguous questions produce more reliable data. When respondents are uncertain about the meaning of a question, they may provide inaccurate or unreliable responses. Checking and refining unclear questions helps improve the quality and accuracy of the data collected, ultimately strengthening the validity of the study.

Internal validity focuses on the alignment of research results with real-world circumstances, assessing how accurately the researcher observes and measures the intended variables (Zohrabi, 2013). One approach to bolstering internal validity involves employing triangulation. Gathering information from various sources and employing different techniques

can validate research outcomes. Triangulation facilitates the acquisition of qualitative and quantitative data, strengthening the credibility of findings (Zohrabi, 2013).

The researcher should collect, analyze, and interpret data as impartially as possible (Zohrabi, 2013). Maintaining neutrality and clarity is crucial for the researcher throughout the research process. In this study, it was imperative to craft and ask interview questions accurately and communicate findings honestly.

External validity is concerned with the relevance of the findings in other settings and with other participants (Zohrabi, 2013). By addressing external validity, researchers can enhance the practical utility of their findings, providing valuable insights that can inform decision-making and interventions in various contexts. The inclusion of external validity in the research design is vital as it validates the generalizability of findings, allowing for their meaningful application in diverse real-world situations.

The researcher aimed to achieve triangulation in data collection by employing both quantitative surveys and qualitative one-to-one interviews with K-12 principals and assistant principals. This approach ensured data and methodology triangulation for the study. Moreover, adherence to ethical rules and principles eliminated the potential for researcher bias.

Summary

This research employed a mixed-methods approach, utilizing surveys and individual interviews to address the research questions. Quantitative data was obtained via a 22-question survey incorporating Likert scale and multiple-choice questions. Qualitative data was collected from one-on-one interviews conducted with fellow K-12 principals and assistant principals. The following chapter will outline the research outcomes and offer an interpretation of the findings, drawing from a comprehensive analysis of the collected data.

CHAPTER IV

Professional development is crucial for K-12 principals and assistant principals, serving as a cornerstone for effective school leadership and the overall success of educational organizations. Rather than being a one-time event, professional development for school administrators involves the administration's ongoing and comprehensive analysis of data in a formalized manner that incorporates multiple factors associated with effectiveness (Barton & Smith, 2015). This continuous learning process is essential in adapting to the evolving educational landscape and addressing the diverse needs of students and staff.

Principals require specific professional development that is rigorous, effective, and aligned to professional leadership standards and effective professional development constructs (Rodriguez et al., 2021). This ensures that they are equipped with the latest strategies, tools, and knowledge to lead their schools effectively. Professional development programs tailored to the unique challenges faced by school leaders can significantly enhance their capacity to drive instructional improvement, manage resources efficiently, and foster a positive school culture. By investing in the ongoing development of principals and assistant principals, educational systems can ensure that their leaders are well-prepared to meet the demands of their roles and contribute to the academic and social success of their students.

This research study aimed to examine the perceptions of K-12 principals and assistant principals in the state of Pennsylvania regarding the professional development they have received during their tenure as K-12 administrators. Understanding their experiences and insights is essential for identifying the strengths and weaknesses of current professional development programs.

The information gained from this research will be instrumental in guiding school districts throughout Pennsylvania in providing ongoing opportunities for the growth and development of their administrators. By tailoring professional development to meet the specific needs and challenges faced by school leaders, districts can foster a culture of continuous improvement and

innovation. Ultimately, the goal is to empower principals and assistant principals with the skills and knowledge necessary to enhance their leadership capabilities, thereby driving the growth and success of their individual schools and improving student outcomes across the state.

The intent of this research study is to identify the preferred delivery methods of professional development opportunities for K-12 principals and assistant principals, evaluate the perception of the effectiveness of current professional development opportunities, and explore the specific topics addressed in these professional development programs.

Chapter IV will serve to present the results of the quantitative and qualitative data collection to answer four research questions:

1. What are the main sources of professional development and support for K-12 principals and assistant principals in Pennsylvania?
2. Have K-12 principals and assistant principals received specific professional development related to social-emotional learning (SEL) for school leaders?
3. Have K-12 principals and assistant principals received professional development specific to creating equitable school communities?
4. Has the professional development K-12 principals and assistant principals received gone beyond defining concepts and developing general awareness?

By addressing these questions, the study aims to provide valuable recommendations for optimizing professional development programs, ensuring they are both impactful and aligned with the needs of school leaders.

Finally, Chapter IV aims to discuss the processes used to collect data, ensuring a comprehensive understanding of the methodologies employed. It will also detail the procedures used to analyze and interpret the data, providing clarity on how insights were derived. The chapter will conclude with a presentation of the results from the findings, highlighting key trends and conclusions.

For this research study, data was collected through two main methods: an electronic survey and one-to-one structured interviews. The 22-question survey was distributed electronically and was available for completion between November 2023 and January 2024. This survey included a mix of multiple-choice attitudinal questions and Likert scale questions, aiming to gather a wide range of quantitative data regarding the perceptions and experiences of K-12 principals and assistant principals with regard to professional development.

Before distributing the survey to K-12 principals and assistant principals, the questions were reviewed by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) to ensure that they met ethical standards and posed no harm to the participants. This step was crucial in maintaining the integrity and ethical conduct of the research.

In addition to the survey, one-to-one structured interviews were conducted with K-12 principals and assistant principals between February 2024 and April 2024. These interviews provided an opportunity to gather in-depth qualitative data, allowing participants to elaborate on their responses and provide nuanced insights into their experiences. The structured interviews provided a framework for consistent questioning while allowing flexibility to dive into emerging themes and ideas, enabling thorough exploration of participants' perspectives and experiences.

The 22-question survey was distributed electronically to 108 K-12 principals and assistant principals across six school districts in Pennsylvania. A total of 30 voluntary responses were received, resulting in a 28% response rate. Prior to the survey distribution, permission was obtained from each of the six school district superintendents.

An email was then sent to the 108 administrators, requesting their voluntary participation in the survey. The email emphasized the anonymity of the survey and included a description of the research study, contact information, and a direct link to the Google Form for voluntary consent to participate in the survey.

Due to the low response rate in January, the researcher decided to resend the initial email message to the 108 K-12 principals and assistant principals, requesting their participation in the survey for a second time. This follow-up email was sent in late January.

Following the second email, the researcher successfully collected a total of 30 responses. To analyze the data, the researcher exported the collected responses into a Google Sheet, allowing for organized and systematic analysis of the survey data.

Structured interviews were conducted with a diverse group of K-12 principals from the six school districts in Pennsylvania. Participation in these interviews was voluntary, and a total of 10 interviews were conducted. The interviews were scheduled at times convenient for the participants and were carried out via the Zoom platform. Each interview was recorded using Zoom, enabling transcription for further analysis. Importantly, all participants consented to the recording of the interviews.

Triangulation

Triangulation is a crucial methodological approach in research, especially when combining quantitative and qualitative data. By using both types of data, researchers can enhance the validity and reliability of their findings. In this study, triangulation was achieved by analyzing both the quantitative survey data and the qualitative interview data. This approach allowed for a comprehensive understanding of the research questions by comparing and contrasting different data sources, ultimately leading to more robust conclusions. Additionally, the use of multiple data measures, such as multiple-choice attitudinal questions, Likert scale questions, and structured interviews, further strengthened the triangulation process. These various data measures provided different perspectives on the research questions, enriching the overall analysis.

Moreover, the inclusion of both descriptive and inferential statistical analyses in the triangulation process added another layer of depth to the study. Descriptive statistics helped to summarize the survey data, providing a clear overview of the participants' responses. On the other

hand, inferential statistics allowed the researchers to make inferences and draw conclusions about the population based on the sample data. By combining these statistical analyses with qualitative data from the interviews, the researchers were able to corroborate their findings, ensuring a more comprehensive and nuanced understanding of the research topic.

Data Analysis

Research Question One Results

The first research question of this research study focuses on identifying the main sources of professional development and support for K-12 principals and assistant principals in Pennsylvania. To address this question, the initial 10 questions of a 22-question survey were designed to gather participants' perspectives on the professional development opportunities and support systems available to them in their roles. Additionally, questions 1-15 of the survey provided the researcher with data relevant to answering this research question. The study also incorporated qualitative data from structured interviews, with a particular emphasis on question 2 of the interview protocol. The researcher analyzed the collected data using descriptive statistics to gain insights into the professional development landscape for K-12 principals and assistant principals in Pennsylvania.

Professional Development Opportunities and Supports Survey Data

Survey question 3 (SQ3) assessed the satisfaction levels of K-12 principals and assistant principals regarding the balance between online and in-person professional development options. When asked, 46.7% (14 respondents) expressed satisfaction with the current offerings, 26.7% (8 respondents) felt neutral, and 13.3% (4 respondents) indicated dissatisfaction. Figure 1 illustrates the responses to SQ3.

Figure 1

Level of Satisfaction Between Online and In-person Professional Development Options

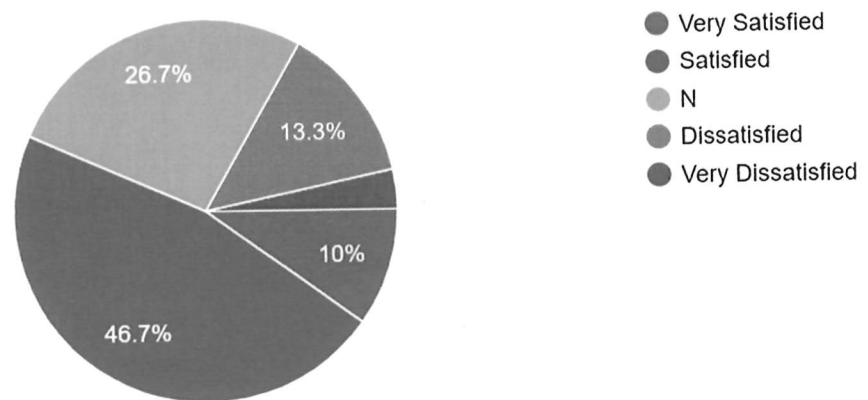
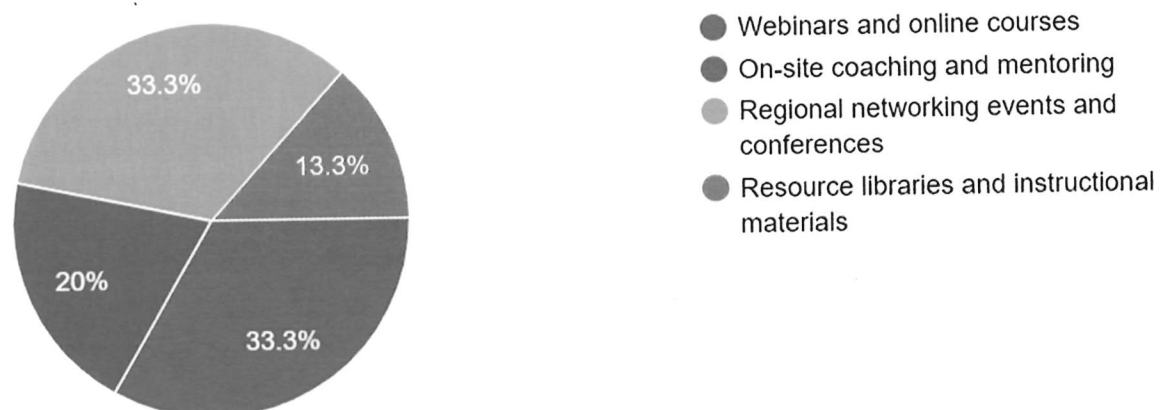


Figure 2, derived from SQ11, identifies the most commonly used sources of professional development for K-12 principals and assistant principals, showing that "Regional Networking and Conferences" and "Webinars and Online Courses" are the two most frequently utilized sources, each used by 33.3% (10) of respondents.

