INTERIM EVALUATION OF THE UNT/DALLAS PUBLIC SCHOOLS LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM: A WORKING MODEL

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The purpose of this study was to determine if, after one year of operation, the UNT/Dallas Public Schools Leadership Development Program was progressing in accordance with the goals set out for the program. Questionnaires administered to 26 interns and 10 mentor principals and follow-up focus group interview sessions provided answers to the study’s five research questions that explored the following: selection process; how interns’ involvement in campus-based decision-making had changed; how mentor principals’ perceptions toward interns had changed; and how administrative interns’ perceptions of themselves and educational administration had changed.

Findings from this study revealed the selection process provided the Dallas Public Schools an opportunity to select teacher-leaders from the district and to include a representative number of minority and women candidates for participation in the program. An area of weakness was seven interns with low GRE scores were admitted through an appeals process at the university. Another weakness revealed the majority of interns had been assigned more duties and responsibilities at the schools, but only 4 of 26 interns were being allowed to participate in any campus-based decision-making processes that could have an impact on school improvements.

The study found the role of the mentor principal to be the most important factor in determining the satisfaction and success of the interns in the program. The embedded internship proved to be a disadvantage for the interns and principals, as the majority
reported not having enough time to spend on administrative activities. Interns reported
growth in personal and professional maturity and gained knowledge about the world of
educational leadership. All 26 interns expressed the desire to become administrators in
Dallas Public Schools upon completion of the program. Further research should include
comparison studies between graduates of restructured programs and graduates of
traditional programs to determine if there is a difference in school improvements and
student achievement based upon the nature of the training of the school leader.
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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This study was an interim evaluation of a school leadership preparation program at a major university in north Texas. The Southern Regional Education Board (SREB) invited higher education institutions from its 16-member states to join in the creation of a Leadership Development Network comprised of institutions that would “have an interest in working together to reshape the traditional leadership preparation program by giving greater emphasis to the knowledge and skills needed by school leaders to improve curriculum, instruction and student achievement” (Bottoms and O’Neill, 2001, p. 2). As a participating institution in the Network, the University of North Texas (UNT) educational administration program developed a partnership with Dallas Independent School District (DISD), in Dallas, Texas, to deliver an innovative school leadership program that would make a difference in improving schools and student achievement.

The SREB initiative for a leadership development network grew out of the search to find answers to two relevant questions in education today: What do successful education leaders need to know and be able to do? and How do you prepare and develop effective school leaders? (Bottoms & O’Neill, 2001). These questions came as a result of the call for reforms in public education over the past two decades. Along with the call for educational reforms, there also emerged a call for changes in the preparation of school leaders (Griffiths, Stout, and Forsyth, 1988; Milstein and Krueger, 1997; National Commission for the Principalship, 1990; National Policy Board for Educational Administration, 1989). High-stakes accountability systems across the United States have changed almost everything in the world of school leadership. Gone
are the days when principals merely had to "hold" school and make certain there was a teacher in every classroom and every student had a set of textbooks. The burden for school success, as well as individual student achievement, has been placed on the school principal. In their research, Bottoms & O'Neill found that, “Today's principal must be prepared to focus time, attention and effort on changing what students are taught, how they are taught, and what they are learning” (p. 6). Many researchers have concluded that this current challenge for school administrators demands a new breed of school leaders who have far greater knowledge and skills than their predecessors (Achilles, 1994; Bottoms and O'Neill, 2001; Bradshaw and Buckner, 1994; Roueche and Baker, 1986).

In the search for answers to their questions, – What do today’s successful school leaders need to know and be able to do? and How can we prepare and develop effective school leaders? – SREB found that researchers, experts, and effective school principals had little trouble agreeing about what present and future school leaders need to know and be able to do. In Preparing a New Breed of School Principals: It’s Time for Action, Bottoms and O'Neill (2001) identified 13 traits that effective school leaders should possess to help them lead schools that are designed for higher student achievement. The traits identified called for successful school leaders to:

- Create a focused mission to improve student achievement and a vision of the elements of school, curriculum and instructional practices that make higher achievement possible.
- Set high expectations for all students to learn higher-level content.
Recognize and encourage implementation of good instructional practices that motivate and increase student achievement.

Create a school organization where faculty and staff understand that every student counts and where every student has the support of a caring adult.

Use data to initiate and continue improvement in school and classroom practices and student achievement.

Keep everyone informed and focused on student achievement.

Make parents partners in their student’s education and create a structure for parent and educator collaboration.

Understand the change process and have the leadership and facilitation skills to manage it effectively.

Understand how adults learn and know how to advance meaningful change through quality sustained professional development that benefits students.

Use and organize time in innovative ways to meet the goals and objectives of school improvement.

Acquire and use resources wisely.

Obtain support from the central office and from community and parent leaders for their school improvement agenda.

Continuously learn and seek out colleagues who keep them abreast of new research and proven practices (p. 8-17).

The second question – How can we prepare and develop effective school leaders? – posed a greater challenge for the experts and yielded less agreement than the first question. Thus, SREB set out to study the issues involved in preparing future
school leaders, with the goal of establishing an action plan that would encourage and aid leadership preparation programs in reshaping their traditional preparation programs to place more emphasis on the knowledge and skills needed by school leaders to improve curriculum, instruction, and student achievement. SREB’s research yielded several suggestions that would help states ensure they had the most effective school leaders possible. These suggestions included:

- Tapping potential leaders in local school districts with demonstrated knowledge of curriculum and instruction and then planning quality school leadership growth opportunities for them;
- Opening the educational leadership certification process to more educators with a proven record of success;
- Basing professional certification on performance;
- Making major changes in university-based leadership preparation programs;
- Offering quality alternatives to traditional university school leadership preparation; and
- Requiring that to maintain leadership certification one must successfully participate in continuous learning activities that are closely aligned to school improvement (Bottoms & O’Neill, 2001, p. 18).

SREB’s Leadership Development Network emerged as a way to create a network of higher education institutions that had a common interest in working together to reshape their existing, traditional leadership preparation programs to train new school leaders who would possess the above identified traits. As members of the network, universities had to agree to design leadership preparation programs around a
comprehensive school-improvement framework and make major changes in their programs.

The UNT/Dallas Public Schools Leadership Development Program was a result of the SREB leadership initiative, as UNT was one of 11 institutions selected by SREB from their member states to participate in their Leadership Development Network. As a participating institution in the Leadership Development Network, The University of North Texas program in educational administration developed the following set of standards that would guide program participants toward becoming the “new breed” of school leaders, as called for by SREB. The standards stated that leaders trained in the UNT/Dallas Public Schools Leadership Development Program would learn how to:

- Support rigorous academic standards and instructional methods that motivate and engage students;
- Make meaningful connections between the abstract aspects of the curriculum and real-world learning experiences;
- Create and manage a system of support that enables all students to meet high standards and motivate faculty to have high expectations of all students;
- Set priorities for change that can be measured and managed realistically;
- Create a personal, caring school environment that helps students meet higher standards;
- Apply research knowledge to improve school practices; and
The educational administration program at The University of North Texas developed a partnership with Dallas Independent School District to deliver an innovative leadership preparation program that would train new school leaders to meet the above goals. Candidates trained in the new program would work toward a Master’s of Education Degree and/or the Texas Principal certificate. All courses taught in the UNT/Dallas Public Schools Leadership Development Program were the same courses that comprised the traditional principal preparation program at UNT. UNT faculty members aligned their existing course offerings from the traditional principal preparation program with the SREB leader qualities to assure that the courses offered in the new UNT/DISD program would meet SREB standards.

The UNT/Dallas Public Schools Leadership Development Program gave DISD the opportunity to have a leadership development program designed to meet their specific, urban school needs. DISD had a student population that was 58.9% Hispanic and 32.9% African-American, as reported in the Texas Education Agency’s 2002-2003 Academic Excellence Indicator System (AEIS). It was the hope and intent of some of the program sponsors that this new program would provide a means of attracting more minority candidates to leadership preparation programs for possible administrative positions in DISD. Whether or not these intentions were met will be discussed in Chapter 4.

The program also provided DISD the opportunity to have a major role in the selection of teacher-leaders from their district who they believed had leadership potential and had demonstrated the ability to teach so that all children achieve at high levels. All candidates were nominated by their building principals for participation in the
UNT/DISD program and were required to meet UNT admissions standards in both the Toulouse School of Graduate Studies and the educational administration program in the College of Education. These program intentions and requirements have been addressed in Chapter 4, the chapter describing the findings from this study.

The two-year UNT/Dallas Public Schools Leadership Development Program began in the fall of 2002 with a cohort of twenty-seven administrative interns representing ten elementary, middle, and high schools in DISD. One of the interns dropped out of the program early in the first fall semester, so there were 26 interns in the program at the time of this study. The University of North Texas educational administration program designed the new leadership development program to prepare individuals in the Dallas Independent School District for building level leadership based on knowledge of adult learning and staff development and research on school improvement and effective schools. Though the UNT/Dallas Public Schools Leadership Development Program encompasses all the same classes that are taught within the master’s degree/principal certificate program already in existence at the University of North Texas, there are some differences that set this new program apart from the existing principal preparation program. Program differences purported by sponsors of the UNT/DISD program included:

- Inclusion in a cohort group – Participants in this program will take all 39 credit hours together. The courses were offered at a Dallas location, rather than on the UNT campus in Denton, Texas. This differs from the traditional program where students attend classes with colleagues from many different school districts and may never take more than one class with the same person. Students in the
traditional program also take classes at several different locations, depending upon which location best suits their schedule.

- **Selection of participants** – The candidates selected for participation in this program represented teacher-leaders who were purported to have demonstrated leadership potential and had a commitment to working with others to improve their school. Participants in this program also had to be recommended by their building principals for inclusion in the program. In the traditional principal preparation program at UNT, participants self-select to be in the program.

- **Job-embedded, problem-based learning** – Classes were purported to include SREB-developed instructional modules that addressed the major research-based elements of effective school leadership. It was intended that the administrative interns would deal with real-world problems that were directly related to their school and its needs. This embedded internship experience over the full two-year span of the program was intended to replace the one semester internship requirement in the traditional principal preparation program at UNT. The interns’ schools were intended to be their “laboratories.”

- **Principal as mentor** – Building principals were to act as mentors for the interns who had been selected from their respective schools to participate in this program. The interns were expected to work closely with the principal on improvements in their school.

- **Release time during the work day** – DISD released the interns from their school duties at noon one day a week so they could take classes and participate in applied activities.
- Working in site-based teams – The cohort was made up of school-based teams of two to three people from various elementary, middle, and secondary schools in DISD. This teaming was intended to allow interns to work together on site-based projects that would help improve their schools.

- Student assessment – Portfolio-based assessment was to be used to allow interns to demonstrate that they had acquired the skills and knowledge necessary to become effective school leaders and to meet the Texas certification requirements for principals. It was intended that the building principals would work closely with the interns in their schools so that they would have first-hand knowledge of the individual’s abilities when recommending the intern for an administrative position in the district at the end of the two-year program.

- Enrichment experiences – UNT program sponsors’ purported plans for enrichment activities included attendance at national education conferences, attendance at seminars conducted by nationally recognized experts, meetings with state and national education officials and policy makers, and Spanish language immersion courses in Mexico upon completion of the program. DISD offered to pay for the enrichment trips for the interns and to secure funding for the Mexico trip. The money to fund these enrichment activities came from seed grant money from DISD to start the program and from Title II funds that were earmarked for teacher and administrator training. (UNT/Dallas Public Schools Leadership Development Proposal, 2001).

The new program at UNT incorporated the cohort model for instruction and was designed to give greater attention to learning experiences that apply leadership and
research-based knowledge to solving field-based problems in the interns’ respective schools. Release time during the school day for the administrative interns was intended to facilitate more job-embedded, school-based learning than in the traditional program. The mentoring nature of this program was intended to allow more time for both the veteran principal and the aspiring administrators to develop and maintain leadership skills and confidence in their professional practice.

Statement of the Problem

The purpose of this research was to determine if, after one year of operation, the UNT/Dallas Public Schools Leadership Development Program was progressing in accordance with the goals set out for the program.

Research Questions

This study addressed the following research questions:

1. What was the process by which the administrative interns were selected?

2. Has participation in the UNT/Dallas Public Schools Leadership Development Program changed the involvement of the administrative interns in campus-based decision-making? If so, how?

3. How has participation in the UNT/Dallas Public Schools Leadership Development Program changed the perception of the mentor principals toward the administrative interns?

4. How has participation in the UNT/Dallas Public Schools Leadership Development Program changed the ways the administrative interns perceive themselves?
5. How has participation in the UNT/Dallas Public Schools Leadership Development Program changed the ways the administrative interns perceive educational administration?

Definition of Terms

1. UNT/Dallas Public Schools Leadership Development Program – The partnership between the educational administration program in the College of Education at the University of North Texas and the Dallas Independent School District to provide a two-year, innovative principal preparation program, incorporating the cohort model and field-based learning.

2. Southern Regional Education Board (SREB) – Founded in 1948, SREB works with its 16 member states to link leaders and agencies that are working to improve education from prekindergarten through graduate programs.

3. Cohort – A group of students who engage in a program of studies together and generally share a common set of classes and experiences (Yerkes, Norris, Basom & Barnett, 1994).

4. Problem-based learning – Students learn through simulations of real-world situations where knowledge is organized around the situation and students are responsible for their learning (Bridges & Hallinger, 1992).

5. Release time – It was intended that DISD would provide substitute teachers so interns could leave their campuses at noon, one day a week, to attend class and other program related activities.
6. Teacher-leaders – Teachers who were purported to have demonstrated leadership abilities in various ways at their schools, such as, being team leaders, department chairs, committee chairs, etc.

7. Administrative interns – The teacher-leaders from various campuses in DISD who were selected to participate in the UNT/Dallas Public Schools Leadership Development Program.

8. Mentor principals – Building level administrators at the participating DISD schools who acted as on-site teachers and guides for the administrative interns.

9. Field-based learning – Students applied knowledge gained in the university classroom to real-world activities and problems at their schools.

10. Program sponsors – Members of the UNT College of Education educational administration program and DISD officials who were involved in the design and implementation of the UNT/Dallas Public Schools Leadership Development Program.

Methodology

This study, to assess whether the UNT/Dallas Public Schools Leadership Development Program was progressing toward its stated goals, employed qualitative research design and methods (Glaser and Strauss, 1965; Glesne and Peshkin, 1992), including case study research methods (Yin, 1984). Triangulation of these qualitative research methods helped this researcher focus on insights, discoveries, and interpretations of educational phenomena that were present in the UNT/Dallas Public Schools Leadership Development Program. Merriam (1988) asserted that the “qualitative case study is a particularly useful methodology for addressing problems in which understanding is sought in order to improve practice” (p. 32). Since this study was
an evaluation of the UNT/DISD program in its formative stages, the case study research method proved helpful in yielding data and conclusions that aided the program sponsors by outlining the strengths and weaknesses of the new program.

The review of the literature pertaining to evaluations of leadership preparation programs revealed a number of questions pertinent to this study. These questions were used as a basis in the formulation of the interview questions and the questionnaires created for this study. Survey instruments prepared by the Southern Regional Education Board and previously administered to the program participants in the early stages of this program were also reviewed for wording, design, and construction of the questionnaires.