Figure 2

Common Sources of Professional Development

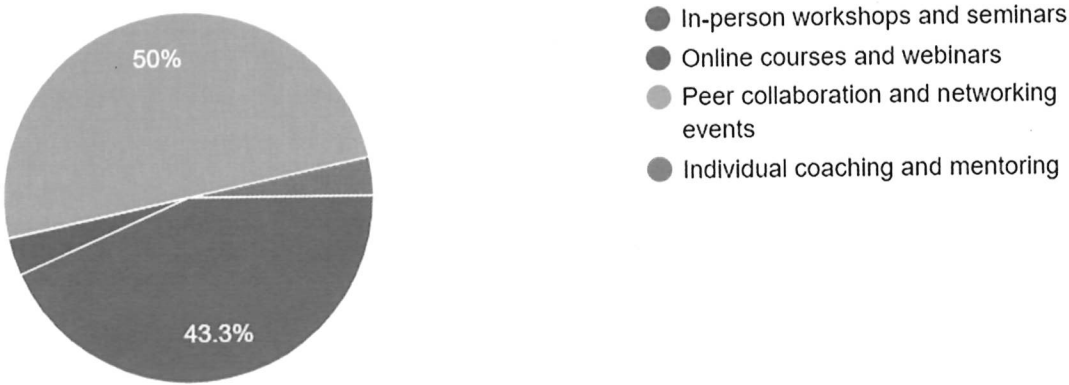


Half of the respondents (15 out of 30) identified "Peer Collaboration and Networking Events" as their preferred mode of professional development, while 43.3% chose "In-person Workshops and Seminars." Only one respondent selected "Online Courses and Webinars" as their

preferred method of professional development. Figure 3 illustrates the distribution of responses for all four options in SQ12.

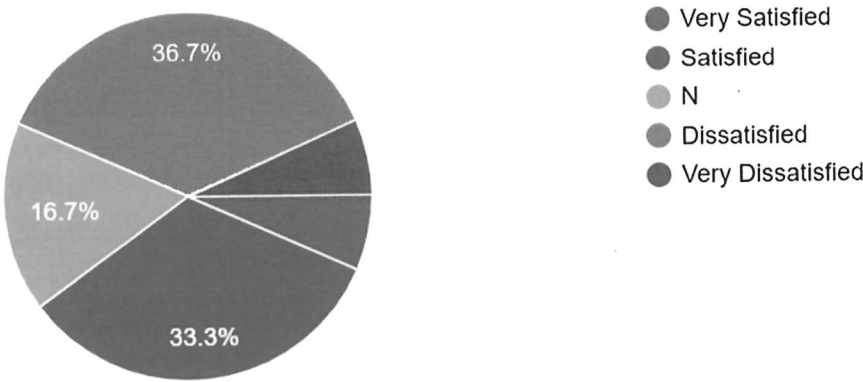
Respondents who prefer face-to-face professional development over virtual or online formats do so for several reasons. One respondent highlighted the benefit of more open dialogue, stating, "The face-to-face has been the best in the fact, I've been able to actually have more open dialogue." Another respondent emphasized the personal aspect of in-person interactions, noting, "I'm an in-person person. I'd like to be in the same room with the facilitator." These preferences underline the value of direct interaction and the enhanced communication that in-person settings can offer. The respondents also cited several other reasons for preferring face-to-face professional development over a virtual format. Many highlighted the importance of real-time feedback and the ability to ask questions immediately, which is often more difficult in virtual settings. They appreciated the opportunities for spontaneous, informal conversations with colleagues, which can lead to valuable insights and networking that aren't as easily facilitated online. The physical presence in a shared space also helps maintain focus and reduces distractions, making the learning experience more immersive and effective. One respondent mentioned that "it's very easy to get distracted by what else is happening in your building" during virtual professional development. This highlights a common challenge of maintaining focus in an online setting. Overall, the personal connection, immediate interaction, and conducive learning environment make face-to-face professional development a preferred choice for many.

Figure 3
Preferred Mode of Professional Development



Survey question 10 (SQ10) assessed the satisfaction levels of K-12 principals and assistant principals regarding the variety of professional development opportunities available to them. Over one-third of the respondents (36.7%) answered that they are "dissatisfied" with the variety of options available to them, while exactly one-third (33.3%) answered that they are "satisfied" with the options available. Figure 4 illustrates the range of responses.

Figure 4
Level of Satisfaction Regarding Variety of Professional Development Opportunities Available



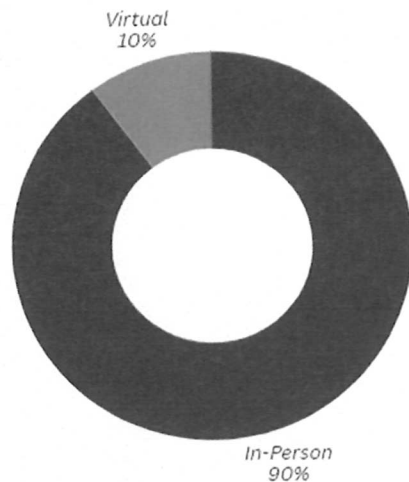
Structured Interview Data

During the structured interview, the researcher asked, "What types of professional development formats or delivery methods do you find most effective and engaging for your own learning?" In response, 90% of the respondents (9 out of 10) stated that face-to-face opportunities were more effective than virtual formats like Zoom (Figure 5). Four out of ten participants pointed to in-person conferences as particularly beneficial for their professional growth. They explained that being physically present at these conferences allowed them to build stronger connections with the presenters and engage more deeply with the content. For example, one participant noted, "My conference experience isn't that robust," suggesting that their past conference experiences had been somewhat limited. However, several participants agreed that in-person attendance facilitated a better learning experience, as it allowed them to process information more effectively and participate in more meaningful interactions.

Additionally, four respondents specifically highlighted the effectiveness of attending in-person conferences for their professional development. One participant mentioned a language immersion conference where they felt a significantly stronger connection to the presenters due to the face-to-face format. This feedback underscores the value of in-person professional development opportunities for fostering direct engagement and enhancing the overall learning experience. Another participant shared that they actively seek out conference opportunities to further their professional growth, stating that they find these events through the PA Principals Association. Two other participants also identified noteworthy in-person conferences they had attended, emphasizing that these conferences focused on crucial topics such as social-emotional learning (SEL) and equity work. Their experiences reflect a broader appreciation for how in-person settings can provide deeper, more impactful learning experiences compared to virtual formats. This collective feedback highlights the importance of face-to-face professional development in creating opportunities for meaningful interactions and comprehensive learning.

Figure 5

Professional Development Formats or Delivery Methods Found Most Effective



One respondent specifically mentioned that virtual formats, such as Zoom, represent the lowest quality of professional development. This participant felt that virtual interactions lacked the depth and effectiveness of face-to-face engagements. However, another respondent expressed a preference for virtual professional development over in-person formats, highlighting the effectiveness and engagement of asynchronous training on specialized topics like cybersecurity. This participant appreciated the flexibility that virtual formats offer, stating, “I like it when there’s choice for our learning,” which reflects a preference for having options in how professional development is delivered. This contrast between opinions underscores the varied experiences and preferences among educators when it comes to professional development formats. While some view virtual formats as less effective, others find that they offer valuable opportunities for learning, particularly when there is a range of choices available to meet individual needs.

The triangulation of data collected from the survey and structured interviews for Question 1 of this research study revealed a clear and consistent preference for in-person or face-to-face professional development among K-12 principals and assistant principals. Both the survey results

and interview responses showed no contradictions in the expressed preferences for professional development formats. The majority of respondents from both data sources indicated that they favored in-person professional development opportunities, citing that this mode of learning allowed them to absorb content more effectively. They believed that face-to-face interactions provided richer experiences for engaging with material and connecting with presenters compared to virtual formats. This alignment in responses underscores a strong consensus among K-12 educational leaders on the value of direct, in-person learning experiences for their professional growth.

Research Question Two Results

The second research question, “Have K-12 principals and assistant principals received specific professional development related to social-emotional learning (SEL) for school leaders?” focused on quantifying the extent and nature of SEL-related training received by school leaders. To address this question, the study analyzed quantitative data from the Professional Development survey, specifically examining responses to SQ16, SQ17, and SQ18. These survey questions sought to gather detailed information on the types and frequency of SEL professional development experiences reported by K-12 administrators. Understanding the extent of SEL training is crucial because administrators with such expertise are better equipped to create a positive school climate by modeling and promoting emotional intelligence, empathy, and effective communication. This approach fosters a supportive and inclusive environment where both students and staff feel valued and respected. By evaluating the availability and impact of SEL professional development, this research highlights the importance of equipping school leaders with the skills necessary to nurture a healthy, productive educational community.

In addition to the quantitative data, the second research question also incorporated qualitative data collected from the structured interviews to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the professional development experiences of K-12 principals and assistant principals in relation to social-emotional learning (SEL). The fourth question in the structured

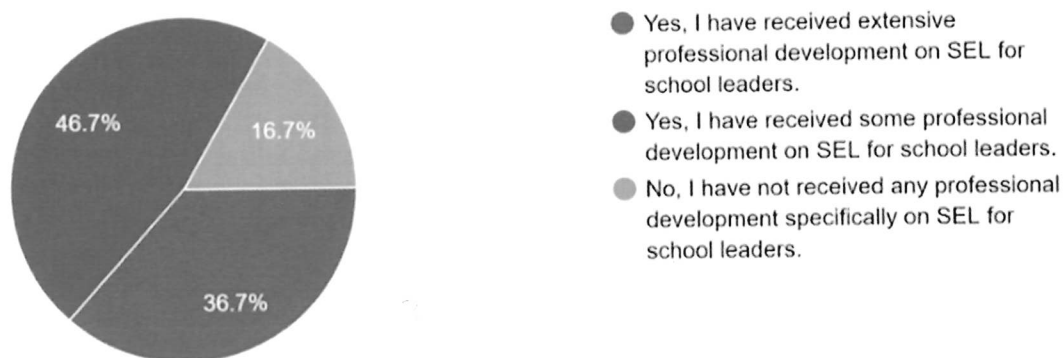
interview specifically asked participants whether they had ever participated in SEL training designed for school leaders. This qualitative approach allowed for in-depth exploration of participants' personal experiences and insights regarding SEL professional development. By combining quantitative survey data with qualitative interview responses, the study aimed to capture both the extent of SEL training received and the nuances of how such training impacts school leaders. By using both quantitative and qualitative methods, this approach provided a richer analysis that revealed not only how widespread SEL professional development is but also how administrators perceive its effectiveness and relevance to their roles. The combination of these data sources provided a well-rounded view of how K-12 school leaders engage with SEL training and its implications for their professional practices.

Professional Development Opportunities and Supports Survey Data

The respondents were asked whether they had received professional development specifically focused on social-emotional learning (SEL) for school leaders. Nearly half of the respondents, or 46.7%, indicated that they had participated in such training, reflecting a substantial level of engagement in SEL-focused professional development. In contrast, 16.7% of the respondents reported that they had not received any SEL training tailored for school leaders. This discrepancy highlights a notable gap in professional development opportunities for some administrators. Figure 6 provides a detailed breakdown of these responses, offering a visual representation of the distribution between those who have and have not engaged in SEL-specific training. This figure helps to illustrate the extent of SEL professional development among K-12 principals and assistant principals, showing both the level of participation and the areas where further opportunities might be needed.

Figure 6

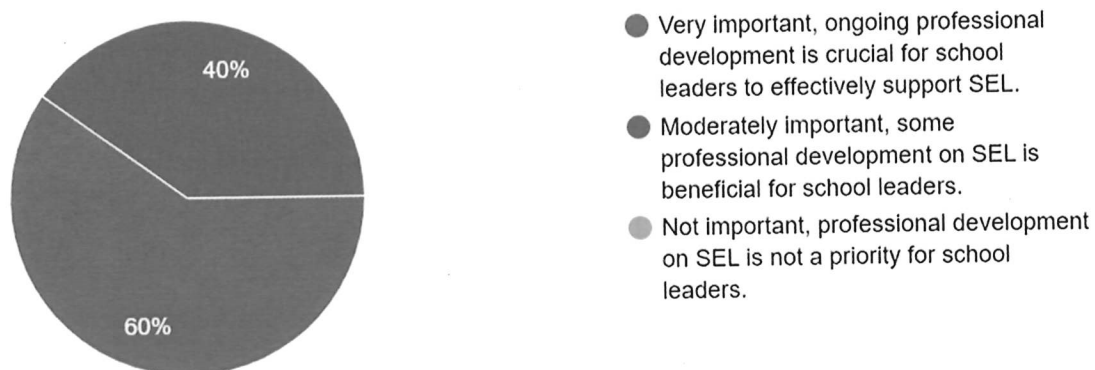
Professional Development Specifically Focused on SEL for School Leaders



Survey participants were also asked to assess the importance of ongoing professional development specifically focused on SEL for school leaders. Every respondent acknowledged that this topic holds significant importance, underscoring its relevance in today's educational landscape. Notably, 60% of respondents expressed that SEL training for school leaders is *very important*, reflecting a strong consensus on the critical role that such training plays in creating a supportive and effective school environment. These participants emphasized that SEL training is essential for enhancing their ability to lead with empathy, manage challenges, and support both staff and students. On the other hand, the remaining 40% of respondents viewed SEL training as *moderately important*, recognizing its value in improving leadership skills and positively impacting student outcomes. This group acknowledged that while SEL training is beneficial, it may not be as immediately essential as other professional development opportunities. Figure 7 provides a detailed breakdown of these responses, illustrating the varying degrees of perceived importance for SEL professional development among K-12 principals and assistant principals. The figure represents how respondents rated the significance of SEL training, offering insights into the broader attitudes towards this aspect of professional growth.

Figure 7

Level of Importance- SEL Training for School Leaders



Structured Interview Data

The fourth question of the structured interview asked participants if they had participated in any professional development focused solely on SEL. Eight out of ten participants confirmed that they had received professional development in this area. This high participation rate underscores the growing recognition of the importance of SEL in educational leadership. However, one participant pointed out a discrepancy, stating, "Not for school leaders. I feel like we did have a lot of professional development for teachers and for students," highlighting a gap in targeted training for administrators. Another participant observed, "SEL is a big thing right now, but I just see that it's stuff that our elementary staff does with the kids every day." These responses suggest a need for more tailored SEL professional development for school leaders to ensure they are equipped to support their staff and students effectively.

Another participant emphasized the rising significance of SEL, remarking, "I think SEL is going to be the big buzz thing for this decade." This sentiment reflects the increasing focus on SEL as a crucial component of effective school leadership. Additionally, a third participant noted that they had been involved in SEL professional development in two different school districts, indicating a broadening acceptance and implementation of SEL training across various

educational settings. These responses collectively illustrate the varying levels of engagement and perspectives on SEL professional development among school leaders.

When responding to this structured interview question, some participants identified multiple sources of SEL professional development specifically designed for K-12 administrators. One notable source mentioned was the SEL work conducted with the Thom Stecher and Associates group, with a participant noting that this training took place prior to the COVID-19 pandemic. This early engagement demonstrates that the district had already been proactive in addressing the need for SEL training for administrators, recognizing its significance well before the pandemic further highlighted the necessity of such professional development. Additionally, another participant described receiving brain research training through Julie Skolnick, which delves into the brain science behind social and emotional learning and its application in educational settings. These examples illustrate the diverse approaches and resources available to enhance SEL competencies among school leaders. The participants' experiences with different training programs emphasize the importance of comprehensive and specialized professional development in this vital area. Another participant also highlighted their involvement in CASEL training, which focuses on the five core competencies of SEL, further expanding on the various methods used to support administrators in developing their SEL skills. Together, these varied sources of professional development reflect a broader commitment to equipping school leaders with the tools they need to foster effective SEL practices in their schools.

Two participants also addressed the changing dynamics in today's society that have made SEL work increasingly challenging. One participant noted that SEL has, in some contexts, "kind of turned into a bad word" and that this negative perception has hindered efforts to advance SEL initiatives. They expressed frustration, stating, "You couldn't really move forward with that," highlighting the barriers faced in promoting SEL effectively. Another participant shared their concern that SEL is often implemented in isolation, which undermines its potential impact. This participant was quoted as saying, "When you teach SEL in isolation, what's the entry point?"

They further criticized this approach by remarking that “I just feel like it’s just, you know, it’s just fluff,” reflecting their belief that without integration into broader practices, SEL can be perceived as superficial rather than transformative. These insights underscore the complexities of advancing SEL in a way that is both meaningful and integrated into the broader educational framework.

For Research Question 2, which explored whether K-12 principals and assistant principals had received specific professional development related to social-emotional learning (SEL) for school leaders, triangulation was crucial for reinforcing the strength and dependability of the findings. This research question was examined through a combination of quantitative data from the Professional Development survey and qualitative data from structured interviews. The quantitative aspect involved analyzing responses to specific survey questions that asked about the types and frequencies of SEL training received by administrators. This data provided a broad overview of the extent to which SEL professional development opportunities were available and utilized by K-12 school leaders.

In contrast, the qualitative component of the research included in-depth insights from the structured interviews, where participants were asked directly about their experiences with SEL training for school leaders. This approach provided a way to explore participants' perceptions in greater depth, offering further context and insights into the survey data. By combining these two methods, the study was able to capture both the prevalence of SEL training and the administrators' detailed reflections on its effectiveness and relevance to their roles. For instance, while the survey data revealed how many administrators had received SEL training, the interviews offered deeper insights into how that training was perceived and applied in their professional practice.

Triangulation of data sources played a key role in validating the findings and offering a more comprehensive overview of the professional development experiences related to SEL. It ensured that the study's conclusions were not solely based on one type of data but were supported

by multiple perspectives. The integration of quantitative survey data and qualitative interview responses allowed for a richer analysis of the extent of SEL training and its impact, thereby enhancing the validity and depth of the research findings.

Research Question Three Results

Qualitative data collected from the Professional Development survey provided valuable insights into Research Question 3, which asked participants to answer, "Have K-12 principals and assistant principals received professional development specific to creating equitable school communities?" To delve deeper into this topic, four of the 22 survey questions were specifically designed to help the researcher understand the extent to which K-12 principals and assistant principals have received professional development focused on fostering equitable school communities. These questions aimed to uncover the nature and impact of such training, shedding light on the participants' experiences and the effectiveness of the professional development they received. Through these qualitative responses, the researcher could gather nuanced perspectives on how well-prepared school leaders feel to address issues of equity and inclusion in their schools, as well as identify any gaps in their training that might need to be addressed.

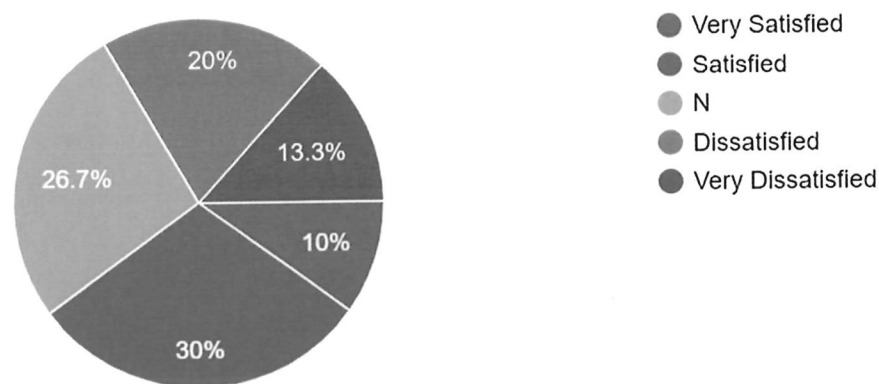
In addition to the quantitative data from the Professional Development survey, qualitative data was collected through the structured interview setting. These interviews provided a deeper, more nuanced understanding of the participants' experiences and perspectives regarding professional development for creating equitable school communities. The inclusion of qualitative data enabled the study to gather comprehensive and detailed narratives from K-12 principals and assistant principals, showcasing their insights and reflections on the training's effectiveness and relevance. By integrating both quantitative and qualitative data, this dual approach allowed the researcher to confirm findings, resulting in a more comprehensive and thorough analysis of the professional development landscape. It also enabled the identification of specific areas where additional support and resources might be needed to better prepare school leaders for fostering equity and inclusion in their educational environments.

Professional Development Opportunities and Supports Survey Data

Survey question 6 (SQ6) aimed to assess the participants' level of satisfaction with the opportunities to learn about emerging trends and best practices in education through professional development. Figure 8 provides a visual summary of these responses. Three respondents (10%) reported feeling "very satisfied" with the professional development they had received regarding emerging trends in education. Additionally, 30% (9 respondents) indicated they were "satisfied." On the other hand, 26.7% (8 respondents) were neutral in their level of satisfaction, neither satisfied nor dissatisfied. A notable portion, 20% (6 respondents), expressed feeling "dissatisfied," while 13.3% (4 respondents) felt "very dissatisfied" with the professional development opportunities available to them. This distribution of responses highlights the varied perceptions among participants regarding the adequacy and impact of their professional development experiences related to emerging trends and best practices in education.

Figure 8

Level of Satisfaction- Emerging Trends and Best Practices



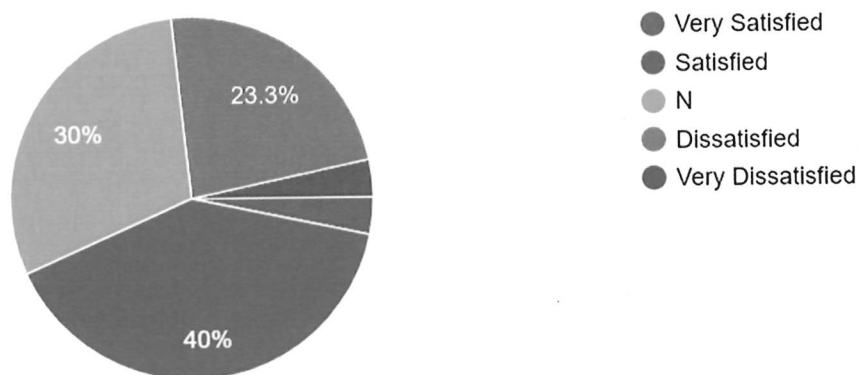
Survey question 8 (SQ8) asked participants, "How satisfied are you with the relevance of the professional development sessions you've attended?" This question was posed to gain insights into the effectiveness of efforts aimed at improving diversity, equity, and inclusion practices

within the education system. SQ8 sought to identify respondents' levels of satisfaction with the professional development they received on this important topic.

According to the responses, 40% (12 respondents) expressed satisfaction with the relevance of their professional development sessions. Meanwhile, 30% (9 respondents) gave a neutral response, indicating neither satisfaction nor dissatisfaction. The third highest percentage was 23.3% (7 respondents) who felt dissatisfied with the relevance of their professional development. Figure 9 provides a full breakdown of these responses. This data underscores the varied perspectives among participants on the effectiveness and applicability of professional development focused on diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Figure 9

Relevance of Professional Development

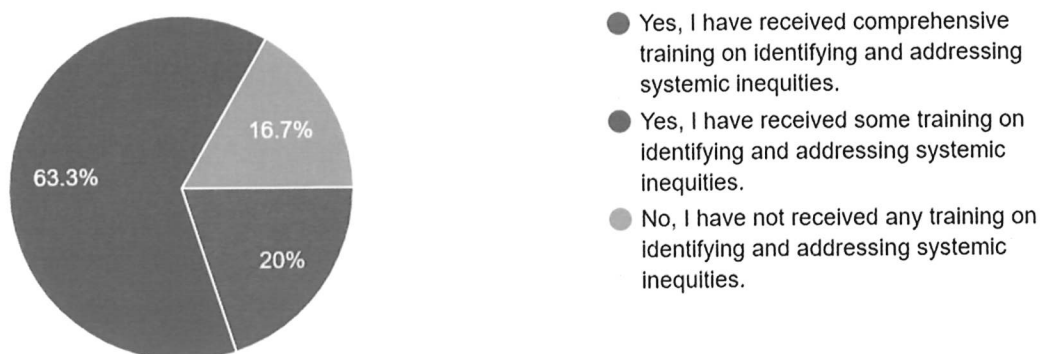


These findings suggest that while a significant portion of participants found professional development relevant and useful, there is still room for improvement. The neutral responses highlight a need for more targeted and impactful sessions that can engage those who are currently indifferent. Additionally, the dissatisfaction expressed by nearly a quarter of the respondents points to potential gaps in the current professional development offerings. Addressing these concerns could lead to more effective and meaningful professional development experiences,

ultimately enhancing the implementation of diversity, equity, and inclusion practices in educational settings.