After questionnaires and interview guides were developed, several different techniques were used to gather data. Administrative intern questionnaires were distributed to the 26 interns during one of their regularly scheduled classes at the Dallas location. The researcher was present during the completion of the questionnaires and collected all 26 questionnaires before leaving the classroom. Mentor principal questionnaires were hand-delivered to each of the 10 participating schools by the researcher. Non-respondents were contacted by telephone and follow-up reminder letters and encouraged to complete and return the questionnaire. Personal interviews were conducted with one representative each from DISD and the educational administration program at UNT. Four structured focus group interview sessions were scheduled to accommodate the administrative interns. Follow-up telephone interviews were conducted with some of the interns to garner additional information regarding questions on the completed questionnaires. A telephone interview was also conducted
with an administrative assistant in the UNT College of Education educational administration program to verify the reported information garnered from the telephone interviews with some of the interns.

Personal, on-site interviews were conducted with eight of the ten mentor principals. Data concerning UNT admission requirements were taken from the university’s web site, with a follow-up telephone call to the graduate school. Document analysis was used to provide historical background information about the UNT/Dallas Public Schools Leadership Development Program.

Data from the varying collection methods were triangulated and analyzed according to the qualitative data analysis prescribed by Miles and Huberman (1984, 1994). Spreadsheets, tables, and matrices were used to organize and analyze the data, which were cross-tabulated with the demographic and historical information to determine and report response differences by race, gender, age, teaching experience, etc. Responses from the interview questions and the open-ended questions on the questionnaires were entered in the QSR NUD*IST revision 6 (QSR International Pty Ltd.) computer software program to help manage and synthesize the data. Data were coded and counted in the software program, then analyzed for emerging themes and compared to the themes that emerged from the questionnaires. Frequencies and percentages were employed for reporting purposes. Findings were reported in a narrative format, with charts and matrices used to aid in the understanding and explanation of the findings. Personal quotes from the interviewees were included to add richness and meaning to the findings.
LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Factors that limited the generalizability of this study included the following:

1. The subjects of this study were all teachers in various Dallas public schools. The characteristics, behaviors, and attitudes of these subjects may not be consistent with those of other populations, especially those not teaching in urban school districts.

2. The outcomes of this study were limited to the 26 administrative interns and 10 mentor/principals in the UNT/Dallas Public Schools Leadership Development Program. Given that this was not a random sample, there were no expectations for the results to be generalized beyond this sample.

3. The selection of the interns in this program may have created an aura (positive or negative) about these students that may not be true of successive cohorts since this was the first cohort in a new program. This aura may be a significant contributor to success in the program. It may or may not carry over to future cohorts and may vary from campus to campus.

4. Self-reported data, such as GRE scores and grade point averages, may have had an effect on the outcomes of this study.

5. While every effort was made to insulate the study from possible bias, it must be acknowledged that the researcher was securing her degree at the University of North Texas. However, the researcher and members of the doctoral committee were not involved in the development and implementation of the UNT/Dallas Public Schools Leadership Development Program.
Significance of the Study

This study was significant because it provided an interim evaluation of the UNT/Dallas Public Schools Leadership Development Program after the administrative interns had completed one year of the two-year program. This study helped the UNT program sponsors determine the strengths and weaknesses of their partnership program with DISD. The problems in this program that were revealed through this study provided the university and DISD ample time to make changes in the program before the first cohort of interns completes the two-year program. This study also aided UNT program sponsors in deciding whether to continue with their new program and enroll a second cohort of interns in the spring of 2004 in preparation for the beginning of the program in the fall of 2004. It also lent insight to DISD as to the possible success of a “grow-your-own” principal preparation program for future use in the school district.

The review of related literature revealed that the majority of evaluation studies that have been conducted on other leadership development programs have been done by university faculty members and program sponsors who were involved in the development and implementation of the programs at their respective universities. While these studies did produce valuable insights into the strengths and weaknesses of the principal preparation programs, they were admittedly conducted by partisan researchers. Many of these partisan researchers called for further study of reformed leadership development preparation programs by unbiased, non-partisan investigators, such as this researcher. This study significantly added to the body of research on reformed leadership development preparation programs because the researcher was an
unbiased graduate student with no ties to the program or vested interest in the success of the program.
CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

A review of the related literature for this study of the UNT/Dallas Public Schools Leadership Development Program revealed several areas that had an impact on this study: the special case of identifying and retaining school leaders in urban education, the need for reform of educational administration preparation programs, the components that comprise many of the revamped principal preparation programs, adult learning theory, and the evaluations of other leadership development preparation programs. Each of these topics has been reviewed separately. The chapter ends with a description of the contributions of this study to the research literature and to the field of educational administration.

*Identifying and Retaining School Leaders in Urban Education*

Many states have created stringent accountability systems for their schools in response to rising expectations in the workplace and greater demands of a global economy. Under this new accountability system, many of the nation’s urban schools are in deep trouble. Urban school districts are typically comprised of large populations of economically disadvantaged students and minority students, with an increasing population of limited English proficient students. In 1999, according to the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), 24% of poverty, school-aged children lived in public school districts within large metropolitan areas of the United States. Poverty
poses a serious risk to children’s potential to succeed in school; thus, creating a greater challenge for urban schools (National Center for Education Statistics, 2002b, 2003a).

Due to rising immigration, public school enrollment has increased dramatically throughout the 1990s, bringing with it the problems of overcrowding and more English deficient students. In 2002, 57% of all schools were in large or midsize cities and were attended by 69% of all public school students. Hispanic students are the fastest growing student group in the nation’s public schools. Changes created by this racial composition of student enrollment in urban schools across America has altered the culture of schools and raised challenges for the schools (National Center for Education Statistics, 2003b). The U.S. Department of Education’s Planning and Evaluation Service sponsored three studies that examined how states and schools were including migrant students and limited English proficient students in their assessment and accountability systems. The study, titled, *The Same High Standards for Migrant Students: Holding Title I Schools Accountable: Executive Summary*, (2002) found that many Title I schools used different standards for their limited English proficient students than they did for the rest of their school population. The study also found that principals and teachers in many high-poverty Title I schools had lower expectations for their students than did faculty and staff in lower poverty schools. The majority of these schools were located in urban areas, and this added to the troubles facing urban school educators.

In the U.S. Department of Education’s report, *The Condition of Education 2002 in Brief*, it was reported that there was a higher percentage of African-American and Hispanic students than white students in the highest poverty urban schools. The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) has assessed trends in students’
reading and math performances since the early 1970s. NAEP reported in 2002 that while white students’ score higher than African-American students in reading, the gaps decreased between the early 1970s and the late 1980s. Since then, however, the gaps have remained relatively stable or increased. Students in high poverty public schools also have lower achievement scores in fourth grade mathematics than do their counterparts in low-poverty public schools. The higher poverty schools also reported higher rates of student absenteeism, a lower percentage of students with a “very positive” attitude toward academic achievement, and less parental involvement than did schools with the least poverty (National Center for Education Statistics, 2002b).

Dropout rates were another reason urban schools were in trouble. The National Center for Education Statistics (2002b) reported that 11% of students between the ages of 16 and 24 were out of school without a high school credential in 2000. Between 1972 and 2000 the dropout rate for white students was lower each year than the rate for African-American or Hispanic students. In 2000, the dropout rate for African-American students was approximately 13%, and the dropout rate for Hispanic students was close to 28%.

Urban schools also had a more difficult time attracting and retaining quality teachers. The U.S. Department of Education study (2002) reported that teachers in Title I high-poverty schools had fewer years of teaching experience, were teaching in fields for which they were not certified, and held emergency or temporary certification. Principals in the highest-poverty schools reported that between 15 and 21 percent of their teachers had less than three years teaching experience compared with only 8 to 9 percent of low-poverty schools.
In early 2003, the National Commission on Teaching and America’s Future (NCTAF) released a report titled, “No Dream Denied: A Pledge to America’s Children.” In their report, NCTAF stated that about one-third of America’s teachers quit during their first three years, and almost half of all teachers left within five years. They further reported that turnover was highest in poor, predominantly minority schools. As stated above, urban schools had the highest concentration of economically disadvantaged and minority student populations, making urban schools the schools with the highest teacher turnover. The NCTAF was a state partnership network that included 20 states that worked together to make comprehensive improvements in teaching quality. The commission was co-chaired by a former governor of North Carolina and a Charles E. Ducommun Professor of Teaching and Teacher Education at Stanford University (“Report: Teacher Retention,” 2003).

With the many problems faced by urban, high-poverty schools, the burden of school success and student achievement had increasingly been placed on the school principal (Bottoms and O’Neill, 2001). The need to strengthen leadership was identified as a large part of the answer to the ailments in urban school districts. In many cases, urban schools were staffed by novice leaders instead of the system’s strongest educators. Strong leadership in the low-performing schools was crucial to improving not only the curriculum and academics in the schools, but to changing the culture of the schools. These urban schools needed “strong, creative, open, and imaginative leadership,” if they were going to succeed (National Policy Board for Educational Administration [NPBEA], 2001). These opinions were expressed by an administrative interest group that was seeking support for the implementation of a system of advanced
certification for administrators. No research was provided to substantiate the assertions made by NPBEA.

However, the findings from a study that was sanctioned by the U.S. Department of Education’s Title I program did substantiate the claims made by the NPBEA above. In a study of nine, high-performing, high-poverty, urban, elementary schools from different parts of the country and schools that served minority populations, teams of researchers interviewed campus and district administrators, teachers, parents, and other school personnel to determine what factors could be attributed to the impressive academic results of the students in all nine schools. The researchers reported that the school principals were integral to the academic successes of the schools and to changing school culture because of the following actions:

- School leaders identified and pursued an important goal that enabled their school to move forward;
- School leaders appealed to all stakeholders to redirect their time and energy toward service to the school children;
- School leaders created a collective sense of responsibility for school improvement; and
- Principals spent more time helping teachers with instructional issues.

Based on the knowledge that the school principals were integral to the academic successes of the students, the researchers made a suggestion that education agencies should build the capacity of principals to provide instructional leadership (Hope for Urban, 1999).
Large urban school districts often had a disproportionate share of underperforming schools, part of which may be attributed to inequitable and inefficient staff resources. Many of these school systems did not have mechanisms in place to systematically and reliably identify exemplary teachers and administrators. Therefore, when it came time to hire new school leaders or promote promising staff members into administrative positions, the urban schools were at a disadvantage. Since there was generally a high turnover rate in urban schools, it became difficult for these schools to replace the leaving administrators with quality people (NPBEA, 2001).

A professor with many years experience as an urban school teacher and as a school superintendent identified another area of concern for attracting and training school principals for urban school districts. Professor Cuban believed America’s urban schools were poorly matched to current popular school reforms and leadership styles that may fit lower poverty, non-urban schools. He stated that due to different expectations, obligations, and city histories, urban school leaders would require “more moxie, skills, and political finesse” (p. 9) than did their colleagues in the more middle to upper class, low-poverty and low-minority schools. Included in Dr. Cuban’s agenda for urban school improvement was the recommendation to make concentrated efforts to recruit large numbers of urban teachers and principals. He further recommended that the new leaders be trained through year-long, paid, supervised internships and intensive summer programs that were conducted in cooperation with local universities. His final recommendation was to pay premium salaries to those teachers and principals who completed the program and stayed in the district for at least five years (Cuban,
2001). These recommendations were based on Dr. Cuban’s years of experience in the public school system and reflected his personal opinion.

Need for Reform of Educational Administration Preparation Programs

For more than the past twenty years, education has been the subject of increased public scrutiny and debate. Reforms in America’s schools were called for in *A Nation at Risk*, a report published in 1983 by the National Commission on Excellence in Education. This report reflected a concern among business, political, and educational leaders that there were many things wrong with America’s public education system. *A Nation at Risk* judged public schools to be so mediocre that they were jeopardizing the economic future of the United States (Cuban, 2001; Jacobson, 1996). The report drew attention to the need for school reforms that would improve the quality of America’s schools, thereby improving student achievement (Petrie, 1990).

As the demands of the reform movement escalated, it became apparent that school leadership was a central element in school improvement, and, without the assistance of school administrators, significant and lasting reform would be unlikely (Jacobson, 1996; American Association of Colleges of Teacher Education, 1988). Stressing the importance of the principal’s role in school improvements was not a new concept in the education world or in society as a whole. Gross and Herriott (1965) showed through their empirical study many years ago that principals’ leadership behaviors influenced student learning. Some of the researchers’ findings were that effective principals offered teachers constructive feedback, showed sincere interest in improving the quality of teaching and learning, gave teachers the sense that they could
improve student performance, and made teachers’ meetings valuable forums for discussing instructional improvement.

The following excerpt from *Leaders for America’s Schools* (1987) further stresses the importance of the school leader’s role in school improvement:

The evolution of reforms over the past few years has progressed from cosmetic changes in course requirements to radical restructuring of the school environment. The new roles envisioned for teachers in reports of both the Holmes Group and the Carnegie Task Force on Teaching as a Profession draw education into a broader field of management research from which it has been isolated for too long. At the same time, these reports identify the unique setting of the school workplace, envisioning how teachers could respond to greater autonomy and professionalism. Yet, the reforms cannot be successful without strong, well-reasoned leadership from principals and superintendents. (p. 6)

These renewed challenges for school leaders sparked the call for reform in the preparation of educational administrators. In a study that examined the quality of educational administrator preparation programs in the United States, the National Commission on Excellence in Educational Administration [NCEEA] (1987) found ten major deficiencies in the development of school leaders:

1. A lack of a definition of good educational leadership.
2. A lack of leader recruitment programs in the schools.
3. A lack of collaboration between school districts and universities.
4. A discouraging lack of minorities and women in the field.
5. A lack of systematic professional development for school administrators.
6. A lack of quality candidates for preparation programs.

7. A lack of preparation programs relevant to the job demands of school administrators.

8. A lack of sequence, modern content, and clinical experiences in preparation programs.

9. A lack of licensure systems which promote excellence.

10. A lack of a national sense of cooperation in preparing school leaders (pp.xiv).

Many of the deficiencies outlined by NCEEA were supported by a national survey of U.S. school administrators that revealed that a little more than half of the administrators who responded (51 percent) rated their training as either fair or poor. Forty-six percent of the respondents stated that the requirements of their graduate preparation programs were not sufficiently rigorous enough to ensure they could meet the demands of school leadership that they faced. A mere seven percent of the administrators surveyed viewed their university preparation program as the most beneficial training they had for the job they faced. Sixty-one percent of the respondents stated it was their initial on-the-job training that was the most beneficial part of their preparation (Heller, Conway, and Jacobson, 1988).

A growing body of literature added credence to the reform movement by pointing out, historically, strong professional preparation programs have been essential and successful in guaranteeing an adequate supply of competent leaders in other, non-educational, professional fields, such as medicine. This challenged educational administration preparation programs to study their traditional methods for preparing future school leaders and to find ways to restructure their programs with more emphasis
on theoretical and clinical knowledge, applied research, and supervised practice (Björk and Ginsberg, 1995; Griffiths et al. 1988; Reynolds, 1994).

Many practitioners in the field of educational administration were skeptical as to whether real changes would occur in universities’ leadership preparation programs due to the reluctance of departments of educational administration to undertake needed reforms. Too many times in the past, undertaking reform simply meant examining and slightly changing the course content of traditional educational administration preparation programs (Björk and Ginsberg, 1995). Though major changes have not been documented in educational administration leadership preparation programs across the nation since the NCEEA’s report, it was noted that many university programs have taken a proactive approach and made attempts to revitalize their educational leadership preparation programs to create new and innovative programs over the past decade and a half (Copland, 2001; Milstein, 1993; Murphy, 1993a, 1993b, Young, Petersen, and Short, 2001). These attempts to revitalize programs will be addressed in the following section, Components of Principal Preparation Programs.