Survey question 19 (SQ19) asked participants if they have received training on strategies to identify and address systemic inequities within their school. The researcher aimed to gain insight into the number of participants who have actually participated in this type of professional development. Understanding the extent of training in this area is crucial, as addressing systemic inequities is vital for fostering an inclusive and equitable educational environment. The responses to this question provide the researcher with a clear picture of the current state of professional development regarding systemic inequities and highlight areas for potential growth and improvement.

The survey offered three options for participants to select. The first option asked participants if they have received "comprehensive" training on identifying and addressing systemic inequities. Only 20% (6 respondents) selected this option, indicating that a small portion of the participants felt they had received thorough and in-depth training in this area. The second option, which asked participants if they have received "some" training on identifying and addressing systemic inequities, was by far the most selected. A significant 63.3% (19 respondents) chose this option, suggesting that while many have received some level of training, it may not be as extensive as needed. The final option indicated that the respondent did not receive any professional development in the area of identifying and addressing systemic inequities within their organization. This option was selected by 16.7% (5 respondents), showing that a notable minority of participants have not received any training on this critical issue. This distribution of responses underscores the necessity for more comprehensive training programs to ensure that all educational leaders are equipped to tackle systemic inequities effectively. Figure 10 displays these results.

Figure 10*Training to Identify Systemic Inequities*

Survey question 20 (SQ20) asked participants to identify the level of importance for K-12 principals and assistants to receive ongoing professional development specifically focused on creating equitable school communities. The theory behind this survey question was for the researcher to gain an understanding of whether respondents felt this topic is significant enough to warrant continuous, ongoing professional development in order to further their understanding of inequities in school systems. The responses to this question aim to shed light on the perceived value and necessity of professional development in equity, helping to inform future training programs and initiatives for educational leaders.

The options available to the respondents for SQ20 were:

- Very important: Ongoing professional development is crucial for school leaders to effectively create equitable school communities.
- Moderately important: Some professional development on equity is beneficial for school leaders.
- Not important: Professional development on equity is not a priority for school leaders.

Only two options were selected by the 30 respondents. An overwhelming 73.3% (22 respondents) felt that this topic is very important and should be delivered to them through

ongoing professional development. The only other option that was selected accounted for the remaining 26.7% (8 respondents) who felt that professional development devoted to equity and its benefits for school leaders is moderately important. This distribution indicates a strong consensus on the importance of continuous equity-focused professional development among educational leaders.

Structured Interview Data

Participants in the structured interview were asked if they have ever participated in professional development experiences that focused on equity, diversity, and inclusion in education. A follow-up question inquired how or if that training contributed to their understanding and ability to create an inclusive and equitable school community. For participants who answered "no" to the initial question, an additional follow-up question was posed. They were asked what skills or knowledge they would like or need to develop through professional development to foster equity, diversity, and inclusion within their organization. Moreover, these participants were also asked how they envision this type of training translating into a positive influence for their organization.

This line of questioning aimed to gain a comprehensive understanding of both the experiences of those who have received training and the needs and aspirations of those who have not. By exploring these areas, the researcher sought to identify gaps in current professional development and potential areas for growth to ensure all school leaders are equipped to promote equity and inclusion effectively.

Eighty percent (8 out of 10) of the participants who responded confirmed that they have taken part in training specifically related to diversity, equity, and inclusion, providing the researcher with some examples. One participant noted, "I've been a part of some equity book studies that were great." A second participant mentioned, "I've been a part of those equity trainings where we get really great engaging speakers come in." Another participant added, "We did have a lot of professional development on cultural proficiency and equity."

While 8 out of the 10 participants answered that they have participated in some form of professional development related to diversity, equity, and inclusion, not all of them felt the training was worthwhile. One participant stated, “I’ve been a part of some equity Zooms that kind of missed the mark.” Another participant mentioned the feeling of being blamed for broader societal issues during diversity, equity, and inclusion professional development sessions, suggesting that these sessions were somewhat ineffective or poorly presented. Finally, another participant added, “It would have been better to kind of take it to the next step instead of just staying surface level.”

The two participants who have not received any specific training in diversity, equity, and inclusion noted that such opportunities are scarce. One participant remarked, “No, that very rarely has come up.” Another participant added, “We have not had any PD focusing on equity, diversity, and inclusion.” When the researcher probed further, one of the participants pushed back against this type of training, stating, “I have 21 African American kids in a school where I have 448 kids,” and “Show me the data. Show me where we need to improve and grow.” This response highlights a perceived disconnect between the demographic makeup of their school and the necessity for such training. It also suggests a demand for data-driven justifications for professional development in equity, diversity, and inclusion. This feedback underscores the need for tailored training programs that address specific contexts and provide clear evidence of the benefits of fostering an inclusive school environment.

Triangulation played a pivotal role in addressing Research Question 3, which explored whether K-12 principals and assistant principals have received professional development specifically focused on creating equitable school communities. This question was examined through both quantitative and qualitative data sources to achieve a comprehensive understanding of the extent and effectiveness of such professional development. The quantitative data was gathered through survey questions SQ6, SQ8, SQ19, and SQ20, which provided a broad overview of the prevalence of equity-focused training and its perceived significance among school leaders.

For example, SQ19 asked participants to identify their level of training on systemic inequities, offering responses from “comprehensive” to “none,” while SQ20 assessed the importance of ongoing professional development in this area. This structured approach allowed the researcher to quantify the extent of participants’ experiences and perceptions regarding professional development related to equity, diversity, and inclusion.

In addition to the quantitative survey data, qualitative insights were obtained through structured interviews to deepen the understanding of the participants’ experiences with equity-focused professional development. Participants were asked whether they had received such training and, if so, how it contributed to their ability to create an inclusive and equitable school community. This line of questioning aimed to uncover the nuances of participants’ training experiences and explore their perspectives on the effectiveness and relevance of these professional development opportunities. For instance, some participants shared positive experiences, such as participating in “equity book studies” and “engaging speakers,” while others expressed dissatisfaction with past trainings, citing issues such as “Zooms that kind of missed the mark” or a feeling that the training was “surface level.”

The triangulation of quantitative and qualitative data provided a well-rounded analysis of the professional development landscape concerning equity, diversity, and inclusion. The survey results offered a broad statistical picture of the prevalence and importance of such training, revealing that 20% of respondents had received comprehensive training, 63.3% had received some training, and 16.7% had not received any training at all. Conversely, the interviews revealed detailed personal experiences and insights, highlighting both successes and shortcomings of the training programs. This approach allowed for a more nuanced interpretation of the data, showing that while a majority of principals and assistant principals acknowledged the importance of ongoing professional development in equity, there were varied experiences regarding the effectiveness of past trainings. For example, one participant’s request for “data-driven justifications for professional development” underscored the need for more targeted and effective

training programs. By integrating these diverse data sources, the study was able to provide a comprehensive view of current practices and identify areas for future improvement in professional development related to creating equitable school communities.

Research Question Four Results

Research Question 4, "Has the professional development K-12 principals and assistant principals received gone beyond defining concepts and developing general awareness?" was designed to explore whether the professional development opportunities available to educational leaders offered more than just a superficial or surface level understanding of important topics. The researcher sought to investigate if the training provided to principals and assistant principals not only introduced fundamental concepts but also went into deeper, more meaningful exploration of these concepts. By examining the extent to which professional development opportunities have moved past basic definitions and general awareness, the study aimed to uncover whether these opportunities offer comprehensive, in-depth learning experiences that equip school leaders with the advanced skills and knowledge needed for their complex roles.

A deeper understanding of significant educational topics is crucial for school leaders as they navigate the complexities of their roles and work to create positive learning environments. Professional development that fosters deep, reflective learning equips principals and assistant principals with the tools necessary to address multifaceted challenges and drive meaningful improvements in their schools. Exploring whether current professional development programs offer this level of depth helps to identify gaps in existing training and highlights opportunities for enhancing future professional development initiatives to better support school leaders in their important work.

Professional Development Opportunities and Supports Survey Data

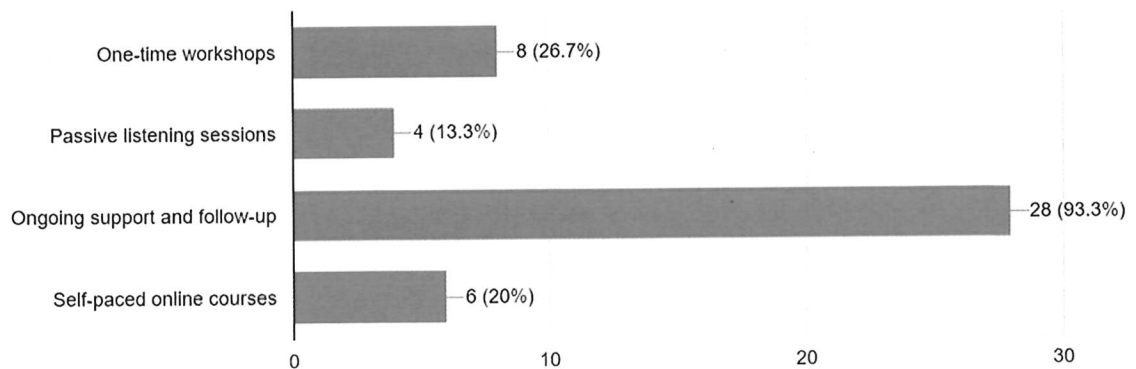
Survey questions 14 (SQ14) and 21 (SQ21) aimed to understand which components K-12 principals and assistant principals considered essential for effective professional development. SQ14 provided respondents with four options, allowing them to select multiple answers:

- One-time workshops
- Passive listening sessions
- Ongoing support and follow-up
- Self-paced online courses

The most frequently selected option was “Ongoing support and follow-up,” with 28 selections, representing 93.3% of the responses. This overwhelming preference indicates that the majority of respondents view ongoing support and follow-up as crucial elements of meaningful professional development. The researcher believed this option to be significant because continuous support and follow-up offer sustained opportunities for learning and growth, which are essential for addressing the complex and evolving challenges faced by K-12 principals and assistant principals. By prioritizing ongoing support, professional development programs can provide educational leaders with ongoing resources and feedback, helping them apply new knowledge in practical settings and refine their skills over time. This approach aligns with best practices in professional development, which emphasize that effective training should extend beyond initial exposure to include continuous engagement and support. Figure 11 illustrates the distribution of responses for SQ14, highlighting the overwhelming preference for ongoing support and follow-up.

Figure 11

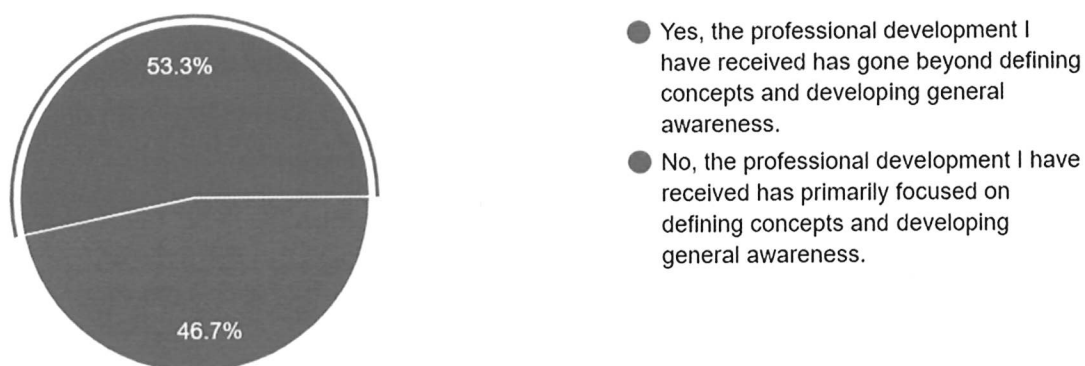
Essential Components of Effective Professional Development for K-12 Principals



In contrast, SQ21 sought to determine if the professional development received by respondents went beyond a surface-level introduction to a topic. This question aimed to assess the depth and practical applicability of the training provided. The responses to SQ21 revealed a more equally divided opinion among the participants. Specifically, 53.3% (16 respondents) indicated that they do not feel the professional development they have received goes beyond defining concepts and developing general awareness. Conversely, 46.7% (14 respondents) felt that their professional development did indeed go beyond surface-level understanding. This split response suggests that while some educational leaders believe they are receiving in-depth training, a significant portion of K-12 school leaders believe they still experience professional development that lacks depth. Figure 12 illustrates the distribution of responses for SQ21, highlighting the differing experiences and perceptions of professional development's effectiveness.

Figure 12

Depth of Professional Development Beyond Basic Concepts and Awareness



Together, the insights from SQ14 and SQ21 highlight the need for professional development that provides continuous support and deep, practical learning experiences. By addressing these aspects, educational leaders can be better equipped to handle the complexities of their roles, ensuring long-term improvement and effectiveness in educational leadership. Figures 11 and 12 visually represent these findings, emphasizing the critical components of meaningful professional development and the need for more comprehensive training programs.

Structured Interview Data

Through structured interviews, the researcher has gained insights into whether participants felt they have received professional development that goes beyond surface-level, general understandings. The overall sentiment ranged from average to minimal satisfaction with current professional development opportunities. One participant mentioned, "I would say, they're average to minimal... I would say they just feel average to limited." Others highlighted the lack of timely training and misalignment with current needs, which often leads to frustration and disengagement. For instance, while some found training on the Danielson framework for teaching as administrators to be beneficial, the impact was reduced when these sessions were not timely or relevant. Participants expressed a desire for more long-term and continuous professional development rather than one-off sessions, with comments like, "I would say they would be more effective if they were more long term, and not just once and done," and, "Sometimes we're kind of left out on a limb a bit." There was a shared perception that professional learning often felt like just another meeting rather than a valuable learning experience.

Participants also noted that the professional development they received often seemed outdated or repetitive. One stated, "I would say the PD for curriculum feels like a repeat from the last, like, 15 years," suggesting a significant gap in current and innovative training methods. Moreover, there was a sense that professional development lacked substance, particularly in areas such as social-emotional learning, with one participant stating, "In terms of other things like social, emotional. I feel it's just a lot of fluff and not a lot of substance." This sentiment was echoed by others who felt that professional development would be more effective if it were more deeply integrated into their daily work rather than treated as isolated events.

Additionally, some participants reported not participating in or seeking out further professional development due to its perceived ineffectiveness. For example, one noted, "We haven't had any additional training in managing student behavior from the district level," highlighting a gap in necessary training areas. There was also frustration with the shift in focus

during principal meetings due to new leadership, which some felt contributed to the ineffectiveness of professional development experiences. Statements such as, "I feel like our professional development for administrators hasn't really evolved with the change in student population," and "We haven't really gotten too much training in all those areas I feel like in our district" indicate a need for professional development that is more responsive to changing educational contexts and student needs. Overall, the findings suggest that there is significant room for improvement in how professional development is designed and delivered to K-12 principals and assistant principals, emphasizing the need for more relevant, ongoing, and integrated training opportunities.

Triangulating the survey question results and structured interview responses for Research Question 4, which explores whether the professional development received by K-12 principals and assistant principals goes beyond surface-level understanding, reveals a nuanced view of the effectiveness and depth of current training programs. Survey Question 21 (SQ21) asked respondents to assess whether their professional development experiences extended beyond merely defining concepts and developing general awareness. The results showed a nearly even split: 53.3% (16 respondents) felt that their professional development did not transcend these basic levels, while 46.7% (14 respondents) believed it did. This split indicates a significant divergence in the perceived depth and efficacy of the training programs available to school leaders.

These survey results are both supported and elaborated upon by the responses from the structured interviews. Interviewees frequently expressed concerns that their professional development experiences were insufficiently comprehensive. One participant highlighted that their training felt "average to minimal," noting that while some topics were valuable, the overall impact was limited due to a lack of ongoing support and timely updates. Another participant echoed this sentiment, pointing out that training often fails to address current needs effectively,

leading to frustration. This aligns with the survey data indicating a substantial portion of respondents who felt their professional development remained at a superficial level.

The structured interviews further illustrated that many participants view professional development as outdated or lacking substance. For example, one interviewee criticized curriculum training as repetitive and ineffective, saying it felt like "a repeat from the last, like, 15 years." Another participant described social-emotional learning training as having "a lot of fluff and not a lot of substance." These qualitative insights support the survey findings, which show that a significant number of respondents are dissatisfied with the depth of their professional development experiences. The alignment between the qualitative and quantitative data underscores the need for professional development programs that offer more than just introductory content.

Furthermore, the interviews highlighted a disconnect between professional development and the evolving challenges faced by school leaders. One participant noted that their training had not kept pace with changes in the student population, reflecting a broader concern about the relevance of the training provided. This concern is reflected in the survey data, which suggests that many respondents feel their professional development does not adequately address their evolving needs. Together, these findings emphasize the necessity for professional development programs that are not only deeper in content but also adaptable to the changing educational environment, ensuring that school leaders are equipped with the tools and knowledge required to navigate contemporary challenges effectively.

Summary

Chapter IV presented a comprehensive analysis of the research findings, utilizing both quantitative and qualitative data to address the four key research questions. The quantitative data was gathered through a detailed survey administered to K-12 principals and assistant principals, focusing on their experiences and perceptions of professional development. This survey included specific questions designed to measure various aspects of training effectiveness, relevance, and

depth. In addition, qualitative data was collected through structured interviews with a subset of survey participants. These interviews provided deeper insights into personal experiences, challenges, and perspectives related to professional development.

The integration of quantitative survey results with qualitative interview responses enabled a robust analysis of the professional development landscape for educational leaders. The survey results provided a general view of trends, while the structured interviews gave detailed, specific insights. Combining both methods helped the researcher closely examine how effective professional development programs are and how well they meet the needs and expectations of K-12 principals and assistant principals.

Research Question 1 focused on the sources of professional development and support. The survey indicated that district-provided workshops and peer networking were the most common sources. Structured interviews supported these findings, highlighting the value of both formal and informal learning opportunities. This multifaceted approach to professional development is crucial for meeting the diverse needs of educational leaders.

For Research Question 2, which examined the effectiveness of current professional development, survey responses revealed varied satisfaction levels. While some participants were satisfied with the relevance of their training, others found it lacking in depth. Structured interview responses provided additional context, with some praising specific programs while others criticized them as superficial. This discrepancy emphasizes the need for continuous improvement and more in-depth training.

Research Question 3 explored whether the professional development received addressed creating equitable school communities. The survey showed a range of experiences, with some participants noting valuable training and others expressing frustration with its adequacy. Interviews revealed a similar pattern, indicating a need for more comprehensive and sustained equity-focused professional development.

Finally, Research Question 4 investigated whether professional development extended beyond basic concepts. The survey results showed a mixed response, with nearly half of the respondents feeling that their training was only introductory. Structured interviews confirmed this, with many participants describing current programs as insufficient for addressing complex issues in depth. This finding underscores the need for professional development that offers ongoing, substantive support to effectively tackle the challenges faced by school leaders.

Chapter V will include a detailed examination of the findings, emphasizing how the data from both surveys and structured interviews interconnect and influence each other. Chapter V will also offer a thorough analysis and interpretation of how these data sets intersect and inform one another. Additionally, actionable recommendations will be provided based on the insights gathered, aiming to enhance the effectiveness of professional development initiatives and better support school leaders in their roles.

CHAPTER V

Conclusions about the Effectiveness of the Intervention

This study assessed the effectiveness of professional development opportunities and support for K-12 principals and assistant principals across various districts in Pennsylvania. The results indicate that while some professional development programs are valued, there is a widespread perception that many initiatives fail to provide deep, actionable insights and sustained support. "Effective professional development should be a continuous process that evolves with the needs of educators, rather than a series of isolated workshops" (Guskey, 2002, p. 382). K-12 Principals and assistant principals expressed a strong preference for professional development that extends beyond surface-level concepts and offers ongoing, practical support. This feedback underscores the need for interventions that ensure continuous, meaningful engagement rather than one-time, passive learning experiences. According to Fullan (2007), "for professional development to be truly effective, it must be integrated into the daily practices of educators, providing ongoing, contextual support" (p. 54).

This research study highlights the importance of contextual relevance in professional development. Effective professional development programs must adapt to the unique challenges and evolving needs of school leaders rather than relying on a one-size-fits-all approach. This perspective is supported by research indicating that "professional development must be closely aligned with the specific context and challenges faced by educators to achieve meaningful impact" (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017, p. 223). This finding reinforces the necessity for professional development initiatives to be both adaptable and responsive, ensuring they remain relevant and impactful in varying educational environments.

The conclusions drawn from this study are supported by both quantitative and qualitative data. Survey results showed that a significant majority of respondents considered "ongoing support and follow-up" essential for effective professional development. This preference was

validated by structured interview responses, which highlighted the limitations of current programs that often fail to address the evolving needs of educational leaders. Interviewees consistently pointed out that while some training topics are beneficial, their effectiveness is reduced when they are not timely or relevant to current educational contexts. As noted by Darling-Hammond et al. (2017), "professional development must be dynamic and responsive to the changing landscape of education to remain effective" (p. 221). The qualitative feedback supports the survey findings, emphasizing that professional development should offer actionable strategies and continuous support rather than merely an initial introduction.

The integration of feedback from both data sources reveals a critical gap in the implementation of professional development programs. Survey data and interview responses collectively indicate that many programs are perceived as "one-size-fits-all" and fail to provide the personalized support necessary for addressing the specific challenges faced by school leaders. According to Guskey (2002), "for professional development to be impactful, it must consider the individual needs of educators and provide opportunities for tailored support" (p. 380). This discrepancy between perceived and actual effectiveness of professional development interventions underscores the need for a more tailored approach that aligns with the diverse needs of principals and assistant principals. The alignment of survey results with qualitative insights highlights the necessity of evolving professional development practices to enhance their relevance and impact.

The data underscores the importance of establishing a framework for continuous evaluation and feedback within professional development programs. The survey and interview data suggest that ongoing assessment and adaptation are crucial for maintaining the effectiveness of professional development. Fullan (2007) stated, "effective professional development is not a one-time event but an iterative process of reflection and adjustment based on ongoing feedback" (p. 56). This approach ensures that professional development initiatives remain relevant and responsive to the needs of educational leaders over time. The integration of these insights into the

design and implementation of professional development programs will be essential for fostering a more effective and supportive learning environment for school leaders.

Considering these findings, it is crucial to re-evaluate and redesign professional development programs provided by school districts. The insights gained from this study will guide the development of programs that offer sustained support and are closely aligned with the real-time needs of school leaders. Implementing a dynamic approach to professional development, which includes continuous feedback, practical applications, and tailored training, will be a priority. As noted by Hargreaves and Fullan (2012), "creating a culture of continuous learning and adaptation is essential for effective professional development" (p. 89). By fostering an environment that supports ongoing learning and adaptation, the district can better equip its principals and assistant principals to handle their roles effectively and drive meaningful improvements in educational outcomes.