Components of Revamped Principal Preparation Programs

Most of the revamped administrator preparation programs that have emerged in response to the call for the reform of such programs used a variety of methods to help students transfer their theoretical knowledge to the real-world practice of educational leadership. Several areas that emerged as being relevant to successful potential administrator programs included: theory-to-practice, improved field-based experiences, problem-based learning, cohorts, internships, recruitment and selection of program participants, and mentoring (Heller, 1989; Mulkeen and Tetenbaum, 1990; National
Each of these components will be addressed in the following discussion in regards to how they may be relevant to the success of future school leaders.

Administrator preparation programs have been characterized as too theoretical, with there being little connection between the theories taught in the classroom and actual practice (Schmuck, 1993). Reform efforts have shown that practical classroom activities, such as role playing and reflection groups, have proven to be successful in helping potential school administrators apply their theoretical knowledge to real-life situations. These activities provided a non-threatening environment in which the students could practice administrative skills. In the North Carolina Potential Administrator Development Program, researchers reported that participants noted a strong correlation between their classes and the planned activities, and they felt that reinforcement was very beneficial in their development as school leaders (Peel, Wallace, Buckner, Wrenn, and Evans, 1998). All of these researchers were program sponsors of the North Carolina program. No follow-up study was found on the North Carolina program to verify whether these activities actually helped the program participants administrate their schools more effectively once they secured an administrative position.

However, in a study conducted to evaluate the effectiveness of a similar administrative training program, known as the Academy Program, co-sponsored by Pepperdine University and the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD), researchers provided evidence to suggest a slightly higher degree of effectiveness of administrators prepared in a school district-university partnership, such as the North
Carolina program, than those administrators prepared in a traditional program. The Pepperdine-LAUSD study focused on graduates of the Academy Program from a five year period who currently held administrative positions in LAUSD. The study asked the graduates and their supervisors to rate the Academy graduates and job-alike non-Academy graduates on their effectiveness as administrators. When asked on the questionnaire, “What aspects of the LAUSD-Pepperdine University Academy Program do you feel contributed most strongly to the success of the graduates,” the most common response was the “mix of theory and practice with an orientation toward the practical” (Hughes, Adams, and Vries, 1990, p. 5). Though the graduates and their supervisors reported that the graduates of the Academy Program were more effective school leaders because of their participation in the program, there was no substantiated research to document in what ways the graduates were more effective.

A four-year action research study of an innovative, field-based, collaborative educational leadership preparation program in Oregon provided more sound results than many of the other studies. The Oregon program was a cooperative venture between the University of Oregon, the Confederation of Oregon School Administrators, and the Oregon School Boards Association. The major thrust of the new two-year program was to create learning opportunities for students that were a mixture of theoretical research and field-based activities. What set this study apart from most of the offers reviewed was that the researchers compared the participants in the alternative program to participants in the university’s traditional administrative certification program. All subjects answered the same questions at the end of their respective programs. Graduates of the new program put three times more emphasis on
being able to communicate effectively, setting a positive social climate in schools, and providing good staff development than did the graduates of the traditional program.

Another facet of the study that made it stronger than many others reviewed was that the researchers tracked the graduates during the first school year after their completion of the program. Thirteen of the twenty-four participants in the program procured administrative positions during that time, and seven more accepted administrative positions one year later. The researchers believed these results to be more than double the typical rate of new graduates procuring administrative positions.

The researchers also studied the job performance of the first 13 participants who became school administrators. The research study included interviews with the participants, their peers, their subordinates and their supervisors. A questionnaire that addressed the participants’ behaviors as administrators was also administered to the groups of colleagues. Over 90% of the colleagues’ rankings revealed that they viewed the program participants as providing strong instructional leadership in the schools (Schmuck, 1993). Though the study was conducted by one of the program sponsors, it employed sound research methods and could be viewed as a credible assessment of one new, innovative principal preparation program that showed the benefits of mixing theory and practice.

The NCEEA’s report (1987) titled Leaders for America’s Schools recommended that administrator preparation programs include opportunities for more clinical approaches to learning, where a person spends a great deal of time “learning by doing.” The Danforth Foundation was an early leader in promoting the field-based learning approach in principal preparation programs, as they sponsored the development of
alternative programs for the training of school principals at numerous universities across the nation. All of the Danforth programs placed great emphasis on the belief that learning about leadership was an activity best carried out in the field, or school setting, with practicing school administrators serving as mentors to aspiring leaders (Playko and Daresh, 1992).

In a study of three of the Danforth-supported university principal preparation programs, Playko and Daresh (1992) sought to determine the effect of participation in Danforth programs on candidates in the programs. The research study followed six individuals as they prepared to move from classroom teachers to leadership positions in their schools and districts. One purpose of the research was to identify ways in which people increased their personal visions and competencies in educational leadership after participation in one of the Danforth-supported leadership programs. Activities in the Danforth programs included intensive field-based learning activities designed to help the participants acquire many technical skills they would need in the field of educational leadership. The researchers found that the candidates in the field-based program acquired a different set of technical skills than those normally associated with traditional management skills. Based on interviews with the candidates, their mentors, and other colleagues, the researchers reported that the Danforth candidates had gained greater listening skills, interpersonal skills, and communication skills that enabled them to work more effectively with others. There was no follow-up study to determine if these skills were transferable to the role of a school administrator, as five of the six interns in the study returned to classroom teaching instead of pursuing an administrative position.
Problem-based learning was another component of administrator preparation programs that had gained increased popularity in recent years and was purported to help students correlate theory and practice. Bridges and Hallinger (1992) characterized problem-based learning as creating situations that simulated real-world problems, where knowledge was organized around the situation and students were responsible for their own learning. The curriculum in many programs included problem-based learning projects that focused on a central dilemma drawn from administrative practice.

Two programs that reported successfully utilizing problem-based learning in their principal preparation programs were in California and North Carolina. The Prospective Principals Program (PPP) at Stanford University included a problem-based learning component that comprised about 40% of the total program curriculum. The program designers recognized that future school leaders needed to build a knowledge base that would help them effectively deal with the realities of the workplace. The PPP had instituted ongoing assessment over the more than 10 years the program had been in existence that included the use of independent program evaluators and the systematic collection of student feedback about their experiences in the program. Program sponsors used these tools to continuously improve the PPP.

Students and graduates of the PPP reported that their experiences with problem-based learning projects were “formative, challenging, and of critical importance in learning the skills and content associated with school leadership, as well as in learning to handle the emotional aspects of the principalship” (p. 357). Program graduates also reported that the problem-based learning projects had a greater impact on their personal professional development than did their field-based work (Copland, 2001). By
the researcher’s own admission, he was not an impartial critic or program evaluator since he was involved in the development and implementation of the PPP at Stanford. Copland called for a study of the outputs associated with the program to be able to determine its real worth.

In North Carolina, interns participated in a simulation of a school district at work. The simulation provided the interns the opportunity for individualized development of leadership skills, as they received feedback from experienced administrators and peers. Students in this program reported that the simulation helped them expand their skills and become more sensitive (Bradshaw, L., Perreault, G., McDowelle, J., & Bell, E., 1997). The results of this study were reported by faculty members who were involved in the program and only reflected the perceptions of the program participants.

Cohorts are not new ideas in learning environments, but their use had diminished over the years. With the call for reform of educational administration programs in the early 1980s, cohorts began to be reconsidered as viable components of successful preparation programs. Cohorts may be defined as a group of students who engage in a program of studies together, sharing a common set of classes and experiences. Many researchers caution, however, that simply sharing common space and assignments does not create an effective cohort. Meaningful cohorts require facilitators to provide a planned set of activities that will create a collegial learning atmosphere where cohort members may participate in real-life experiences that will prepare them for leadership positions (Barnett and Muse, 1993; Yerkes, Basom, Barnett, and Norris, 1995).
The cohort model was a critical element that received much attention in evaluations of leadership preparation programs. Yerkes, et al (1995) conducted a survey study of 23 institutions around the nation that used cohort models to prepare school leaders. The results of this study and many other studies read for this report yielded similar positive responses to involvement in a cohort. The researchers reported faculty and students involved in cohort groups generally considered the cohort experience to be an essential part of a quality program, with students reporting a sense of belonging and social bonding that created new opportunities for collaboration and networking among classmates, which led to a strengthened ability to reflect on practice (Barnett and Muse, 1993; Norris and Barnett, 1994; Vornberg and Davis, 1997). None of these researchers conducted follow-up studies to determine if the positive effects of participation in a cohort carried over when the students became school principals.

The positive attributes of a cohort arrangement may be the key to insuring that cohorts are not a passing trend, as in the past. Schools today exist in a different societal context than was present in the 1970s and 1980s. Today’s schools are characterized by “shared leadership, communities of learners, and visionary leadership” (Yerkes et al, 1994). School leaders immersed in this culture must be facilitators, transformers, and catalysts of change. The cohort model of teaching was being touted as the educational model that will successfully provide future generations of leaders with the skills needed to meet the challenges for creating collaborative, collegial learning environments (Yerkes et al, 1994). No research was found that focused on the impact the cohort method of teaching would have on future school leaders. Yerkes and her research colleagues called for further research into the influence of the cohort experience on
students to help determine whether students who participate in cohort-model preparation programs do indeed become the new breed of school leader for the future.

Norris and Barnett (1994) conducted a study of 51 students from four different universities who were each involved in a cohort setting in their respective principal preparation programs. The purpose of the study was to determine how successful educational administration preparation programs were in training school principals to become community builders in their schools. The study concluded that program participants experienced all of the benefits detailed above, with the most prominent finding being the degree of bonding experienced within each of the cohorts. In addition to the personal benefits reaped from participation in a cohort, the study asserted that the more individuals were empowered in their cohort, the more likely they would be to empower groups and build community in their schools. No follow-up study was done on these same 51 students to ascertain whether the research study’s findings were carried over to actual practice when the students became practicing school administrators.

Though most researchers concluded that the benefits of cohort groups outweighed the liabilities, certain areas of concern did arise. Potential problems included: the isolation of cohort members from students in other educational settings, thus curtailing benefits from student interaction; the time faculty must devote to planning and conducting an effective cohort group experience, as well as the time required to work collaboratively with all stakeholders; perceived elitism favoring cohort over non-cohort students; faculty effort to revise the curriculum and model of instructional delivery; and discomfort among faculty in regards to faculty-student relationships. Even with the potential problems, researchers advocated the use of a cohort approach to
develop potential school leaders (Barnett and Muse, 1993; Vornberg and Davis, 1997; Yerkes et al, 1995).

Recruitment of students into educational administration programs has not generally been systematic, and admission standards have typically been low. The dominant selection criterion in the past has been undergraduate grade point average (GPA), scores on the Graduate Record Examination (GRE), and, in some cases, performance on departmental interviews (Mulkeen and Tetenbaum, 1990). According to The National Center for Education Statistics (2002b), the pool of qualified teachers from which to choose administrative candidates may be too small. The NCES reported college graduates who were in the bottom quartile of SAT or ACT scores coming out of high school were more likely to have taught school than students who were in the top quartile (14% versus 10%). Further, students in the bottom quartile were also more likely to have majored in education (15% versus 7%), earned a teaching certificate, and still been teaching long after students in the top quartile had exited the profession.

Some principal preparation programs were utilizing instruments and tools to gather data on potential administrators that extended beyond GPA and GRE scores. The University of Wyoming developed admissions criteria that extended beyond the traditional requirements. After applicants to the principal preparation program at the University of Wyoming had submitted the routine test scores, résumés, and applications, they were invited to participate in a day of screening activities on the campus. The screening activities were designed to identify the applicants’ traits related to educational beliefs, communication skills, and group process skills. Practicing
administrators were invited to participate in the screening activities and help the faculty members make the final selections of candidates (Sorenson and Machell, 1996).

Reported concerns about the selection process at The University of Wyoming seemed to contradict the very purpose of a rigorous screening process for candidates. Faculty members at the university expressed concern that quality candidates might not always be selected for several reasons: 1.) the difficulty in assessing maturity and commitment, two areas critical to success in leadership, 2.) the process could be seen as elitist and contrary to the belief that everyone can learn and change their professional behavior, 3.) the possibility for political pressure and negative attitudes from practitioners in the field, 4.) internal politics and pressure to maintain larger classes, and 5.) applicants who could make good educational leaders were overlooked due to slightly below the “benchmark” score on a number of criteria (Sorenson and Machell, 1996).

Even with the faculty members’ concerns about the selection process, the University of Wyoming’s principal preparation program had met with positive reaction from students and practicing administrators. Graduates of the program had been successful in finding employment as school principals, and their supervisors had reported satisfaction with the preparation of the new administrators (Sorenson and Machell, 1996).

Other programs found it helpful to determine whether the potential school leader had an established history of successful leadership skills, as well as the personal disposition or personality style that would lend itself to the principalship. In some programs it was common for candidates to produce evidence of successful leadership
experiences in their adult life, whether it was in schools or in another work environment. It was purported that individuals with prior experience in applying leadership skills in any context were more likely to be successful in converting that knowledge into skills necessary to be a successful school principal (Combs, Miser, and Whitaker, 1999; Lauder, 2000). Though these practices have been incorporated into the selection of candidates for leadership development programs, there was no evidence from research that they had an impact on the performance of school leaders upon completion of their training programs.

A recent study of over 450 university master’s degree and principal certification programs in education administration revealed some discouraging practices in the selection process for candidates. Except for a few programs that used rigorous and quality selection procedures, the majority of university preparation programs still used the criteria of standardized test scores, undergraduate grade point average, and letters of recommendation. The study found limited use of personal interviews and heavy use of conditional admissions in the selection process. The authors of the study believed one of the most important steps a university could take to positively impact PreK-12 education was to better identify quality candidates for their educational administration programs (Creighton, 2002; Creighton & Jones, 2001).

Active recruitment of the best people into the field was identified as a great need in order to improve the quality of educational administrators. For a variety of reasons, including low pay, lack of respect, the feeling that it was impossible to do the job well, stress, and a lack of autonomy, the best and brightest educators were not choosing to pursue careers in educational administration. As pointed out by NCES, many of the best
and brightest did not teach long enough to even consider entering the world of school administration. Therefore, it was imperative that school districts become invested in the recruitment process, both in identifying talent and in providing incentives for qualified individuals to pursue administrative credentials (Edwards, 1989; Hughes, Adams, and Vries, 1990; Mulkeen and Tetenbaum, 1990). A study of three university preparation programs that were supported by grants from The Danforth Foundation concluded that alliances must be formed between universities and local school districts to help locate the best and brightest staff members with leadership potential. The desire to change the current pattern of aspiring administrators self-selecting into preparation programs was deemed critical to the recruitment of the best potential leaders (Playko and Daresh, 1992). No research studies were found that compared school leaders who self-selected into leadership programs to those administrators who were recruited by their school districts.

As minority student populations were rapidly increasing, especially in urban school districts, it was a concern among educators and business leaders that minority enrollments in education preparation programs were failing to increase (National Commission on Excellence in Educational Administration, 1987). The National Policy Board for Educational Administration (1989) recommended that administrator preparation programs adopt rigorous recruitment strategies to discover and encourage qualified women and minority candidates to apply for administrator training. The Danforth Foundation-sponsored programs were among the first to make an effort to increase the opportunities for traditionally underrepresented groups to enter the field of educational leadership. Several other administrator preparation programs have included
the recruitment of traditionally underrepresented groups in the mission of their programs (Jacobson, 1996; Playko and Daresh, 1992).

No research was found that proved women or minority school administrators were more effective in leading schools with high minority populations than were male or non-minority school principals. It appeared that the call for more women and minorities in school leadership was based on equity issues and the fact that women and minorities were still underrepresented in the education field, as well as in other business fields. (Marshall, 1987). Education was one of the few professions in which women have historically dominated the workforce, so people found it interesting and troubling that the majority of leaders in the education profession continued to be white males.