The redesigned programs will incorporate a system for regular evaluation and adjustment based on participant feedback and evolving educational trends. This will involve establishing feedback loops where school leaders can provide input on the relevance and applicability of the training they receive. The integration of such feedback mechanisms is crucial for ensuring that professional development remains responsive to the needs of educational leaders. As Desimone (2009) asserts, "sustained and supportive professional development relies on ongoing feedback and adaptation to meet the diverse needs of educators" (p. 185). By incorporating this ongoing process into the professional development framework, school districts can ensure that training remains practical and effective.

To enhance the impact of professional development, school districts can focus on creating collaborative learning communities where principals and assistant principals can share best practices and support each other. This approach aligns with research indicating that collaborative learning and peer support are key components of effective professional development (Vescio et al., 2008). Establishing these communities will provide a platform for

school leaders to engage in meaningful dialogue, exchange strategies, and collaboratively address challenges. By building a network of support and shared learning, the district can foster a culture of continuous improvement and professional growth among its leaders.

School districts can prioritize the integration of technology to support ongoing professional development. Utilizing online platforms for virtual workshops, webinars, and resource sharing will ensure that professional development opportunities are accessible and flexible. As noted by Penuel and Gallagher (2017), "leveraging technology in professional development allows for scalable and flexible learning opportunities that can be tailored to individual needs" (p. 142). By incorporating technological tools into the professional development strategy, the district can enhance accessibility, provide a variety of learning formats, and ensure that all school leaders have the resources they need to succeed.

Addressing the fiscal implications of professional development is essential for ensuring the sustainability of any proposed changes. This study highlights that effective professional development does not necessarily require a significant budget increase but rather a strategic reallocation of existing resources. Investing in high-quality, ongoing support mechanisms, such as mentorship programs and targeted workshops, can provide significant benefits without substantial financial outlay. Additionally, leveraging technology for virtual training sessions and integrating professional development into regular administrative meetings can help manage costs while maintaining program efficacy. As noted by Kennedy (2016), "strategic investment in targeted professional development can yield high returns without necessitating extensive financial resources" (p. 340). A careful analysis of current expenditures and a focus on optimizing resource allocation will be critical in implementing the recommended changes effectively.

Creating partnerships with local universities and educational organizations can enhance the quality of professional development while mitigating costs. These collaborations can provide access to expert trainers, resources, and research-based practices at reduced or shared expenses. Exploring grant funding opportunities from educational foundations and government programs

can also support innovative professional development initiatives. By seeking external funding and working with academic institutions, districts can significantly expand their professional development offerings without imposing a heavy financial burden on their budgets.

Adopting a blended learning approach that combines in-person and online training can maximize the reach and impact of professional development programs while keeping costs in check. Online platforms can facilitate continuous learning and collaboration among educators, reducing the need for frequent travel and associated expenses. According to a study by Darling-Hammond et al. (2017), "blended learning environments can provide more flexible and accessible professional development opportunities, allowing for sustained engagement and learning over time" (p. 14). This approach not only conserves financial resources but also caters to the diverse learning preferences and schedules of school leaders.

Embedding professional development into the daily operations of schools can lead to more efficient use of resources. Integrating training sessions into regular staff meetings or professional learning communities (PLCs) minimizes disruptions and ensures that professional development is an ongoing, embedded practice. This approach aligns with the findings of Guskey (2002), who emphasized that "effective professional development should be a part of the daily fabric of educators' work, seamlessly integrated into their routines and responsibilities" (p. 386). By making professional development a natural and integral part of the school culture, districts can enhance the effectiveness and sustainability of their training programs without incurring excessive costs.

A strategic approach to professional development that leverages existing resources, fosters partnerships, adopts blended learning, and integrates training into daily operations ensures fiscal responsibility while maintaining high-quality support for school leaders. This comprehensive strategy enables districts to implement effective professional development initiatives that are both financially sustainable and impactful in enhancing the skills and competencies of principals and assistant principals.

Conclusions

Chapter V will examine each research question in detail to provide comprehensive findings from the data collected. This chapter will also include a rationale for correlating these findings to inform future professional development opportunities and support for K-12 principals and assistant principals. By analyzing the data in this structured manner, Chapter V aims to offer actionable insights and recommendations that can enhance the effectiveness and relevance of professional development programs tailored to the needs of educational leaders.

Research Question One

Research Question One sought to identify the main sources of professional development and support for K-12 principals and assistant principals in Pennsylvania. Specifically, it asked, "What are the main sources of professional development and support for K-12 principals and assistant principals in Pennsylvania?" To address this question, data was collected using a professional development survey and structured interviews. The survey consisted of 22 questions, with Questions 1-15 focused on professional development sources. These questions used various scales, including Likert scales, to measure the frequency and perceived effectiveness of different professional development activities.

Structured interviews were conducted to supplement the survey data, aiming to gain deeper, more specific responses from participants. Unlike the survey questions, the interview questions were tailored to elicit more detailed and nuanced information about the participants' professional development experiences and contexts. This approach provided a richer understanding of their experiences and perceptions.

The data revealed a diverse range of professional development sources accessed by K-12 principals and assistant principals. Survey responses indicated that formal workshops, district-provided training sessions, and state-sponsored programs were among the most frequently used sources. Mentorship and peer collaboration also emerged as significant forms of support, highlighting the value of collaborative networks in professional growth.

To analyze the data, both quantitative and qualitative methods were employed. Survey data was analyzed using descriptive statistics to identify trends and commonalities. Frequencies were calculated for the Likert scale items to determine the most and least frequently utilized professional development sources. The structured interview questions required descriptive analysis, as mean data was not collected. Interview transcripts were coded and analyzed thematically, allowing for the identification of key themes and patterns.

Triangulating the data involved comparing the quantitative survey results with the qualitative insights from the structured interviews. This process confirmed the findings and made sure the conclusions were strong and reliable. By integrating multiple data sources, a comprehensive understanding of the professional development offerings for K-12 principals and assistant principals was achieved.

The findings showed that while many use formal professional development programs, they prefer ongoing support that is specific to their position. Survey and interview data consistently highlighted the need for professional development opportunities directly relevant to the daily challenges faced by K-12 school leaders. Mentorship and peer collaboration were particularly valued, with many respondents noting that these forms of support provided practical, real-world insights that formal training programs often lack.

The analysis also revealed gaps in current professional development offerings. Many participants expressed a desire for professional development opportunities that can adapt to their unique needs and schedules. This feedback shows that although current professional development and support are useful, they could be much better if they were more personalized and easier to access. These findings highlight the need to create professional development opportunities that can adapt and respond to the changing needs of K-12 principals and assistant principals.

Research Question Two

The second research question, “Have K-12 principals and assistant principals received specific professional development related to social-emotional learning (SEL) for school leaders?”

aimed to determine if they have received specific professional development related to SEL for K-12 school leaders. Data to address this question was collected through the professional development survey and structured interviews. The survey included items that used Likert scales to gauge the extent to which principals and assistant principals had participated in SEL-related professional development. Structured interviews were conducted to provide more detailed insights into the types of SEL training received and its perceived relevance.

Survey data indicated that while many principals and assistant principals had received some form of professional development, SEL-specific training was less common. The responses showed varying levels of exposure to SEL-focused programs, with a noticeable gap in targeted SEL training specific to K-12 principals and assistant principals. Structured interviews provided further context, revealing that while some leaders had engaged in SEL training, it was often incidental or not specifically tailored to their roles as school leaders. These interviews highlighted a general awareness of SEL's importance but also pointed out a lack of specific professional development in this area.

Analyzing the data from Research Question Two involved comparing the survey results with the detailed feedback from the structured interviews. This process revealed that, although there was some exposure to SEL training, it was not widespread or deeply integrated into the professional development opportunities or experiences of school leaders. The survey and interview data together illustrated that SEL-focused professional development was present but not a major component of the opportunities or support received by most principals and assistant principals.

The findings from Research Question Two show that specific professional development related to social-emotional learning for school leaders is not widely implemented. The survey responses and interview feedback indicate a need for more focused SEL training opportunities that address the unique challenges and responsibilities of K-12 principals and assistant principals.

This gap suggests that enhancing SEL-related professional development could better support school leaders in addressing the emotional and social aspects of their roles.

Research Question Three

Research Question Three aimed to explore the extent of professional development received by K-12 principals and assistant principals regarding the creation of equitable school communities. The specific question was: "Have K-12 principals and assistant principals received professional development specific to creating equitable school communities?" To address this question, data was gathered through the comprehensive professional development survey and structured interviews. The survey featured a range of question types, including Likert scale items that measured the frequency and perceived impact of training on equity-related topics. Structured interviews were conducted to provide additional insights, offering a deeper look into participants' experiences and perspectives thus allowing the researcher to gain a different angle of understanding.

The data collected from the survey and interviews revealed that while some principals and assistant principals have participated in professional development focused on equity, the extent and depth of this training vary significantly. Survey results indicated that about 35% of respondents had received professional development specifically targeting the creation of equitable school communities. This percentage reflects a portion of the K-12 principals and assistant principals who have engaged in such training, but not the majority. The structured interviews provided the researcher with more detailed information, highlighting that among those who had received equity training, there was a range of experiences from introductory sessions to more comprehensive, ongoing opportunities.

The analysis of the data involved reviewing both the survey responses and the interview transcripts to assess the alignment and discrepancies in the findings. Survey data provided a quantitative measure of how many educational leaders had received equity-focused training, while interviews offered qualitative insights into the nature and effectiveness of this training. By

comparing these data sources, it was possible to confirm the survey findings with the detailed experiences shared during structured interviews. This process provided a thorough understanding of the professional development offerings related to equity.

The findings from Research Question Three indicated that, while there are opportunities for professional development on building equitable school communities, these opportunities are neither widely accessible nor consistently applied across all schools. Survey responses revealed that only 35% of K-12 principals and assistant principals had participated in relevant training, suggesting that there are gaps in coverage. Interview data supported this view, indicating that those who did receive training often found it valuable but expressed a need for more extensive and sustained professional development on equity.

Overall, the integration of survey and interview data highlighted that there is a need for more comprehensive and widespread professional development focused on equity and building equitable school communities. Many respondents said that current programs were too limited and not frequent enough. They clearly wanted more focused and ongoing support in this area. Looking at all the data together showed that it's crucial to increase equity training and make sure it's available to all K-12 school leaders to build fair and inclusive school communities.

Research Question Four

The fourth research question, "Has the professional development K-12 principals and assistant principals received gone beyond defining concepts and developing general awareness?" was designed to explore whether the professional development provided to K-12 school leaders has moved past basic introductions to more in-depth training. To address this question, data were gathered through a detailed Professional Development survey and structured interviews. The survey included 22 questions, with survey questions 14 and 21 specifically aimed at assessing whether the training offered was more than just surface-level. The structured interviews followed a consistent format and focused on gathering deeper insights into the application of the professional development participants received.

Survey data revealed a mixed perspective on the effectiveness of the professional development received. Specifically, 53.3% of respondents (16 individuals) felt that their professional development did not extend beyond basic definitions and general awareness. On the other hand, 46.7% of respondents (14 individuals) believed that their training did indeed offer more substantial, practical insights beyond surface-level understanding. This split shows that some participants find their professional development to be thorough and practical, while others feel it falls short in terms of real-world application.

The structured interviews provided further context to these survey findings, with many participants echoing the survey results. While a substantial portion of the respondents reported that their training included useful and practical elements, there was a significant number who felt that the programs they attended only scratched the surface. The interviews revealed that participants who valued their professional development found the practical, actionable elements beneficial. In contrast, those who considered the training superficial often felt it lacked real-world, implementable aspects.

Comparing the survey data with the interview insights, it became clear that there was a notable split in perceptions regarding the depth of the professional development received. The process of analyzing both data sources revealed that while some professional development opportunities succeeded in offering practical applications, others failed to move beyond general awareness. This comparison confirmed that a balanced approach is essential for effective professional development.

The findings from Research Question Four reveal a notable contrast in how participants perceive the usefulness of professional development programs. While nearly half of the respondents felt their training was valuable and practical, a majority found it lacking in depth beyond general concepts. This discrepancy highlights the need for professional development programs to improve their emphasis on practical approaches to better address the needs of K-12 principals and assistant principals.