The National Center for Education Statistics (2002a) reported the number of women school administrators had increased by 33% between 1994 and 2000, raising their total number to 44% of all public school principals in the 1999-2000 school year. The number of male administrators had decreased almost 10% during the same time period. Since 75% of all public school teachers were women in 1999-2000, the number of women holding principalships was still disproportionate to the total number of women teachers. Minority school principals increased 18.5% from 1994 to 2000, increasing their numbers to almost 18% of all public school principals in the nation. The call for more women and minorities in educational administration could be attributed to these facts.

Assigning active school principals to serve as mentors to administrative interns was a practice that had become an integral part of most of the reformed educational administration preparation programs. Mentorships were reported to work best when the
principals selected to supervise an intern were interested in participating in the program, were good communicators, were creative and innovative, were energetic and had time to spend with the intern, were knowledgeable about their school, and were willing to orient administrative interns to all aspects of the district and community. It was a consensus among researchers that, in their programs, the mentor was key to a successful internship for the aspiring principal (Pence, 1989; William and Hudson, 2001; Wilmore, 1999).

The Educational Leadership UTA Program evaluation (Wilmore, 1999) revealed that interns collaborated with their mentor principals on many different school improvement projects during the first year of the program. The program was deemed successful in that it focused the interns and mentors’ attention toward school effectiveness for all students. The researchers were unable to determine the relevance of the mentorship experience to the actual practice of being a principal because the study was done at the end of the first year of a two-year program. The evaluation study called for further research by the field of educational administration to determine the real value of mentorships in principal preparation programs.

Negative aspects of the mentor role in leadership preparation programs were highlighted in a study of a principal preparation program in North Carolina. Williamson and Hudson (2001) reported that quite frequently interns were subjected to bad mentor experiences. In some cases, interns had no opportunity to assume responsibility for real projects or to develop knowledge, skills, and confidence necessary to be a good principal. Some interns were ignored or left on their own to find their own projects. Other interns experienced a change in principals after the school year had begun, while
others were moved to new schools in the middle of the year. Based on these bad experiences compared to those interns who reported positive mentor relationships, Williamson and Hudson concluded that the mentor was key to a successful internship.

One piece of research was able to show the relationship between mentoring and school improvements. Though the program was designed for assistant principals, rather than administrative interns such as those in leadership preparation programs, the study showed how the results could be transferred and applied to principal preparation programs. The School Leadership Initiative was a 3-year pilot mentor program designed for assistant principals. It was followed by a second initiative, the Richardson Mentor Program that was created for seasoned administrators who were committed to making a change in how leadership was supported and nurtured throughout their campuses. Both initiatives focused on improving the way prospective school leaders were recruited and mentored, as well as focusing on the way practicing administrators were supported and mentored throughout their careers.

The purpose of the study was to identify strategies that enhanced how principals recruit, support, and mentor individuals into school leadership roles as a result of their involvement in a leadership initiative. The subjects of the study were all school leaders who had been mentored in their formative years and/or had served as mentors to interns and other teacher-leaders on their campuses. The following was a compilation of their recommendations for principal preparation programs based on their mentoring experiences:
1. Principal preparation programs need to provide opportunities for prospective school leaders to collaboratively work with practicing principals on real school issues.

2. Understand that effective school leadership can no longer be the sole responsibility of the principal.

3. Future school leaders arise from our schools through collaboration of all stakeholders in the school community.

4. Principals have an obligation to mentor and teach others in their schools.

5. Future principals will be more easily recruited when many people have had an opportunity to lead in their schools under the tutelage of good mentors.

6. The principal must be a “leader of leaders” who encourages all members of the school community to take responsibility for the improvement of the school.

Though this research was done by a professor and four of the principals in the program, it was a well-constructed study and provided valuable insights into the importance of the role of a mentor principal in leadership preparation programs (Zellner, Jinkins, Gideon, Doughty, and McNamara, 2002).

*Adult Learning Theory*

Since the majority of participants in educational administration preparation programs were teacher-leader adults, it was necessary for university faculty members, school personnel, and the participants themselves to be aware of the characteristics of adult learners. Adults prefer to be actively involved in the learning process, rather than being passive recipients of knowledge. This does not mean, however, that instructors must give up the role of being information givers. Instructor’s roles need to change to
being resource advisors and learning facilitators (Brookfield, 1986). As facilitators, instructors can create collaborative teaching situations that allow learners to share in setting goals and objectives for courses and share the responsibility for carrying out the learning activities. The goal was for adult learners to become empowered and feel ownership in their own professional development (Merriam and Caffarella, 1991).

Adults possess rich life experiences and prior knowledge that differentiates their learning from child learning (Kidd, 1973; Knowles, 1980; Merriam and Caffarella, 1991). Knowles states that, “Adults derive their self-identity from their experience. They define who they are in terms of the accumulation of their unique sets of experiences. Because adults define themselves largely by their experiences, they have a deep investment in their value” (p. 50). Though these past experiences may be beneficial to adult learning, they may also become obstacles to new learning, as some adults may have to unlearn negative attitudes toward learning, old ways of doing things, and prejudicial views (Barnett and Caffarella, 1992).

Kidd (1973) explained that “one of the reasons adults continue to learn well . . . is that they concentrate their learning in the areas of experience in which their interests also lie. Thus their motivation is substantial and, as everyone knows, wanting to learn is the greatest aid to learning” (p. 91). For this reason, programs involving adult learners demanded greater use of problem-based learning, where problems were selected from practice and the learners could draw upon their own experiences in exercising and developing their problem-solving skills. Role playing and simulation activities, which have already been discussed earlier in this chapter, helped the adult learners bridge the
gap between the university classroom and the real world of the schools (Knowles, 1986).

Evaluations of Leadership Development Preparation Programs

It was acknowledged by the majority of principal preparation program evaluators that continual review of these programs was critical to the effectiveness and successfulness of the programs. Milstein, Bobroff, and Restine (1991) stated, “Evaluation lets us know how close we have come to meeting our purposes and provides information needed to make decisions that can improve our performance” (p. 101). Many preparation programs had established advisory committees of principals, business and industry leaders, parents, teachers, and former participants who gave continual advice for improvement and reviewed the program goals, processes, and outcomes (Lauder, 2000). All researchers reported ongoing assessment of the leadership preparation programs at their universities that usually resulted in numerous changes to the programs. All stakeholders in the programs had a voice in the assessment process, especially the participants, as the new programs were designed to meet their needs. In addition, university professors and graduate students had performed formal evaluations of many leadership preparation programs. The reformed educational administrator preparation programs were considered works in progress rather than static entities that did not need to change (Copland, 2001; Didham, Drake, and Cosiano, 1997; Wilmore, 1994).

A common finding in the literature review on evaluations of principal preparation programs was that the majority of evaluations had been conducted by in-house professors and other program sponsors who were involved in the development and
implementation of leadership preparation programs at their universities. By their own admissions, these researchers acknowledged their bias in evaluating their own programs. Still, much useful insight into the strengths and weaknesses of many of the programs was revealed through these evaluations.

While most of the studies reported the programs utilized evaluations to judge and improve their principal preparation programs, what was lacking in the evaluations of the leadership preparation programs was any carefully designed research studies that tied the various components of the preparation programs to school improvements and higher student achievement. As reported earlier in this chapter, most of the studies revealed that their revamped leadership preparation programs included new and more useful activities, such as problem-based learning, case studies, simulations, field-based activities, and internships that helped their learners bridge the gap from theoretical learning in the university classroom to the real-world situations in schools. Other researchers simply reported their revamped educational administrator preparation programs had met with significant positive reaction from participants and practicing administrators in the local school districts. Researchers also reported graduates of many of the programs were employed as principals and were receiving complimentary feedback from their supervisors as to the quality of their training. However, there were no credible studies found to prove that all of these activities or assertions did indeed produce school leaders who would have a positive effect on improving schools and raising student achievement. All of the programs claimed school improvement and greater student achievement were the catalysts for the changes they made in their principal preparation programs. No studies were found to substantiate those claims.
Despite the lack of credible research studies to prove that the newly revamped leadership preparation programs actually trained a new breed of school leaders, enthusiasm on the part of student participants, school district officials, and university faculty remained high on the new programs, though new challenges arose in the programs on a regular basis (Worner and Parks, 1992). As reported earlier in this chapter, some researchers questioned how much principal preparation programs had actually changed if universities simply put their cohorts through a traditional training program. They also questioned whether university faculty members were willing to commit to the substantial time that was necessary to implement these new programs (Björk and Ginsberg, 1995).

No one knows the answers to these questions. Whether these new programs were preparing principals better remained to be seen; however, it was clear that the reformed preparation programs were preparing principals differently. It was the hope of all stakeholders in these programs that the emerging principals would be capable of effectively leading tomorrow’s schools (Bottoms and O’Neill, 2001; Jacobson, 1996; Lauder, 2000; Sorenson and Machell, 1996). At the time of this study, there was no research to prove that the principals who emerged from the newly revamped leadership preparation programs would actually make any more or less changes in school improvement and student achievement than had the principals who emerged from traditional principal preparation programs.
Contributions of the Study

This study contributed to the research literature and to the field of educational administration in two areas. First, unlike the majority of researchers who conducted the studies reviewed for this project, this researcher was an unbiased, non-partisan investigator who had no ties to the UNT/Dallas Public Schools Leadership Development Program that was being studied. The researcher had no vested interest in the success or failure of the program. This impartiality allowed the researcher to design and conduct a research study that would provide forthright, valuable information about the strengths and weaknesses of the UNT/Dallas Public Schools Leadership Development Program. Further, this researcher revealed that many of the claims that had touted the successes of reformed educational leadership preparation programs had no significant research studies to prove that graduates of the reformed leadership programs did indeed improve schools and raise student achievement better than did graduates of traditional leadership preparation programs.

Second, this research study provided an interim evaluation of a new principal preparation program for the University of North Texas and the Dallas Independent School System. As will be discussed in chapters 4 and 5, DISD has traditionally had a difficult time attracting and retaining quality people for leadership positions within the school district. This evaluation study was conducted after DISD interns had completed one year of the two-year program. The study helped the UNT program sponsors determine the strengths and weaknesses of their partnership program with DISD. The problems in the program that were revealed through this study provided the university and DISD ample time to make changes in the program before the first cohort of interns
completed the two-year program. This study also aided UNT program sponsors in
deciding whether to continue with their new program and enroll a second cohort of
interns in the spring of 2004. It also lent insight to DISD as to the possible success of a
“grow-your-own” principal preparation program for future use in the school district.
CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

This study, to assess whether the UNT/Dallas Public Schools Leadership Development Program is progressing toward its stated goals, made use of qualitative research design and methods (Glesne and Peshkin, 1992). Glaser and Strauss (1965) promote qualitative research in the social sciences because of its usefulness in the discovery of substantive theory. They define substantive theory as “the formulation of concepts and their interrelation into a set of hypotheses for a given substantive area, such as education, based on research in the area” (p. 5). The theories that emerged from this study have been useful to the UNT and DISD staff members who are responsible for the development and implementation of the UNT/Dallas Public Schools Leadership Development Program. Glaser and Strauss believe qualitative research is the most “adequate” and “efficient” method for obtaining the type of information required in an empirical research situation (p. 5).

Merriam (1988) supports the Glaser and Strauss qualitative research methods that discover the relevant concepts and hypotheses for the substantive area being researched. Merriam states that qualitative research is “exploratory, inductive, emphasizes processes rather than ends, and strives to understand how all the parts work together to form a whole” (p. 16). The qualitative case study research method (Yin, 1984) helped this researcher focus on insights, discoveries, and interpretations of educational phenomena that were evident in the study of the UNT/Dallas Public Schools Leadership Development Program. Merriam asserts that the “qualitative case study is a particularly useful methodology for addressing problems in which understanding is
sought in order to improve practice” (p. 32). Since this study is an evaluation of the UNT/DISD program in its formative stages, the case study research method proved helpful by providing valuable input to the UNT faculty members and DISD staff members who are interested in improving the program for the future.

Population

The population for this study was the 26-member cohort of administrative interns participating in the UNT/Dallas Public Schools Leadership Development program. Twenty-seven interns originally began the program, but one intern dropped out of the program early in the first fall semester due to personal reasons. All the interns are current teachers in elementary, middle, and high schools in the Dallas Independent School District, which is a large urban school district in Texas. Eight of the interns are teachers from three different elementary schools, ten are teachers from four different middle schools, and eight are teachers from three different high schools.

Of the 26 interns, 7 are males and 19 are females. These numbers are representative of the Dallas Independent School District, as 73.8% of all teachers in DISD are female. Seventy-three percent (73%) of the interns represent various ethnic minority populations, with 46.2% of all interns being African-American, 15.4% being of Hispanic/Mexican origin, and 26.9% being white (see Table 1).

In some ethnic groups, these numbers correspond closely to how the groups are represented overall in DISD. African-Americans make up 41.6% of the teaching staff in DISD, which is close to the 46.2% of interns in the program. Hispanics comprise 12.0% of all teachers, and they are represented with 15.4% of all interns. The disparate group
is the white interns, as they only comprise 26.9% of the interns but represent 44.1% of all teachers in DISD (See Table 2).

Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>African American</th>
<th>Other Hispanic</th>
<th>Mexican</th>
<th>White</th>
<th>Asian</th>
<th>American Indian</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Administrative Interns</th>
<th>All Teachers in DISD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>African-American</td>
<td>46.2%</td>
<td>41.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic/Mexican</td>
<td>15.4%</td>
<td>12.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>26.9%</td>
<td>44.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>7.7%</td>
<td>1.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Indian</td>
<td>3.8%</td>
<td>.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The ethnic make-up of the administrative interns in the program does not correlate closely with the ethnic make-up of the student body in the Dallas Independent School District. The Hispanic/Mexican ethnic groups comprise 58.9% of all students in
DISD. African-American students comprise 32.9% of the student body, and white students account for 6.7% of all students in DISD (See Table 3).

Table 3

Comparison of Ethnic Distribution of Students in DISD to Administrative Interns

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Students</th>
<th>Administrative Interns</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>African-American</td>
<td>32.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>58.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>6.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian/Pacific Islander</td>
<td>1.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native American</td>
<td>.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: These figures were taken from DISD’s 2002-2003 AEIS (Academic Excellence Indicator System) data on the Texas Education Agency web site.

The administrative interns range in age from less than 30 to over 50 (see Table 4) and have an average of more than ten years (10.4) teaching experience, with 4 years being the least number of years’ experience and 30 being the most years of teaching experience. The average length of time interns have taught at their current schools is 5.5 years. Fourteen of the interns entered the teaching profession through alternative teacher certification programs, while 12 of the interns completed traditional university teacher certification degrees.
Table 4

Age Range of Administrative Interns by Gender

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Less than 30</th>
<th>31-40</th>
<th>41-50</th>
<th>More than 50</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The 10 school principals who served as mentors to the administrative interns were also members of the population that was studied. The principals represent three elementary schools, four middle schools, and three high schools in the Dallas Independent School District. Four of the principals are male and six are female. There are four African-American principals, three Hispanics, two whites and one Mexican principal. Fourteen years is the average length of time these individuals have served as principals in a public or private school, with the least amount of experience as a principal being 6 years and the most being 28 years.

Instrumentation

Multiple methods, or triangulation (Denzin, 1978), were used to collect and analyze data for this study. According to Miles and Huberman (1994), using varying data sources, such as people, times, and places, and varying data methods, such as interviews, surveys, and documents, can aid a researcher in increasing the validity of his/her study. The researcher should choose triangulation sources that have different biases and different strengths so that they can complement each other. These recommendations have been employed in this study. Data collection methods included:
an administrative intern questionnaire (See Appendix A); a mentor/principal questionnaire (See Appendix B); structured focus group interviews with the administrative interns (See Appendix C); individual interviews with interns, mentor/principals, one DISD central office staff member, one UNT faculty member; and one administrative assistant in the educational administration program; and document analysis.

The administrative intern questionnaire was designed for the collection of various types of data: demographic and historical data about each of the participants in the cohort, factual information concerning the participant’s registration status at UNT, each participant’s perceptions about their level of involvement in campus-based decision making and their relationship with their mentor/principal, their perceptions about themselves as prospective school leaders, and their perceptions about educational leadership. Several sources of data were used in the questionnaire design. The review of the literature pertaining to evaluations of leadership preparation programs revealed a number of questions pertinent to this study; thus, they were adapted and included in the questionnaire. The research questions for this study formed the basis for the questions asked on the questionnaires. Survey instruments prepared by the Southern Regional Education Board and previously administered to the program participants in the early stages of this program were also reviewed for wording, design, and construction of the questionnaire.

The six-page administrative intern questionnaire consisted of 48 questions in seven different sections. The sections were designed and titled to facilitate responses to the research questions for this study. Thirty-two of the questions asked participants to
respond in a yes/no format, with six of those questions including an open-ended question to provide an opportunity for respondents to explain their answer. Two questions on the instrument were designed to glean factual information concerning the interns’ admissions status in the UNT Toulouse School of Graduate Studies and the UNT educational administration program. These questions asked participants to place a check in front of all admission requirements that had been met. Two open-ended questions asked the administrative interns about the amount of time their mentor principals spent with them in regards to their participation in this program. The questionnaire also included one other open-ended question that asked interns what impact they believed their participation in this program would have on improvements at their campus. The last page of the questionnaire contained 11 demographic/activities questions. Members of the researcher’s doctoral committee examined the questionnaire for redundancy, clarity of instructions for responding to items, clarity of questions asked, and overall interest and visual appeal.

The questionnaires were coded by the researcher prior to their distribution to the interns. The rationale for the coding was to be sure the researcher could match the questionnaire to the appropriate intern in case follow-up questions were necessary in regards to the interns having met all the UNT admissions requirements. The coded questionnaires were distributed by the researcher to the 26 administrative interns on a Wednesday afternoon during their regularly scheduled UNT class time. The interns were asked to respond to the questions that same day, and the researcher collected the instruments on site. All 26 interns were present and completed the questionnaire.
The questionnaire designed for the mentors/principals was much shorter than the administrative interns’ questionnaire – only three pages, with 18 questions. The rationale for the shorter principal questionnaire was that school administrators are busy people and have lots of forms to fill out on a daily basis for their school and their district. The researcher hoped a shorter questionnaire would be less intimidating and less time-consuming for the principals, thus encouraging them to answer the questions and return the questionnaire in a timely manner.

The mentor/principal questionnaire covered three areas: demographic information; questions about the amount and quality of time the mentor/principal had spent with his/her administrative interns; and the mentor/principal’s perceptions of the qualifications of the administrative interns reporting to that principal. Questions were structured in several formats: three open-ended questions, one yes/no question, and 10 Likert-type scale questions. The same data sources were used to prepare the mentor/principal questionnaire that were used to prepare the administrative interns’ questionnaire. This instrument was also reviewed by members of the researcher’s doctoral committee.

Mentor/principal questionnaires were coded and hand-delivered by the researcher to each of the participating principals at their respective schools. The coding was done on these questionnaires so the researcher could identify principals who had not returned their completed questionnaire in a timely manner. Along with the questionnaire, each principal received a letter from the DISD Special Assistant to the Superintendent, Higher Education Linkages, informing them that this researcher was approved by DISD to conduct a study of the UNT/Dallas Public Schools Leadership
Development Program. Each principal also received an introduction letter from the researcher, explaining the study and requesting that the questionnaire be completed and returned by a certain date. Principals were provided with a self-addressed, stamped envelope in which to return the questionnaires to the researcher.

Eight of the ten principals returned the questionnaires in a timely manner. Follow-up telephone calls were made to the two principals who did not return the completed questionnaires by the requested date. One questionnaire was received following the telephone reminder; the other questionnaire was received after a second-request letter followed the telephone call.

Structured focus group interviews to probe for further information were conducted with four separate groups of administrative interns after the questionnaires had been reviewed by the researcher. Interns were offered four different time periods over two days to facilitate maximum participation in the interviews. Each interview group consisted of four or five interns. A total of 18 administrative interns participated in the focus group interviews during the two day period. Individuals who taught at the same school were not placed in the same interview group. The rationale for this decision was to limit any intimidation or fear that might have been created by having a colleague from the same school present to hear the answers given by each intern. All interviews were conducted in a conference room at the Dallas location where the interns regularly attended the UNT classes.

Questions for the focus group interviews were developed from a review of related literature, preparation of the administrative intern questionnaire, conversations with the researcher’s major professor and a group of research interns, and interns’ responses to
the questionnaire. Interview topics included involvement by the interns in campus-based decision making, relationships with mentor principals, interns’ perceptions about themselves as school leaders, interns’ perceptions of educational administration, and interns’ feelings about the program. Intern participants were asked to respond individually to each question by writing their response on post-it note paper. All the responses were placed on a chart under the appropriate question; then, participants were asked to discuss their responses with the group. The interviewer asked probing questions to elicit deeper responses and facilitate open discussion of each topic. Interview sessions were tape recorded, with the permission of the participants, and the recordings were transcribed by the researcher at a later date. The findings from these interviews will be discussed in Chapter 4.

The twelve interns who indicated on their questionnaire that they had not completed all the necessary requirements of the UNT Toulouse School of Graduate Studies and UNT educational administration program were targeted for further inquiry to probe for reasons why the requirements had not been met. A personal, casual conversation with one of the interns at his school enlightened the researcher to the fact that all the interns knew who had completed the requirements and who had not; therefore, indicating that the information was not confidential. The researcher was informed that one of the UNT professors who had taught the interns a class in the fall semester had instructed the nine interns who had not met all the requirements on procedures for filing an appeal to the UNT Toulouse School of Graduate Studies. Telephone calls were made to several of the other interns who had not completed all the requirements to verify their status in the program. Each of the interns reported they
had been instructed to file an appeal to the graduate school. Some interns reported that their appeals had been approved, and they were cleared for further participation in the program. Others reported that they were still waiting for a response from the appeals committee at UNT.

A follow-up telephone call to the educational administration program in the College of Education at UNT confirmed what the interns had reported to the researcher. Twenty-four of the twenty-six interns had been fully approved, with five interns being granted an appeal, by both the graduate school and the educational administration program. Two of the interns were waiting for the appeal process to be complete. Two of the interns who reported that they had not taken the GRE were not required to take the entrance exam, as they both already hold advanced degrees.

Individual, private interviews were conducted with eight of the ten principals who were acting as mentors to the administrative interns at their schools. The interviews were conducted at the mentor principals’ schools. Interview questions for the principals evolved from the responses to the mentor principal questionnaire and covered the principals’ perception of and attitudes toward the teachers from his/her school who are participating in the UNT/Dallas Public Schools Leadership Development program. These questions were less structured than the ones asked of the interns during their focus group interviews. Seven of the eight interviews were tape recorded, with the permission of the participating principal. One principal declined to have the interview recorded. The two principals who were not interviewed did not respond to several telephone calls from the researcher.
A personal interview with one member of the DISD central office staff was conducted to obtain historical information about the inception of the UNT/DISD partnership that evolved into the UNT/Dallas Public Schools Leadership Development Program. Questions of particular interest to the research project included how the schools that are participants in the program were selected and how the administrative interns from each school were selected. One UNT faculty member who was involved in the development and implementation of the program was interviewed to provide background information and historical data.

Document analysis was also used to provide historical background information about the UNT/Dallas Public Schools Leadership Development Program. All written documents pertaining to the program, from its early planning stages to the current date, were reviewed to obtain historical information. These documents are housed at the University of North Texas College of Education’s educational administration program offices and were made available to the researcher. Information about the admission requirements for the UNT Toulouse School of Graduate Studies and the UNT Department of Educational Administration was acquired from the UNT web site. Acceptable scores on the GRE (Graduate Record Examination) for admission to the educational administration program at the University of North Texas were acquired through a telephone call to the UNT Toulouse School of Graduate Studies.

Analysis of Data

Data from the varying collection methods were triangulated and analyzed according to the qualitative data analysis prescribed by Miles and Huberman (1984, 1994). The researcher was aware of the issue of validity throughout the data collection
and data analysis phases of this study. In keeping with the suggestions of Miles and
Huberman for ways to increase confidence in the findings of a study, the researcher
“checked for representativeness” (p. 263), “checked for researcher effects” (p. 265),
used “triangulation” (p. 266), and “weighted evidence” (p. 267).

To check the “representativeness” of the group of interns, the researcher looked
for the “outliers” (p. 264), those who did not participate in the interview sessions.
Interns who were not able to participate in any of the four scheduled interview sessions
were contacted by telephone and asked if they would be willing to participate in an
interview session that would better meet their time requirements. None of the eight
interns who did not participate in a focus group interview session were willing to
schedule another time. They all claimed “family issues” as their reason for not
participating. However, the researcher was suspicious about three of the interns who
did not participate in an interview session, as all three interns were teachers at the
same school. This fact was mentioned to the principal of the school during the principal
interview, and the principal corroborated the family time issues of the teachers, so they
were not asked again to participate in an interview session.

Another outlier issue arose during the mentor/principal interviews. The two
principals who did not return telephone calls to schedule an interview were at schools
where interns had reported having problems with their principal not showing interest in
their participation in the UNT/Dallas Public Schools Leadership Development Program.
For that reason, extra efforts were made by the researcher to schedule an interview with
the two principals. All efforts failed.
To avoid biases that might stem from researcher effects on the site, the researcher spent several class periods with the administrative interns prior to the day the interns were asked to complete the questionnaire. The researcher was introduced to the cohort of interns early in the fall semester, at which time the interns were told about the researcher’s study of the UNT/Dallas Public Schools Leadership Development Program. The researcher also administered an SREB questionnaire to the interns, which was in no way related to the researcher’s study. This helped gain the confidence and trust of the interns.

The interns were told by their professors and the researcher that they would be asked to complete a questionnaire and participate in a focus group interview session later in the spring semester. The researcher provided meals, cold drinks, and parking money for all interns during their interview sessions. This helped create a more congenial, social atmosphere for the interviews and removed the intimidation factor for the interns. For the convenience of the mentor/principals, all principal interviews were conducted at their respective schools. The principals were given pastries and fruit as a conciliatory gesture to reduce the “threat quotient” (Miles and Huberman, 1994, p. 266). Principals were assured by the researcher that they were not “being checked-up on” for a report back to their superiors in the Dallas school district.

The area where the researcher weighted evidence most effectively was in regards to the twelve interns who reported that they did not initially meet the admissions requirements of the graduate school and/or the educational administration program. According to Miles and Huberman (1994), stronger data is data that may be collected later, or after repeated contact, data that is seen or reported firsthand, data given to a
trusted field worker, data that is collected in an informal setting, and data that is collected when the researcher is alone with the respondent. All of these conditions applied to the information that was garnered from one of the interns during an informal, friendly conversation between the researcher and the intern in the school office while the researcher was waiting to see the mentor/principal for an interview. That one conversation provided valuable information to the researcher in regards to all nine of the interns who had not met the necessary admissions requirements. The intern even provided the researcher with cellular telephone numbers for some of the other interns that needed to be contacted in regards to the admissions standards. The intern also advised the researcher to call the administrative assistant in the educational administration program at UNT to obtain further information about the status of the twelve interns. Information provided by the administrative assistant provided stronger data than were provided by some of the interns themselves.

Answers to the yes/no questions, the Likert-type scale questions, and the factual questions on both the administrative intern questionnaires and the mentor principal questionnaires were tabulated in a table format on an Excel spreadsheet, keeping the sections of the questionnaires separate. Responses to all questions were cross-tabulated with the demographic and historical information to determine and report response differences by race, gender, age, teaching experience, etc. The results from each questionnaire were reported as frequency distributions in a table. Open-ended questions from both questionnaires were recorded in a series of matrices to aid the researcher in identifying patterns and similarities that emerged. A separate matrix was created for each section of the questionnaire, which was closely aligned with the
research questions. The results from the yes/no and factual questions were compared
to the results from the open-ended questions to check for congruity of responses.

Data from all interview questions were coded, counted, and analyzed for emerging themes. Data were double-coded to ensure internal consistency and raise reliability. Tape recordings from the interview sessions were transcribed by the researcher and recorded in a computer word document. Responses to open-ended questionnaire items were recorded in word documents. The computer software program, QSR NUD*IST revision 6 (QSR International Pty Ltd.), was utilized in conjunction with the word documents to help manage and synthesize all the data.

After all word documents were loaded into the NUD*IST computer program, the researcher generated initial, broad-term codes based on the research questions in this study. After initial coding grouped similar themes, each set of grouped data were recoded to further define more specific themes and relationships. The software program helped the researcher identify emerging themes and provided frequencies of responses. The computer program provided clarity of understanding of the data for the researcher. As themes emerged from the written data, they were compared to the themes that emerged from the questionnaires. Consolidated findings from all data sources are reported in a narrative format in Chapter 4, with charts and matrices also used to aid in the understanding of the findings. Personal quotes from the interviewees were included to add richness and meaning to the reported findings.
CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS

This study examined the UNT/Dallas Public Schools Leadership Development Program to determine if the program was progressing toward its stated goals after the first year of the two-year program. This new principal preparation program, which was a partnership between the University of North Texas and the Dallas Independent School District, was in response to the call from the Southern Regional Education Board for the need for new methods to train future school leaders. The purpose of this study was to evaluate the UNT/Dallas Public Schools Leadership Development Program after its first year of operation to discover the strengths and weaknesses of the program in an effort to determine if the program was doing what it was designed to do.

This chapter includes the study’s findings and is presented in three parts. The first part of the chapter contains a brief review of the evaluation study, its purposes, and its methodology. The second part of the chapter contains information about responses obtained from the groups surveyed and interviewed, and about data gathered from documents about the program. The third part of the chapter contains a review of the study’s research questions and a presentation of findings related to each question.

Review of the Evaluation Study, Its Purposes, and Its Methodology

The UNT/Dallas Public Schools Leadership Development Program was created as a partnership between the University of North Texas and the Dallas Independent School District to train new school leaders who would purportedly make a difference in improving schools and student achievement. The two-year “grow-your-own” principal preparation program began in the fall of 2002 with a cohort of 26 administrative interns
from ten elementary, middle, and high schools in DISD. Acceptance into the leadership preparation program required that DISD teachers be recommended by their building principals, meet all admissions standards for the UNT Toulouse School of Graduate Studies and educational administration program in the UNT College of Education, and complete an interview process conducted by UNT faculty and DISD principals.

This study focused on the process by which the administrative interns were selected for participation in the program, how participation in this program had changed the involvement of the interns in campus-based decision-making processes at their respective schools, how participation in this program had affected the perceptions of the interns about themselves and educational administration, and how mentor principals’ perceptions had changed toward their administrative interns as a result of their participation in the program. Information needed to investigate these research questions was gathered through two questionnaires, a series of interviews, and examination of documents pertaining to the development of the program.

Information about Responses

Two separate questionnaires were created for this study – one for the administrative interns and a different one for the mentor principals. As reported in Chapter 3, the researcher garnered a 100% return rate on the questionnaires, as all 26 administrative interns completed the questionnaire during one of their regularly scheduled UNT classes. All ten mentor principals also completed and mailed back the questionnaire that was hand-delivered to their schools.