Themes

Throughout the study, several key themes emerged from both the professional development survey and the structured interviews. One prominent theme was the need for professional development programs that are both relevant and responsive to the specific challenges faced by K-12 principals and assistant principals. Survey data revealed a widespread concern among participants that current training often falls short in addressing the practical issues they encounter in their daily roles. Structured interviews supported this view, with many respondents expressing that professional development opportunities lacked the depth required to tackle their day-to-day responsibilities effectively.

Another significant theme was the disparity between the availability of professional development opportunities and their perceived effectiveness. The survey showed that many respondents felt their professional development only provided a surface-level understanding and didn't dive deeper into important topics. This sentiment was echoed in the interviews, where participants expressed frustration with professional development opportunities that lacked meaningful content or practical strategies. The feedback showed a need for professional development that offers more than just general information, providing practical and ongoing guidance.

The structured interviews also emphasized the importance of continuous support that is tailored to the specific needs and situations of K-12 school leaders. Many respondents stressed that mentorship and peer collaboration were crucial for their professional growth. The survey showed that formal training programs are frequently used, but the interviews uncovered a strong desire for ongoing support that adjusts to the changing needs of school leaders. Participants emphasized the importance of having access to resources and support networks that provide real-time solutions and foster a deeper understanding of complex issues.

The research also highlighted a significant gap in professional development for K-12 principals and assistant principals, especially in relation to SEL and creating equitable school

communities. Both the survey and structured interviews revealed that while some training opportunities exist, they are not consistently accessible or implemented across schools. Many respondents noted that training on equity and SEL is often not thorough or widely available. They mentioned that the current professional development offerings don't fully prepare school leaders to create inclusive and equitable learning environments. This finding highlights the need for better professional development opportunities in these areas. Professional development opportunities should improve to ensure all K-12 principals and assistant principals get the support they need to promote equity in their schools. Additionally, K-12 school leaders need more support for SEL for themselves, not just for their staff and students.

Limitations

The research study faced several limitations that influenced the interpretation of its findings. One significant limitation was the response rate and sample size for the surveys and interviews. For Research Question One, which explored the primary sources of professional development for K-12 principals and assistant principals, a 28% response rate does not fully represent the diversity of experiences and practices across all school districts in Pennsylvania. The low response rate might affect how well the results represent all K-12 school leaders, as it may not show all the types of professional development they've participated in or have had access to.

In addressing Research Question Two, which asked if K-12 principals and assistant principals received specific professional development related to SEL, the survey results showed a notable divide in perceptions. Only a portion of the respondents reported having access to SEL-focused training for K-12 principals and assistant principals, indicating that while some principals received relevant professional development, others did not. The limitation here was that the survey and interviews did not explore the depth or quality of SEL training for K-12 principals and assistant principals, which could provide further insights into how effectively these professional development opportunities meet the needs of K-12 school leaders.

For Research Question Three, which looked at whether professional development included creating equitable school communities, the study found that although some training is available, it's not consistently offered or used by all school districts. The research was limited because it did not explore the specific barriers or challenges that prevent equitable training from reaching all school leaders. Additionally, the survey data showed that only a subset of respondents had participated in relevant equity training, suggesting that the findings might not fully represent the experiences of all K-12 principals and assistant principals in Pennsylvania.

Research Question Four, which assessed whether professional development for K-12 principals and assistant principals went beyond basic concepts, revealed mixed perceptions. The structured interviews and survey responses revealed that some professional development opportunities are seen as too general and surface-level, with limited practical application. A limitation of this research was the absence of in-depth follow-up questions that could have clarified why some professional development programs were seen as lacking.

The mixed-method design of the research study, utilizing both quantitative and qualitative methods, offered valuable insights but also had its constraints. The mixed-methods approach provided a thorough look at professional development experiences but also made it more challenging to combine and interpret data from various sources. The survey data gave a wide perspective, while the interviews offered more detailed insights. However, the differing responses from these methods sometimes required careful consideration to ensure that conclusions were well-supported and accurate.

The inclusion of K-12 principals and assistant principals from multiple districts in Pennsylvania was a strength, as it allowed for a diverse perspective on professional development practices. However, this broad approach might have overlooked some specific details and differences at the district level. While the varied sample helped identify general trends, it might have missed unique challenges faced by individual districts or schools.

Despite these limitations, the mixed-methods approach offered a thorough view of the professional development opportunities available. It highlighted both the strengths and weaknesses of current programs, offering a broad perspective on the experiences of school leaders. While the study faced challenges in capturing the full range of professional development impacts, it successfully identified key areas for improvement and underscored the need for more targeted and effective support for K-12 principals and assistant principals.

Recommendations for Future Research

Based on the findings and conclusions of this study, several recommendations for future research emerge to enhance the understanding and effectiveness of professional development for K-12 principals and assistant principals. One important recommendation is to conduct studies focusing on the effectiveness and impact of professional development programs that go beyond introductory concepts. The current research revealed that many programs are perceived as surface-level, providing only a general understanding or awareness without actionable strategies. Future research should explore which aspects of professional development are most effective in translating into practical, real-world applications for K-12 principals and assistant principals. This could involve longitudinal studies tracking the long-term impact of such programs on school leadership practices and student outcomes.

The study's findings also suggest that there is a significant need for professional development that integrates SEL for administrators, not just their staff and students. Future research should explore how SEL-focused professional development can be effectively integrated into existing professional development opportunities for K-12 principals and assistant principals. This could include evaluating SEL training models and their impact on school leaders' ability to foster supportive and inclusive school environments. Exploring best practices for SEL professional development will be essential for enhancing K-12 school leaders' overall effectiveness.

A closer look at the professional development needs of individual districts and schools is also recommended. The current study covered a wide area, which may have missed unique challenges faced by specific districts or schools. Future research should focus on the particular needs of different districts and schools, considering their unique demographics and resources. This will help tailor professional development to better address these diverse needs and make it more effective overall.

The study also highlights the need to look into the role of continuous support in professional development. While the current research showed that this type of support is valuable, more detailed studies are needed on how to organize and deliver it effectively. Future research could examine various models of ongoing support, such as mentorship, peer collaboration, and coaching, and evaluate their effects on school leadership. Finding the best ways to provide continuous support will be important to keep professional development relevant and effective, especially for K-12 principals and assistant principals.

Future research should also address the gap in training on creating equitable school communities. It is important to create and assess more thorough professional development opportunities that cover equity issues in detail. Research could explore the development of new training methods or approaches that better equip K-12 principals and assistant principals to promote equity within their school communities. Evaluating how well these new professional development opportunities work and whether they help create fair and inclusive learning environments will be crucial for improving this aspect of professional development.

Another area for future research is the exploration of how professional development programs can be improved to better meet the needs of K-12 school leaders. The current study showed that many respondents felt existing professional development opportunities didn't offer enough useful content. Future research could focus on creating and testing new professional development approaches that provide more hands-on strategies and relevant information.

Assessing the effectiveness of these new models will help to ensure that professional development is more relevant and beneficial for K-12 school leaders.

Future studies could also consider a more diverse sample of K-12 principals and assistant principals to understand how different contexts and backgrounds influence the effectiveness of professional development. While the current study included K-12 principals and assistant principals from multiple districts in Pennsylvania, a broader range of participants from different states or regions could provide additional insights. Looking at findings from different settings will help identify common challenges and effective practices in professional development.

Finally, research should explore the impact of various types of professional development on K-12 school leadership outcomes. The current study focused on the availability and perceptions of professional development but did not extensively analyze its impact on actual leadership practices and school performance. Future research could involve tracking the implementation of professional development strategies and their effects on K-12 school leaders' practices and student outcomes. This approach will provide a clearer picture of how professional development translates into tangible improvements in school leadership and student success.

By addressing these recommendations, future research can build on the findings of the current study to enhance professional development programs for K-12 principals and assistant principals. This will contribute to a more effective and equitable educational environment, ultimately benefiting both K-12 school leaders and their school communities.

Recommendations

To create a more effective and equitable educational environment for K-12 school leaders and their communities, several concrete recommendations should be considered, aligned with the findings from the research questions.

Addressing the Need for Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) Training

Research highlighted a gap in social-emotional learning (SEL) training specifically designed for K-12 principals and assistant principals. Professional development opportunities

should focus on enhancing SEL skills for K-12 school leaders. By providing SEL training tailored to the needs of K-12 school leaders, we can help them foster a supportive school climate and improve both staff and student well-being. One SEL professional development program for K-12 principals and assistant principals is the “Leading with SEL: Building Emotionally Intelligent Schools” program offered by the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL). This program is designed specifically for school leaders and focuses on integrating SEL into school culture and leadership practices.

Expanding Equity Training

The study found that current professional development opportunities on creating equitable school communities are not consistently accessible or effective. Developing comprehensive and accessible professional development opportunities that address equity issues in depth is essential. These opportunities should be designed to meet the diverse needs of different schools and be evaluated for their effectiveness in promoting equity. This will help ensure that all K-12 principals and assistant principals are well-prepared to create inclusive and fair learning environments. One such professional development program that is focused on creating equitable school communities is the “Equity Leadership Academy” offered by Learning Forward. This program is designed to help school leaders develop and implement effective equity strategies within their schools.

Enhancing Long-Term Professional Development Opportunities

School districts should focus on developing ongoing professional development opportunities that allow school leaders to build a deeper understanding of critical topics. Instead of relying on one-time workshops, districts should implement sustained professional development sessions that provide continuous learning. This approach will enable leaders to consistently apply and refine their knowledge over time, supporting long-term growth and helping them effectively integrate new concepts into their everyday practices.

- Develop a series of professional development training modules focused on specific topics such as equity, SEL, and instructional leadership.
 - Each module builds on the previous one, with content designed to deepen understanding and application of concepts.
- Establish peer learning groups for principals and assistant principals.
 - These groups provide a platform for discussing experiences, sharing best practices, and collaborating on solutions to challenges encountered in their schools.
- Implement action research projects where K-12 principals and assistant principals apply new strategies in their schools and collect data on their effectiveness.
 - K-12 principals and assistant principals present their findings and experiences during monthly central office meetings, fostering a culture of continuous improvement.
- Schedule monthly planning sessions where K-12 principals and assistant principals review their progress, discuss the application of new skills, and plan for upcoming events or challenges.
 - These sessions help reinforce learning and ensure that training is relevant and practical.

These recommendations aim to address the gaps identified in the research study and enhance the effectiveness of professional development for K-12 principals and assistant principals. Implementing these strategies will help create a more supportive and equitable educational environment, ultimately benefiting both school leaders and their school communities.

Summary

Chapter V has highlighted key findings and recommendations from the study on professional development for K-12 principals and assistant principals. The research revealed significant gaps in current training programs, particularly in areas such as creating equitable

school communities and integrating SEL. While some professional development opportunities exist, many are perceived as surface-level and fail to provide the depth of understanding and practical application needed by K-12 school leaders. The research study highlighted the need for more in-depth and continuous training that goes beyond general concepts and provides K-12 school leaders with practical strategies.

The recommendations outlined in this chapter address these gaps by advocating for the development of ongoing professional development opportunities. School districts are encouraged to implement structured professional development opportunities that offer continuous learning through training modules focused on topics like equity and SEL, K-12 principal and assistant principal peer learning groups for collaboration and sharing best practices, and action research projects where school leaders test new strategies and present their findings. Establishing an online platform for resources and regular reflection sessions will support ongoing professional growth. These measures aim to ensure that school leaders not only receive relevant and in-depth training but also have the tools and support necessary to effectively apply new concepts in their daily practices.

Ultimately, addressing these recommendations can lead to a more effective and equitable educational environment. By focusing on the specific needs of K-12 school leaders and providing ongoing, relevant professional development, districts can better support principals and assistant principals in their roles. This approach will enhance their ability to foster inclusive and equitable learning environments, thereby benefiting the broader school community and improving overall educational outcomes.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

IRB Approval Letter



Institutional Review Board
250 University Avenue
California, PA 15419
instreviewboard@calu.edu
Melissa Sovak, Ph.D.