Focus group interview sessions for the administrative interns were scheduled at four different times over a two-day period to offer convenient options for the interns to
participate. Two interview sessions were scheduled immediately prior to two of the regularly scheduled UNT classes and two were scheduled immediately following the two classes. During the class period where the administrative interns completed the questionnaire, they were asked to sign-up for an interview session that was convenient to their schedule. The only stipulation the researcher placed on the time of participation in an interview session was that interns from the same school were not permitted to attend the same interview session. This stipulation was based on the rationale that interns might be intimidated by the presence of one of their colleagues and not be free to express their true thoughts and opinions on the questions being asked. This did create a logistics problem for a few of the interns who regularly carpooled to their UNT classes at the downtown Dallas location. However, the researcher's rationale for not having interns from the same school participate in the same interview session outweighed the importance of having all 26 interns participate in an interview session.

Eighteen of the twenty-six interns (69%) signed up to participate in one of the four interview sessions. All seven males in the program and eleven females participated in an interview. Each session lasted approximately one to one and a half hours, depending on the amount of discussion generated among the interns. Telephone calls were placed to the eight interns who did not sign up for an interview session, and they were offered an additional session that might be more convenient for their schedule. None of the eight interns was able to schedule a different time for an interview session.

Eight of the ten mentor principals (80%) were interviewed at their respective schools for this study. Interview times were scheduled, and, in many cases, re-scheduled, by telephone calls to the principals. Interview sessions with each principal
lasted 20 minutes or less. The two principals who were not interviewed for this study did not return several telephone messages that were left both with secretaries and on voice-mail.

One DISD official who was involved in the development of the UNT/Dallas Public Schools Leadership Development Program was interviewed at his office about the history of the program, the selection process of schools and interns, and DISD’s need for qualified principal candidates. One UNT faculty member, who was also instrumental in the development of this program, was interviewed in his office at the UNT Dallas location. Questions to this interviewee addressed the history of the program, the partnership with DISD, and whether this program was truly a program that would develop a new breed of school leaders. Each of those two interviews lasted approximately one hour.

Telephone interviews were conducted with three of the administrative interns who had not met the GRE admissions requirements for the UNT Toulouse School of Graduate Studies. The information reported by these three interns led the researcher to a telephone interview with the administrative assistant in the educational administration program in the UNT College of Education to verify the information received from the interns. The interview with the administrative assistant provided more accurate information on the admissions status of all 26 interns than was garnered from the questions that addressed that issue on the administrative intern questionnaire. This situation will be addressed later in the third part of this chapter.

All documents pertaining to the UNT/Dallas Public Schools Leadership Development Program from its inception were made available to the researcher. The
documents were reviewed to develop an understanding of the formation and purpose of the program.

Examination of Findings

Data from the administrative intern questionnaires and the mentor principal questionnaires were entered and tabulated in an Excel spreadsheet. Responses to open-ended questions from the questionnaires were recorded in word documents. Responses to the interview questions were tape recorded, then transcribed into word documents. The transcribed interview word documents and the responses to the questionnaire open-ended questions were entered into the qualitative data analysis software program, QSR NUD*IST revision 6 (QSR International Pty Ltd.). The information was then coded and recoded to help synthesize and analyze the data. The information received from the NUD*IST program was compared with the results in the Excel spreadsheets to verify themes that had emerged from the two sets of data.

In this section, findings were presented for each of the study’s five research questions:

1. What was the process by which the administrative interns were selected?

2. Has participation in the UNT/Dallas Public Schools Leadership Development Program changed the involvement of the administrative interns in campus-based decision-making? If so, how?

3. How has participation in the UNT/Dallas Public Schools Leadership Development Program changed the perception of the mentor principals toward the administrative interns?
4. How has participation in the UNT/Dallas Public Schools Leadership Development Program changed the ways the administrative interns perceive themselves?

5. How has participation in the UNT/Dallas Public Schools Leadership Development Program changed the ways the administrative interns perceive educational administration?

Research Question 1

Data were gathered from the administrative interns, the mentor principals, a UNT faculty member, a DISD official, and program documents as to the selection process that was used to determine which DISD schools and teachers would be participating in the first cohort in the UNT/Dallas Public Schools Leadership Development Program. UNT faculty members and DISD officials met and signed a memorandum of agreement that created the UNT/Dallas Public Schools Leadership Development Program in February 2002. The agreement stated the University of North Texas College of Education and Dallas ISD would work together to select program participants who:

- demonstrated the ability to teach so that all children achieve at high levels;
- demonstrated a commitment to working with others to improve their schools;
- demonstrated leadership potential; and
- met all UNT admissions requirements, both to the Toulouse School of Graduate Studies and the educational administration program in the UNT College of Education.

Dallas ISD was divided into eight areas across the district, with each area being headed by an area superintendent. Each of the eight area superintendents was asked
by DISD’s Special Assistant to the Superintendent, Higher Education Linkages, to recommend principals in his or her area who might be good mentors and willing to participate in the program. Not all the area superintendents responded to the request for a submission of principals’ names for the program, so the program was also explained to DISD principals at a principal’s meeting. The principals were asked to determine the level of interest in such a program at their respective schools. Willingness and interest to participate in the UNT/DISD program grew among principals as knowledge of the program spread by word-of-mouth and after the offer of a $1,500 stipend for principals who participated in the program. No effort was made by DISD to target schools that were known to need help to improve their campuses. The initial focus for the first cohort was simply on the interest shown by teachers and principals for participation in the program.

Many principals in Dallas ISD responded they had teachers at their campuses who were interested in a principal preparation program. Application forms for admission to the program were given to the principals, who were instructed to give the forms to teachers they thought would make good school administrators. Based on research that stated one of the issues in administrator preparation programs was the self-select aspect, DISD wanted to be sure they got people in the program that were recommended by their principal. Some principals followed the instruction to give applications only to those teachers they would recommend for the program; others made the program available to all teachers in their school. DISD had more interest in participation in this program by their teachers than they could handle, as it had been
agreed between UNT and DISD that no more than 30 teachers could participate in the first cohort.

After the overwhelming response by teachers who were interested in getting in the program, DISD officials chose 10 campuses for participation. The ten campuses chosen each had multiple applicants, and this fit one criteria of the program that stated the cohort would be made up of school-based teams of two to three people that would allow interns to work together on site-based projects to help improve their schools.

Principals at the ten campuses that were chosen for participation in the program were told they could nominate up to three people from their school out of all the teachers who had applied at that particular school. Nine of the ten principals complied with the request to nominate only three teachers from their school. One of the principals submitted a list of seven teachers for consideration and told the program sponsors to choose the participants from her school. This did create a problem in the selection process and caused some hurt feelings among teachers at the school.

The list of applicants was narrowed down by the recommendations of the 10 principals. A UNT faculty member and two mentor principals interviewed every applicant, using interview questions based on SREB’s “Critical Success Factors” for school principals. Following the interviews, 27 interns were chosen for participation in the first cohort of the UNT/Dallas Public Schools Leadership Development Program that began in the fall of 2002. One intern dropped out of the program early in the first fall semester due to personal reasons. The other 26 interns were still participating in the program, with plans to complete the program in the summer of 2004.
All but one of the interns reported they had been asked by their principal if they would consider participating in the UNT/Dallas Public Schools Leadership Development Program. The one intern who was not asked by her principal to participate in the program reported she had heard about the program from a friend, so she inquired as to how she might be included in the program. Because she was the only teacher at her school that expressed an interest in the program and was currently looking for a principal preparation program to enter, DISD transferred her to another campus that had been chosen as one of the 10 campuses for participation in the program.

The administrative interns were asked on the questionnaire to state the reasons their principals gave for recommending them for participation in the program. Mentor principals were also asked during their interviews what qualities they looked for in teachers they recommended for the program. Those two sets of data were compared and the responses proved to be compatible with one another. The interns reported overall leadership, leadership potential, and strong instructional leadership were the reasons most often given by their principals for selecting the interns to participate in the UNT/DISD program. The mentor principals also listed overall leadership and strong instructional leadership as primary reasons for selecting the candidates they did for participation in the program. Five principals reported they chose candidates based on the principals' knowledge of which teachers on their campuses had previously expressed an interest in pursuing educational administration. Table 5 lists all the reasons given by the interns and the mentor principals for selection into the UNT/Dallas Public Schools Leadership Development Program. The interns and mentor principals
were free to list more than one reason each; therefore, the number of responses does not total 26 for the interns and 10 for the mentor principals.

Table 5

| Reasons Reported by Interns and Mentors for Selecting Interns to Enter the Program |
|---|---|
| Reasons Reported by Interns | Reasons Reported by Mentor Principals |
| (N=26) | n | (N=10) | n |
| Leadership | 10 | Leadership | 4 |
| Potential to be a good leader | 8 | Strong instructional leader | 3 |
| Strong instructional leader | 6 | Strong teacher | 3 |
| Strong teacher | 5 | Good transfer skills | 1 |
| Ability to relate to staff members | 3 | Collaborative approach to getting along with faculty | 2 |
| Organization skills | 2 | Decision making skills | 2 |
| Teacher was already enrolled in a principal preparation program | 2 | Teachers had expressed interest in leadership programs | 5 |
| Committed to education | 1 | Dedication/interest in education | 1 |
| No reason given–just told teacher about the program | 1 | How they got along with children | 1 |

Note: Interns and mentor principals were allowed to give more than one reason each; therefore, N does not equal 26 for the interns or 10 for the mentor principals.
Two of ten principals reported on their questionnaire they chose their teachers for program participation only from the pool of teacher-leaders on their campus. Teacher-leaders were those teachers who currently held a leadership position at their school. The other eight principals reported they looked at their entire faculty to determine which teachers they thought would be best suited for participation in a leadership preparation program. All eight principals interviewed reported knowing which teachers had expressed interest in pursuing educational administration made the selection process an easy task for them. The principals also reported they knew immediately which teachers they would recommend for participation in the program, based on the reasons given in Table 5.

Table 6
Self-selected Versus Principal-tapped Participation in UNT/Dallas Public Schools Leadership Development Program (N=18)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Selection Method</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Previously enrolled in principal preparation program</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Currently looking for a program in which to enroll in fall 2002</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Previously thought about becoming a school administrator; needed</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>encouragement from supervising principal to enter program</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never considered administration prior to being tapped by principal</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Table 6 displayed responses from 17 of the 18 interns interviewed, as one intern chose not to respond to the question. Percentages were calculated on the basis of the
18 interns who were interviewed, not the total 26 interns in the cohort.

As outlined in Table 6 above, four administrative interns reported they were already enrolled in principal preparation programs, or had taken the GRE with the intent to enroll in the fall 2002 semester, when they learned about the new UNT/DISD program. Their principals recommended they simply move into the new program since they had already begun to pursue an educational administration degree. Four other interns reported they were currently looking for a principal preparation program in which to enroll when they heard about the new UNT/DISD program. The UNT program provided them easier access to a program, since it was sanctioned by DISD and they were recommended by their principals. Only two of the eighteen interns interviewed reported they had never considered entering a principal preparation program before their principal approached them and recommended they enter the UNT/DISD program. One intern stated, “I planned to teach abroad and never thought I wanted to deal with the stress.”

Seven interns reported they had previously thought about becoming a school principal, but the timing and their personal circumstances had never allowed them to pursue that goal (see Table 6). The structure and the components of the UNT/Dallas Public Schools Leadership Development Program aided these interns in being able to enroll in the program. DISD paid half the university tuition for each intern and that helped many interns be able to afford participation in the program. When their principal approached them with the suggestion that they enter the UNT/DISD program, they felt the timing and the circumstances were right for them to enroll. Table 7 reported the
information about self-selected versus principal-tapped participation according to
gender and ethnicity of interns.

Table 7

Self-selected Versus Principal-tapped Participation in UNT/DISD Program According to
Gender and Ethnicity of Interns (N=18)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Selection Method</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Previously enrolled in program</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Looking for a program to enter</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Had thought about administration</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never considered administration</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Table 7 displayed responses from 17 of the 18 interns interviewed, as one intern
chose not to respond to the question.

The DISD Special Assistant to the Superintendent, Higher Education Linkages,
reported the goal for DISD in this program was to increase the pool of highly qualified
people for administrative positions within the school district. Meeting all the admissions
standards for the UNT Toulouse School of Graduate Studies and the educational administration program in the UNT College of Education was an important component of the selection process to assure that the interns chosen for the program were quality candidates. Questionnaires completed by the administrative interns revealed 9 of the 26 interns had not met the required score on the GRE for admission to the graduate school. Further inquiry revealed two of those nine interns were not required to take the GRE, as they already hold advanced degrees, so that left seven interns who did not have an acceptable GRE score. Twelve interns reported they had one or more admission requirements that had not been met. The requirements that had not been met included an acceptable GRE score, payment of fees, submission of résumés, essays, application forms, and supervisor recommendation forms (see Table 8). Table 9 reported the same information according to gender and ethnicity of interns.

Table 8
UNT Graduate School and College of Education Educational Administration Program Admissions Standards Not Met by Administrative Interns (N=26)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Admissions Standards Not Met</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Acceptable GRE Score</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Payment of Graduate School Application Fee</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>11.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational Administration Program Application Form</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>11.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Essay submitted to Educational Administration Program</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Supervisor Letter of Recommendation to Educational Administration Program

<p>| | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Résumé submitted to</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational Administration Program</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Twelve interns reported they had one or more admission requirements that had not been met. \( n \) equaled the number of interns who had not met each requirement listed. Percentages were calculated on the total \( N=26 \).

Table 9

UNT Admissions Standards Not Met According to Gender and Ethnicity of Interns

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Admissions Standards</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acceptable GRE Score</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Payment of Fees</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational Administration</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Program Application Form</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Essay</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recommendation Letter</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A personal, informal conversation with one of the seven interns at his school enlightened the researcher to the fact that all seven interns who had not made an acceptable GRE score had been instructed on how to complete an appeal process to the graduate school by one of the UNT professors who had taught them a class in the first fall semester. Follow-up telephone interviews to verify this information were conducted with three of the interns who reported they had not made an acceptable GRE score. After the third interviewee reported the same information about the appeal process, along with a recommendation that the researcher call the administrative assistant in the educational administration program at UNT for verification, the researcher conducted a telephone interview with the administrative assistant in the educational administration program in the UNT College of Education.

The interview with the administrative assistant verified the seven interns had filed an appeal with the graduate school. Names of the interns who had filed an appeal were not divulged by the administrative assistant to the researcher; only the information that seven individuals had filed an appeal was given to the researcher. Five of the interns’ appeals had been approved, and two were still waiting for the results of the appeal process at the time of data collection for this study.

The administrative assistant also clarified the status of the other admission requirements in which the interns had reported deficiencies. After a review of all 26 interns’ admissions files by the administrative assistant, it was reported that all
deficiencies had been removed and 24 of the 26 interns were fully admitted to the UNT Toulouse School of Graduate Studies and the educational administration program in the UNT College of Education, thus making them eligible for continued participation in the UNT/Dallas Public Schools Leadership Development Program. The administrative assistant explained that since it had been almost one year between the time the interns had begun the admissions process and the time they completed the questionnaire for this study, it could have been possible that the interns simply forgot all the procedures they had completed during the admissions process. That explanation could account for the difference in the number of deficiencies reported by the interns and the actual admissions status of the interns.

The final area that was studied in regards to the selection process was whether DISD would use the UNT/Dallas Public Schools Leadership Development Program as an opportunity to increase the number of minority candidates, especially Hispanic, in their pool of people qualified to be school administrators. As stated in the review of the literature in Chapter 2, the inclusion of minority candidates and women in principal preparation programs was an ongoing concern. The interview with the UNT faculty member revealed he did have the concept that DISD would use this opportunity to tap a lot of Hispanic teachers into the program, since DISD was now a predominately Hispanic school district and their number of Hispanic administrators was very small (see Tables 2 and 3 in Chapter 3). This did not happen, but the UNT professor stated he believed DISD tapped the people they felt needed to be in the program.