Dear Thomas Seidenberger,

Please consider this email as official notification that your proposal titled "Identifying Professional Development and Supports for K-12 Principals and Assistant Principals" (Proposal #PW23-030) has been approved by the PennWest Institutional Review Board as amended with the following stipulations:

Please make sure to not make answering each question in Google Forms mandatory.

Once you have completed the above request you may immediately begin data collection. You do not need to wait for further IRB approval. At your earliest convenience, you must forward a copy of the changes for the Board's records.

The effective date of the approval is 8/24/2023 and the expiration date is 8/23/2024. These dates must appear on the consent form.

Please note that Federal Policy requires that you notify the IRB promptly regarding any of the following:

- (1) Any additions or changes in procedures you might wish for your study (additions or changes must be approved by the IRB before they are implemented)
- (2) Any events that affect the safety or well-being of subjects
- (3) Any modifications of your study or other responses that are necessitated by any events reported in (2).
- (4) To continue your research beyond the approval expiration date of DATE you must file additional information to be considered for continuing review. Please contact instreviewboard@pennwest.edu. Please notify the Board when data collection is complete.

Regards,
Melissa Sovak, Ph.D.
Chair, Institutional Review Board

Appendix B

Survey Instrument

The purpose of this questionnaire is to give you a chance to tell how you feel about the professional development opportunities and supports available to you as a K-12 principal or assistant principal.

On the basis of your answers and those of people like you, we hope to get a better understanding of the the professional development opportunities and supports available to you.

In the **first section**, you will find statements about professional development opportunities and supports available to you.

- Read each statement carefully.
- Decide **how satisfied you feel** about the professional development opportunities and supports available to you.

Keeping the statement in mind:

- if you feel that the professional development opportunities and supports available to you gives you **more than expected**, check the box "**Very Satisfied**";
- if you feel that the professional development opportunities and supports available to you gives you **what you expected**, check the box "**Satisfied**";
- if you **cannot make up your mind** whether or not the professional development opportunities and supports available to you gives you what you expected, check the box "**N**" (Neither Satisfied nor Dissatisfied);
- if you feel that the professional development opportunities and supports available to you gives you **less than you expected**, check the box "**Dissatisfied**";
- if you feel that your job gives you **much less than you expected**, check the box "**Very Dissatisfied**."

Remember: Keep the statement in mind when deciding **how satisfied you feel about the professional development opportunities and supports available to you**.

- Do this for **all** statements. Please answer **every** item.

Be frank and honest. Give a true picture of your feelings regarding the professional development opportunities and supports available to you.

How satisfied are you with the frequency of professional development opportunities provided to enhance your leadership skills?

- Very Satisfied
- Satisfied
- N
- Dissatisfied
- Very Dissatisfied

How satisfied are you with the level of support you've received from your district or organization for your professional growth and development?

- ☐ Very Satisfied
- ☐ Satisfied
- ☐ N
- ☐ Dissatisfied
- ☐ Very Dissatisfied

How satisfied are you with the balance between online and in-person professional development options provided to you?

- ☐ Very Satisfied
- ☐ Satisfied
- ☐ N
- ☐ Dissatisfied
- ☐ Very Dissatisfied

How satisfied are you with the alignment between your individual professional development goals and the offerings provided by your district/organization?

- ☐ Very Satisfied
- ☐ Satisfied
- ☐ N
- ☐ Dissatisfied
- ☐ Very Dissatisfied

How satisfied are you with the opportunities to learn about emerging trends and best practices in education through professional development?

- ☐ Very Satisfied
- ☐ Satisfied
- ☐ N
- ☐ Dissatisfied
- ☐ Very Dissatisfied

How satisfied are you with the flexibility of scheduling professional development activities to accommodate your responsibilities as a K-12 principal or assistant principal?

- ☐ Very Satisfied
- ☐ Satisfied
- ☐ N
- ☐ Dissatisfied
- ☐ Very Dissatisfied

How satisfied are you with the relevance of the professional development sessions you've attended?

- ☐ Very Satisfied
- ☐ Satisfied
- ☐ N
- ☐ Dissatisfied
- ☐ Very Dissatisfied

How satisfied are you with the clarity of goals and objectives in the professional development programs you've participated in?

- ☐ Very Satisfied
- ☐ Satisfied
- ☐ N
- ☐ Dissatisfied
- ☐ Very Dissatisfied

How satisfied are you with the variety of professional development opportunities available to you as a K-12 principal or assistant principal?

- ☐ Very Satisfied
- ☐ Satisfied
- ☐ N
- ☐ Dissatisfied
- ☐ Very Dissatisfied

The **second section** is focused on gathering your insights about the professional development opportunities and supports available to K-12 principals and assistant principals. Please take a moment to respond to the following multiple-choice questions that delve into various aspects of professional development. Your feedback is vital, and your participation is greatly appreciated.

- For each question, select the option or options that best reflects your experience or preference.
- Your candid responses will help to identify aspects of professional development that you deem meaningful and impactful.

Thank you for your valuable input.

Which of the following do you use as a common source of professional development and support as a K-12 principal or assistant principal?

- ☐ Webinars and online courses
- ☐ On-site coaching and mentoring
- ☐ Regional networking events and conferences
- ☐ Resource libraries and instructional materials

What is your preferred mode of professional development as a K-12 principal or assistant principal?

- In-person workshops and seminars
- Online courses and webinars
- Peer collaboration and networking events
- Individual coaching and mentoring

How do you typically seek out professional development opportunities?

- District or school-provided offerings
- Educational conferences and conventions
- Online research and self-directed learning
- Professional organizations and association

Which of the following is an essential component of effective professional development for K-12 principals? (Select all that apply)

- One-time workshops
- Passive listening sessions
- Ongoing support and follow-up
- Self-paced online courses

What factors influence your decision to participate in a specific professional development opportunity? (Select all that apply)

- Relevance to current job responsibilities and goals
- Reputation and expertise of the presenters or facilitators
- Cost and availability of funding or resources
- Schedule and timing of the professional development activity
- Recommendation or endorsement from colleagues or mentors

In your opinion, professional development for K-12 principals and/or assistant principals should align with:

- Current educational research and best practices
- Principal/ Assistant Principal personal interests related to education
- The initiatives currently in place within your current school district

Have you received professional development specifically focused on social-emotional learning (SEL) for school leaders?

- Yes, I have received extensive professional development on SEL for school leaders.
- Yes, I have received some professional development on SEL for school leaders.
- No, I have not received any professional development specifically on SEL for school leaders.

How important do you think it is for school leaders to receive ongoing professional development specifically focused on social-emotional learning (SEL) for school leaders?

- Very important, ongoing professional development is crucial for school leaders to effectively support SEL.
- Moderately important, some professional development on SEL is beneficial for school leaders.
- Not important, professional development on SEL is not a priority for school leaders.

Have you received training on strategies to identify and address systemic inequities within your school?

- Yes, I have received comprehensive training on identifying and addressing systemic inequities.
- Yes, I have received some training on identifying and addressing systemic inequities.
- No, I have not received any training on identifying and addressing systemic inequities.

How important do you think it is for school leaders to receive ongoing professional development specifically focused on creating equitable school communities?

- Very important, ongoing professional development is crucial for school leaders to effectively create equitable school communities.
- Moderately important, some professional development on equity is beneficial for school leaders.
- Not important, professional development on equity is not a priority for school leaders.

Has the professional development you have received gone beyond defining concepts and developing general awareness on various topics?

- Yes, the professional development I have received has gone beyond defining concepts and developing general awareness.
- No, the professional development I have received has primarily focused on defining concepts and developing general awareness.

Has the professional development you have received included opportunities for collaboration and sharing best practices with other principals and assistant principals?

- Yes, the professional development has included extensive opportunities for collaboration and sharing best practices.
- Partially, the professional development has included some opportunities for collaboration and sharing best practices.
- No, the professional development has not included opportunities for collaboration and sharing best practices.

Appendix C

Structured Interview Questions

1. In your experience, how effective are the current professional development opportunities in addressing or supporting the unique challenges and responsibilities that K-12 principals and assistant principals face?
2. What types of professional development formats or delivery methods do you find most effective and engaging for your own learning? Please explain why you prefer these formats.
3. From your perspective, how well do the current professional development offerings align with the evolving demands and trends in education? Are there any emerging areas that you believe should be addressed more comprehensively?
4. Have you participated in any professional development that focused on social-emotional learning (SEL) for school leaders? If so, can you describe the content of the training and how it has influenced your approach as a principal/ assistant principal?
5. Have you participated in any professional development experiences that focused on equity, diversity, and inclusion in education. How did this training contribute to your understanding and ability to create an inclusive and equitable school community?
 - a. If the above answer is 'No'- In terms of fostering equity, diversity, and inclusion in your school, what specific knowledge or skills would you like to develop through professional development? How do you envision this training positively influencing your school community?
6. Reflecting on your experience, how can your district or organization better support your continued learning and development as a K-12 school leader, even outside formal professional development sessions?

Appendix D**Invitation Email**

Dear Colleagues:

I hope you've had a successful start to the 2023-24 school year. I understand your time is extremely valuable, but any assistance you may provide would be greatly appreciated.

My name is Thomas (TJ) Seidenberger, a doctoral candidate at the Pennsylvania Western (PennWest) University in the Educational Administration and Leadership Studies Ed.D. program. I am conducting a doctoral capstone study on identifying professional development opportunities and supports available to K-12 principals and assistant principals. The purpose of this letter is to solicit your voluntary participation in my doctoral capstone research study. I am asking you to complete a research survey, which will take approximately 15 minutes to complete. Through your participation, I hope to understand better how K-12 principals and assistant principals receive professional development and supports related to their leadership position. Submissions remain entirely confidential.

Attached is the Informed Consent Statement approved by the Pennsylvania Western (PennWest) University Institutional Review Board. If you choose to participate in this voluntary research study, please click on the link to the survey below. Thank you for your consideration.

[Doctoral Capstone Research Survey Link](#)

Appendix E

Consent to Participate in Research Study

Title of Study: Identifying Professional Development Opportunities and Supports for K-12 Principals and Assistant Principals

Principal Investigator: Thomas J. Seidenberger

KEY INFORMATION

You are being asked by Thomas J. Seidenberger to participate in a research study. Taking part in the study is voluntary, and you may stop at any time.

The purpose of the study is to explore and document the professional learning preferences, needs, and experiences of school leaders, with a focus on K-12 Principals and Assistant Principals.

In this study, you will be asked to complete an anonymous survey aimed at identifying professional development opportunities and supports that have been available to you as a K-12 principal or assistant principal. It will take you about 10-15 minutes to complete this anonymous survey.

The potential risks during the study are nothing greater than daily living. Remember, you may stop taking the survey at any time.

There are no direct benefits to participants from the research. It will help the researchers better understand your perceptions of the benefits and challenges of the co-teaching model.

The online study is completely anonymous; you will not be asked to give any information that could identify you (e.g., name). The survey is NOT linked to IP addresses. Any information provided to obtain extra credit will NOT be connected to your responses to the survey. Individual responses will not be presented, just the aggregated data.

Remember, taking part in this study is voluntary. If, while taking the survey, you feel uncomfortable or no longer want to participate, you may stop at any time. To stop taking the survey, you may close your browser completely.

There are no consequences if you decide to stop participating in this study.

There is no identifiable information collected from you during this study; all other information from this study will be confidential within local, state, and federal laws. The PennWest University Institutional Review Board (IRB) may review the research records. The study's results may be shared in aggregate form at a meeting or journal, but your personal information will not be revealed. Records from this study will be kept by Thomas J. Seidenberger for at least three (3) years after the study is complete.

Non-identifiable information collected as a part of this research could be used for future research studies or distributed to another investigator for future research studies without your additional informed consent.

If you would like a copy of this informed consent, please print this screen or contact Thomas J. Seidenberger at tseidenberger@wcasd.net.

Online Survey Link: <https://forms.gle/yLPuZ7TKHUTZ5xrb8>