The DISD official who was interviewed also stated he had hoped this program would bring a lot of Hispanic candidates into the pool. He encouraged the principals to
include Hispanic teachers in their recommendations, as there were plenty of African-American applicants for the program. No extra points or any special rules were applied to try and get more Hispanic teachers in the UNT/DISD program, but every effort was made to not overlook any Hispanic applicants who might have been marginal due to a low GRE score or grade point average. The one teacher who was transferred to a new campus so she could participate in the program was a Hispanic female, but she was also one of the interns who reported she was currently looking for a leadership preparation program in which to enroll. The DISD official stated the Dallas school system consciously looks for Hispanic candidates to place in administrative programs but does not have a lot of success in identifying and attracting very many Hispanic applicants. He further stated this was an area of on-going concern for the district and one in which district officials realized they needed to make continued, concentrated efforts to improve.

As displayed in Table 1 in Chapter 3, there were four Hispanic/Mexican females and no Hispanic/Mexican males in the UNT/Dallas Public Schools Leadership Development Program. True to the statement made by the DISD official that there were plenty of African-American applicants for the program, there were five males and seven females in the program, which comprised 46% of the cohort. In keeping with the call for more women, as well as minorities, in the literature reviews of principal preparation programs, this program had 19 females and only 7 males. According to all program sponsors who were interviewed for this study, there was no design or plan to obtain this specific make-up of the cohort. These were the candidates recommended by their principals, then selected by program sponsors following the interview process.
Research Question 2

One of the ways in which SREB envisioned reformed leadership preparation programs making a difference in school improvements was through program participants' involvement in campus-based decision-making processes at their respective schools. That vision was the catalyst for research question two that asked how participation in the UNT/Dallas Public Schools Leadership Development Program had changed the involvement of the administrative interns in campus-based decision-making, if it had indeed changed their involvement at all. Five yes/no questions (see Table 10) and two open-ended questions (see Table 11 and Table 18) on the administrative intern questionnaire were directed toward program participants’ involvement in campus-based decision-making processes and what kind of impact the interns believed that involvement would have on improvements at their campuses. Three interview questions addressed the same issues for the purpose of probing for further understanding and ascertaining any changes in the interns’ involvement in campus-based decision-making as a result of their participation in the UNT/DISD program.

Table 10
Administrative Intern Questionnaire Items Related to Interns’ Involvement with Campus-Based Decision-Making Processes (N=26)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questionnaire Item</th>
<th>“Yes” Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Were you involved in campus-based decision-making processes prior to participation in this program?</td>
<td>65%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Was school faculty receptive to new ideas and different leadership principles transferred from UNT classes to workplace? 85%

Was school leadership receptive to new ideas and different leadership principles transferred from UNT classes to workplace? 96%

Have UNT-assigned field-based projects been directly related to real-world problems or projects at your school? 96%

Have you received cooperation and encouragement from teachers and administrators when you initiated field-based projects or tried to incorporate something new 96%

Sixty-five percent of the interns reported they were involved in some types of campus-based decision-making processes prior to participation in the UNT/DISD program. An open-ended question on the questionnaire asked the interns to list any decision-making processes in which they were involved prior to participation in this program. Table 11 displayed the responses that were reported by the interns as involvement in campus-based decision-making processes. However, many of the activities in which the interns reported participating prior to involvement in the principal preparation program could more accurately be categorized as school activities or school duties than as campus-based decision-making processes. The differentiation between school activities/duties and campus-based decision-making processes reported in Table 11 was made by the researcher.
The interns were asked during their interview sessions if they had been more involved in campus-based decision-making processes during the school year in which they were in the UNT/DISD program than they had been in the past, and, if they were more involved, what types of involvement were included. As indicated in Table 12, only four interns reported actually being involved in any real decision-making processes in
which they were not involved prior to participation in this program. Two of those four interns were from the same school, so that indicated interns from only three of the ten schools were actually involved in more campus-based decision-making processes.

Table 12
Involvement in Campus-based Decision-making Processes during Year of Participation in UNT/DISD Program as Reported by Administrative Interns (N=18)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of Involvement</th>
<th>n</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No change</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assigned more duties/activities</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More involvement in campus-based decision-making processes</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The four interns who stated they had been involved in more decision-making processes as a result of participation in the UNT/DISD program reported involvement in several different areas of school administration. Interns from three schools reported they had a bigger role in the budget process than they had ever had before. Two teams of interns prepared their school’s budget, had it reviewed by the principal, then, presented the budget to the faculty. The third team of interns was asked for input during the budget preparation process. It should be noted that this involvement was a result of an assignment from one of the UNT classes, and these three teams of interns were allowed greater input than were the other cohort members at their respective schools. Interns from the other seven schools reported discussing the school budget with their mentor principals but had limited involvement in its preparation.
One of the four interns who reported more involvement stated she had helped with interviewing prospective teachers and making other staffing decisions for her school. She reported that was a change from the principal making direct decisions by herself. Two of the four interns reported they had been allowed to sit in on some meetings where decisions were made. One of those interns reported having some input in the meetings and the other intern reported having no input. The other fourteen interns reported they had been assigned more duties but were not involved in any real decision making at their schools.

All interns who were not involved in decision making at their schools expressed concern that the assignment of more duties was not really involvement in making decisions that would have an impact on school improvements. The interns who were fortunate enough to have mentor principals who allowed them to be involved in decision-making processes were empathetic toward their cohort colleagues who were not being allowed to get involved in any campus-based decision-making processes at their schools.

Though the majority of interns were not involved in more campus-based decision-making processes during the first year of participation in the UNT/Dallas Public Schools Leadership Development Program, they did report acceptance and cooperation from their teaching peers and school administrators when the interns initiated a field-based project that stemmed from a UNT class assignment (see Table 10). The interns reported greater acceptance of new ideas and leadership principles from school administrators (96%) than from their teaching peers (85%). Eight interns reported teachers on their campuses were a little intimidated, nervous, or skeptical about the
purpose of the projects and what the interns were “going to do with the information” they
gathered for the projects. Those eight interns stated they slowly gained the trust of their
teaching colleagues, so the colleagues eventually changed their attitudes toward the
interns and became supportive of their efforts to complete any UNT class projects. One
intern reported, “Now that the faculty sees how hard we work, they don’t seem to resent
our positions anymore. People come up and say, ‘I’m glad it’s you and not me.’”
Another intern who had a difficult time with her teaching colleagues at her school early
in the program reported, “Now I actually have teachers that are excited I’m going to be
on their team next year.”

Three Likert-type scale questions on the mentor principal questionnaire also
addressed the extent of the interns’ participation in campus-based decision-making
processes. The results of those questions were displayed in Table 13. Table 14
reported the same data but was broken down by school level. One interview question
gave the mentor principals an opportunity to expound on the level and nature of intern
involvement in campus-based decision-making processes at their schools. The
responses to the survey questions were compared to the responses from the interviews
to check for correlation and emergence of themes.

The results of the mentor principal questionnaire items reported in Table 13
concurred with the interns’ reporting that the majority of interns had been assigned more
duties and responsibilities as a result of their participation in the UNT/Dallas Public
Schools Leadership Development Program. However, most principals believed they
were including their interns in more campus-based decision-making processes than was
reported by the interns (see Table 12).
Table 13
Mentor Principal Questionnaire Items That Addressed Interns’ Involvement in Campus-based Decision-making Processes (N=10)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>None</th>
<th>Little</th>
<th>Some</th>
<th>A Lot</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To what extent were interns included</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in decision-making processes during year of participation in UNT program?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To what extent were interns assigned</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>different responsibilities as result of participation in UNT/DISD program?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To what extent do interns take part in</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>administrative meetings?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Four mentor principals reported using the interns as additional assistant principals at their schools and welcomed the added help provided by the interns. One mentor principal was the only administrator on his campus, so he was especially grateful for the interns’ help. He stated, “When I’m not in the building, they’re in charge. It’s nice to have them.” Though eight principals stated they included the interns in as many administrative processes as possible, this inclusion was usually in the form of the interns simply being present and witnessing the actions and conversations of the school administrators.
Table 14

Interns’ Involvement in Campus-based Decision-making Processes as Reported by Mentor Principals and Broken Down by School Level

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Level</th>
<th>Extent included in campus-based decision-making</th>
<th>Extent included in administrative meetings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Little</td>
<td>Some</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elementary</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: There were three elementary schools, four middle schools, and three high schools in the UNT/Dallas Public Schools Leadership Development Program.

As displayed in Table 15, interns and mentor principals from two of the three elementary schools reported the highest level of intern involvement in campus-based decision-making. The two principals reported they involved their interns in almost everything at their schools, and those reports concurred with the reports from the interns at those two schools. Both principals and interns reported the interns were involved in preparing the school budget, teacher selection, hiring and retention, evaluation of school programs, staffing needs, discipline conferences with parents, academic problems, support in the “No Child Left Behind” initiative, coordination of instructional strategies, and acting as liaisons between administration and faculty.
Table 15
Level of Intern Involvement in Campus-based Decision-making as Reported by Interns and Mentor Principals and Level of Intern Satisfaction with Amount of Involvement at the Three Elementary Schools

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Elementary School</th>
<th>Level of Involvement</th>
<th>Level of Intern Satisfaction with Amount of Involvement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Interns</td>
<td>Principals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elementary School 1</td>
<td>a lot</td>
<td>a lot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elementary School 2</td>
<td>a lot</td>
<td>some</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elementary School 3</td>
<td>some</td>
<td>a lot</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Though interns from the third elementary school were not as involved in campus-based decision-making processes as the interns from the other two elementary schools, the interns at the third school reported great satisfaction with their internship experience on their campus. The interns reported spending quality time with their mentor principal and receiving her full support in all areas of the UNT/DISD program. The interns believed they were as involved in decision-making processes as they had the time to be involved, as the interns reported previous involvement in many school activities and leadership roles on their campus. The mentor principal from the third campus concurred with her interns, as she reported she had not involved her interns in “more” because they were already so involved. She stated, “My leadership style is very, very
collaborative, so all I’m really doing differently is being more proactive about making
sure they understand the reasoning behind why I do things I do.”

As Table 16 showed, two of the four middle school mentor principals’ reports
about intern involvement in campus-based decision-making correlated with the reports
from interns from those two schools. The interns and mentor principal from one of those
two schools reported “little” involvement and the other school reported “some”
involvement. Data could not be compared for a third middle school, as none of the three
interns from that school participated in the focus group interview sessions.

Table 16
Level of Intern Involvement in Campus-based Decision-making as Reported by
Interns and Mentor Principals and Level of Intern Satisfaction with Amount of
Involvement at the Four Middle Schools

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Middle School</th>
<th>Level of Involvement Reported by Interns</th>
<th>Level of Intern Satisfaction with Amount of Involvement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Middle School 1</td>
<td>little</td>
<td>medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle School 2</td>
<td>some</td>
<td>high</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle School 3</td>
<td>No data</td>
<td>a lot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle School 4</td>
<td>little by one intern; a lot</td>
<td>medium for one intern; low for one intern</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
There was a discrepancy between what the interns reported and what the mentor principal reported for the fourth middle school. That was the school to which an intern had been moved at the beginning of the school year so she could participate in the UNT/DISD program. The mentor principal from that school reported her interns were included in “a lot” of campus-based decision-making processes; however, that did not correspond to the reports given by the two interns. The intern who had been moved reported a different level of involvement at her campus than did her intern teammate at the same school. The intern who was moved to the school felt alienated by her principal and was excluded from many of the projects in which her teammate participated. The intern who had not been moved reported she was assigned more duties but had not been involved in decision-making processes. The mentor principal at that school did not participate in an interview, so those reports were not verified with follow-up questions.

Table 17

Level of Intern Involvement in Campus-based Decision-making as Reported by Interns and Mentor Principals and Level of Intern Satisfaction with Amount of Involvement at the Three High Schools

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>High School</th>
<th>Level of Involvement Reported by Interns</th>
<th>Level of Involvement Reported by Principals</th>
<th>Level of Intern Satisfaction with Amount of Involvement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High School 1</td>
<td>none</td>
<td>a lot</td>
<td>low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High School 2</td>
<td>none</td>
<td>some</td>
<td>low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High School 3</td>
<td>some</td>
<td>some</td>
<td>high</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As displayed in Table 17, interns from two of the three high schools in the program reported the least amount of involvement in campus-based decision-making processes, though that assessment was not corroborated by the mentor principals at those schools. As stated earlier, interns from one of the high schools reported they never met with their principal; an assistant principal had assumed the role of “mentor” to the interns in the program. The principal from that school did not participate in an interview, so those reports were not verified.

The other mentor principal of those two schools reported different levels of involvement by the interns on his questionnaire, where he reported “some” involvement, than was reported during his interview. During the interview, the mentor principal stated he had not allowed the interns to participate in any decision-making processes at the school. The mentor principal stated during his interview, “I guess it takes a little more time for me to let go of some things that I could’ve possibly let go of. I probably brought my interns along a little slower than some of the other campuses.” The interns from his school agreed more with the principal’s interview statements that they had not been allowed any participation in administrative duties or meetings during their internship than they did with his response of “some” on the questionnaire.

The mentor principal at the third high school reported spending a lot of time with his interns and including them in many campus activities. He devised a plan for working with his interns where he divided their responsibilities into three categories so he would be sure to include all areas of administration. Some of the interns’ administrative responsibilities included: a campus needs assessment to ascertain how the school was going to allocate funds and personnel for the next school year; decisions on student
supervision; coordinating school programs; sitting in on level three student disciplinary hearings, with input in some of those meetings; working with off-campus supervision; and working with parent issues. As a result of that involvement, the interns from that school reported a high level of satisfaction with their internship experience.

As reported above, most of the 10 mentor principals were not opening administrative opportunities for their interns nor were they involving their interns in many decision-making processes. The interns were aware that one of the goals of the UNT/DISD program was to develop new school leaders who would have an impact on school improvements and greater student achievement. The interns expressed frustration that, due to the lack of involvement in administrative activities and meetings, they were not able to have an impact on improvements at their campuses.

Table 18 encompassed the responses to the second open-ended question on the administrative intern questionnaire that asked the interns what impact they believed their participation in the UNT/DISD program would have on improvements at their campus. Many of the responses reported in Table 18 reflected the possibility and hope the interns had for being able to have a positive impact on their campuses. Other responses revealed the interns’ disappointment in not being allowed to participate to the point of facilitating changes on their campuses.

One interview question provided the interns an opportunity to expound on the responses they had given on the questionnaire in regards to what impact they believed they could have on improvements at their campuses. The interns who responded on the questionnaire that they could share new ideas with school administrators and faculty
gave some examples of what the interns had done at their schools. As was reported in Table 11 earlier in this discussion, most of the examples given could have been classified as duties and activities rather than administrative-driven decision-making processes. The following comments were representative of what the interns reported as ways their new ideas were implemented: “Discipline may improve, as I have many new ideas;” “Our principal has asked us to research some professional development opportunities that we could use for our campus-based staff development;” “There are some programs that aren’t running as smoothly as we’d like…so we are trying to work out the kinks…mostly logistics;” and “I will bring fresh, new ideas on strategies in the classroom and better discipline management ideas.”

Table 18

Responses to What Impact the Interns’ Participation in the UNT/DISD Program Would Have on Improvements at Their Campuses (N=26)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Impact</th>
<th>n</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>New ideas could be shared with administrators and faculty</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No opportunities allowed; no impact</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive effect just from participation in program</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Encourage others to seek same opportunity</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Only 19 of the 26 interns responded with an answer to the question on the questionnaire.
Those interns who reported they would have a positive effect on their school by just participating in the UNT/DISD program did not iterate any concrete reasons during the interviews as to why they believed that would be true. The interns simply offered the following statements: “Our just being in this program will be beneficial to our campus;” “Any time you help the principal do their job in their capacity, it has to have a positive impact;” and “Any time my principal gives me something new to do, I think I become a better leader. I think that helps him.” One intern gave the following reason why she believed she would have an impact on her campus: “I believe I will have an impact by setting the example for teachers to have a more positive attitude.”

The interns who reported on their questionnaire that they were not being allowed opportunities to have an impact on their campuses expressed their frustrations during the interviews by stating: “She’d have to let us become more involved in the processes of the school before we’d have any improvement on our campus;” “I’m unsure what impact I’ll have, because we haven’t been considered for implementing any improvements, so I don’t know;” and “We’ll have very little impact because the principal likes to think of her own ideas.”

The interns’ interactions with the administrative staff and fellow teachers at their schools, though not classified as involvement in campus-based decision-making processes, produced serendipitous results at seven of the campuses. Seven mentor principals who were interviewed reported they had personally and professionally benefited from their interns’ participation in the UNT/DISD program. The principals enjoyed discussing education issues their interns brought to them from their UNT class assignments. One mentor principal stated, “I’ve probably benefited as much from their
class work as they have. We’d get together each week and go through their class assignments.” Another principal reported the same enthusiasm, stating, “They bring what they have learned in their course work and the dialog from the university, and we discuss everything. We’re all very excited!”

Two of the seven mentor principals expressed how involvement with their interns had enriched the principals’ attitudes toward their jobs. One principal stated,

They [interns] thrive on it [participation in the program]. That energizes me. I’ve enjoyed the teaching aspect of it [working with her interns]. It’s great when you light the fire under someone, and they get excited. That’s the kind of people we really want in this business.

The other principal stated,

The program forced me to reevaluate and be better able to articulate some of the things I did from my gut. When they ask me questions about things, it makes me think about these things and better articulate the reasons why to them and myself.

The administrative interns’ participation in the UNT/Dallas Public Schools Leadership Development Program was also reported to have had an effect on other faculty members at the interns’ schools. Five of the eight mentor principals interviewed reported they had seen positive effects on the other teachers at their schools. Those principals had seen respect and admiration for the interns grow among the interns’ colleagues. One mentor principal stated,

I see where other teachers are looking for higher ground now, not necessarily in administration, but just in their profession and career. Everyone has come up a
notch, in terms of professionalism and wanting to strive to do other things. I think it’s because of the three in the program.

Another mentor principal reported the effect of the interns on his staff by stating,

It [interns’ participation in UNT/DISD program] gives the faculty a sense of empowerment, almost, because they see someone coming from their own ranks, working through the problems and dealing with the problems, and they feel at ease with that. It’s not someone new coming into the building. It’s not an outsider, so it’s helped morale.

The three mentor principals who reported negative effects from the administrative interns’ participation in the UNT/DISD program all reported there was some jealousy among the interns’ colleagues. One principal stated,

Everybody on my staff takes a lot of leadership roles, so I think there is a little dissatisfaction in that the interns leave in the middle of the day to go to class. That creates an inconvenience for all other teachers at school. Some of the teachers say they have projects to do too, and they don’t get to leave school during the day to do them.

Another principal reported he had 10 or 15 other teachers come to him to find out how they could get in the program, especially because of the release time. He also reported he had teachers from other schools calling him, wanting to transfer to his school, because they knew his school was going to be in the UNT/DISD program.

Research Question 3

The review of the literature in Chapter 2 revealed the purported significance of the mentor principals to the success of the administrative interns in principal preparation.
programs. Research question three was based on those findings and asked how the mentor principals’ perceptions of the administrative interns had changed since the interns’ involvement in the UNT/Dallas Public Schools Leadership Development Program. Table 19 displayed the responses given to two questions on the mentor principal questionnaire that addressed the principals’ perceptions about their interns. Those questions were followed with an interview question that allowed the principals to elaborate on their responses given on the questionnaire.

As indicated in Table 19, the majority of principals viewed their interns differently as a result of their participation in the UNT/Dallas Public Schools Leadership Development Program. Six of the eight principals interviewed reported having a new respect for their interns. The principals stated the interns had surpassed their expectations for them, and they were impressed because the interns were able to handle their teaching duties and leadership roles at the schools, the UNT course work and projects, and the added school duties that came with being in the program.

Mentor principals also reported seeing more initiative on the part of the interns. The interns were reported to be interested in learning about all facets of being a principal and often initiated involvement in activities and question and answer sessions with school administrators. As one principal reported, “These interns are pretty aggressive. A couple of them are adamant about being present for all situations, just to be there, making sure they’re being exposed to all things.” Another mentor principal stated, “You see that [confidence] in their assertiveness, their take-charge attitude, and being able to problem solve.”
Table 19

Mentor Principal Questionnaire Items Pertaining to Mentor Principals’ Changes in Perceptions of Administrative Interns (N=10)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>None</th>
<th>Little</th>
<th>Some</th>
<th>A Lot</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To what extent were interns viewed in a different light due to participation in UNT/DISD program?</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To what extent were interns witnessed having a difficult time moving from responding like teachers to thinking like administrators?</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Another change the principals witnessed in the interns was goal setting. Three principals reported their interns were focused and “in tune” with why they were in the UNT/DISD leadership program. The interns were reported to be more interested than the rest of the staff in why the principals did things the way they did and in how things worked around the school. Mentor principals observed the interns striving for their goal to be a school leader. As one principal stated, “They are truly wanting to be a part of the administrative process and be administrators. I see that commitment. Now that they see it, they are not wavering. They’ve become more strongly committed about this being what they want to do.” Another principal expressed her admiration for her interns’ goals
by saying, “They [interns] really have an understanding of which direction they are going and what they want.”

Though the majority of principals viewed their interns differently, five principals reported during their interview they did not treat the interns any differently than they had treated them prior to their participation in the program. One principal stated he believed it was important to not treat them differently for their own sake as well as the sakes of their colleagues.

The mentor principals were also asked to what extent they had witnessed the interns having a difficult time moving from responding like teachers to thinking like administrators in various situations. Half the principals reported they had seen “very little” difficulty and the other half reported they had seen “some” difficulty. Most principals reported the interns still switched back and forth quite frequently between thinking and responding like teachers and thinking and responding like administrators. Many interns were reported to be making a smooth transition, though not a total transition yet. One principal reported, “About mid-ways through the second semester, they started to look different and carry themselves differently.”

The mentor principals were encouraged that many interns were beginning to “see the big picture” of school administration and were realizing decisions needed to be made based on what was best for the entire school and not just what was best for their specialty area or for a few teachers or students. Mentor principals noticed the interns “beginning to think and see and understand why” the administrators made the decisions they made and behaved in the manners in which they behaved. In regards to seeing the bigger picture, one principal stated he believed his interns were “beginning to see the
bigger picture, even to the point of making the decision whether administration was even something they wanted to be involved with."

**Research Question 4**

Interest in the mentor principals’ perceptions about the changes they had witnessed in their interns led to research question four that asked how participation in the leadership preparation program had changed the administrative interns’ perceptions about themselves in three areas: personally; as a teacher; and as a prospective school administrator. Table 20 displayed responses to five “yes/no” items on the intern questionnaire related to how participation in the UNT/Dallas Public Schools Leadership Development Program had affected the interns’ perceptions of themselves. Follow-up interview questions allowed the interns to elaborate on their responses given on the questionnaire.

Table 20

Responses to Intern Questionnaire Items Related to Interns’ Perceptions of Themselves as Result of Participation in the UNT/DISD Program

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Number Of “Yes” Responses</th>
<th>Total “Yes” Responses</th>
<th>Percentage of “Yes” Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Has participation in program changed how you perceive yourself?</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>77%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| N=7 | N=19 | N=26 |
Are you thinking more like an administrator and less like a teacher?  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>88%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Has your confidence in assuming leadership positions increased?  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>81%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

After one year in program, do you still have the desire to become a school principal?  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Have you learned more about your personal leadership style from being in this program?  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>96%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Twenty interns (77%) reported participation in the program had changed the way they perceived themselves (see Table 20). From the interviews, five areas of personal change emerged: no change; maturity; professional growth; highlighted strengths and weaknesses; and belief in themselves (see Table 21). There were four areas that emerged in regards to the interns’ perceptions of themselves as teachers: no change; made them a better teacher; had to learn cooperation; and crossing the line from thinking like a teacher to thinking like an administrator (see Table 22). In regards to how participation in the program had changed the interns’ perceptions about themselves as prospective school administrators, four themes also emerged: made them more global minded; gave them a better understanding of what principals do; showed the need for collaboration between teachers and principals; and gained confidence in the ability to be an administrator (see Table 23).
Table 21
Areas of Personal Change Reported by Administrative Interns (N=18)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area of Personal Change</th>
<th>n</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No change</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maturity</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional growth</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Highlighted strengths and weaknesses</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belief in themselves</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A growth in personal maturity was the change most often reported by interns (5) as a result of participation in the UNT/Dallas Public Schools Leadership Development Program. Four female interns reported they had learned from participation in the program and interactions with their mentor principals that they needed to “grow up” and take things more seriously than they had in the past. Three of those four interns stated they did not laugh as much and make jokes about everything as was their usual custom, and their students had even commented on how much stricter they were in their classrooms this year than they were last year. Another of the five interns reported participation in the cohort had made her more aware of how other people see her, and that made her realize she needed to change some of her behaviors. Participation in the program helped the last of the five interns realize she needed something more in her life. She stated, “I feel the need to become more complete, personally.”
Four interns stated participation in the program helped them see their strengths and weaknesses and showed them areas they needed to improve. One of the four interns reported she had started reflecting more on the things she did and why she did them, as opposed to just doing something and not thinking about it. Another intern stated she was critiquing herself more than she had prior to participation in this program.

Three interns reported a renewed enthusiasm for their professional growth. They stated they liked the rigor of the course work because it had been a challenge for which they now realized they had been longing for a while. One intern’s statement on professional growth reflected both a change in her maturity and a changed attitude about herself. The intern stated, “I take more pride in myself as a professional. I’m not such a rocker chick anymore.”

Another area of personal change reported by four interns was a greater belief in themselves. The successes the interns had experienced in their UNT class work gave them a sense of confidence they had lacked. One intern reported participation in this program had truly changed her. She stated, “It has brought me out of my shell. I used to be very quiet and introverted. I liked to do a lot of stuff in the background instead of being put out there to get criticism.” This intern’s assessment of her change was corroborated by her principal, who reported the same change without knowing the intern had shared this information with the researcher.

Table 22 reflected the changes reported by interns when asked how they perceived themselves as teachers after participation in the UNT/DISD program. Eight interns reported being in the program had made them a better teacher. Two of the eight
interns reported they were now working harder and putting in more effort to be recognized by administrators. Two other interns stated they had always thought of themselves as good teachers, but after being in this program, they realized they were not as good as they thought they were. One of those interns commented, “I was actually making some of the mistakes on the tapes we’ve watched.” The intern was referring to instructional videos shown by a UNT professor during one of the classes. Another intern reported the opposite reaction and stated, “I’m discovering I’m better than I realized.” Two other interns stated participation in the UNT classes had made them more understanding of their students and the fact that there are issues beyond their control that have an effect on a student’s performance in school.

Table 22
Areas Reported by Interns in Regards to Perceptions of Themselves as Teachers (N=18)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area of Interns' Perceptions of Themselves as Teachers</th>
<th>n</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No change</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Made them a better teacher</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Had to learn cooperation</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crossing the line from thinking like a teacher to thinking like an administrator</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Eighty-eight percent of interns reported on their questionnaire (see Table 20) they had begun to think more like an administrator and less like a teacher as a result of
participation in the UNT/DISD program. Responses to the same question during the
interns’ interviews were in alignment with the responses on the questionnaire. The
interns reported they had a better understanding of the decisions made by their
principals. Participation in the program had made them more tolerant of things that cut
into their class time, as they had become more aware of the school as a whole, rather
than just knowing what was going on in their own classroom. One intern reported she
was looking at everything differently now and was always measuring the culture or the
climate at her school. The interns who reported above that participation in this program
had made them better teachers further stated they believed that change was a result of
their looking at themselves from an administrator’s point of view now.

An intern who had previously taken educational administration courses on her
own and not as a part of a specific program reported being in a program had helped her
see things differently and allowed her to cross the line from teacher to administrator.
She stated,

I understand it [administration] better. That’s what being in this program versus
just taking one class here and there has done for me. It has allowed me to really
get into a different mindset; because I don’t think I had it before, when I was
taking my other classes on my own.

Table 23 displayed the responses given by interns when they were asked about
their perceptions of themselves as prospective school administrators. Six interns
reported the need to think more globally was an issue of which they had become more
aware through participation in the UNT/DISD program. The interns realized as an
administrator they would be responsible for all the children in a school, as opposed to being responsible for only the children in their classroom. As one intern stated,

Being in a classroom every day, you have your own little box and that’s where you stay. When you have to start thinking that, as an administrator, ‘I’ll be running all the boxes,’ you have to be a lot more open to a variety of ideas.

Other interns reported they had become more aware of the issues that come up in schools, such as the problems with personnel and dealing with children. They reported gaining a new insight as interns that they did not have as teachers in the schools.

Table 23

Areas Reported by Interns in Regards to Perceptions of Themselves as Prospective School Administrators (N=18)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area of Interns’ Perceptions of Themselves as Prospective School Administrators</th>
<th>n</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Made them more global minded</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gave them better understanding of what principals do</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Showed need for collaboration between teachers and principals</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gained confidence in ability to be an administrator</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Seven interns reported being amazed when they started learning what their principals did all day, every day at their schools. The interns stated they had gained a better understanding of what a principal “is,” and what all goes on in the life of a principal. This revelation prompted one intern to state, “I have been nicer to my
principal!” One intern summed up the common thoughts of all seven interns when she stated,

We used to joke that when teachers became administrators the first thing they did was have a lobotomy and forget what it was like in the classroom. Now I realize, I don’t think they really forgot. They just had to look at things differently.

The need for principals to be instructional leaders was another revelation noted by one intern during the discussion of gained understanding of what principals do. As indicated in Table 5 earlier in this chapter, several interns reported they were told by their principals they were chosen for participation in the UNT/DISD program because they were strong instructional leaders at their respective schools. After learning the importance of the principal being an instructional leader, rather than someone who just “holds school, making sure nobody dies, taking calls, etc.,” the interns were encouraged because they already possessed that administrative trait.

Three interns recognized the need for school administrators to have good people skills in order to facilitate collaboration between the school principal and the faculty of the school. One of the three interns stated, “I’m usually a very blunt person, so I’ve become very aware of my people skills, because it is all about relationships. I’ve learned that you have to approach people differently when you want them to make a change.” A second intern concurred that learning how to work with others would make her a good prospective administrator. The third intern expressed a strong belief in the need for collaboration between the principal and the teachers in the school. The intern related her thoughts using the following analogy:
We’re in this boat and if our oars aren’t moving, which are our teachers, we’re all sinking. I am one person; they are 50 people out there. If I don’t have them on my side working with me, they’re going to shut their doors and do what they want. My principal doesn’t agree with me, but I still say I’m going for the teachers, because if they’re not happy, my boat’s sinking.

Two interns spoke about gaining confidence in their ability to be good school administrators. The interns reported gaining confidence in their ability to see the broad picture in situations, then being decisive in those situations. They also reported gained confidence in learning how to work with others for the good of the school. One intern stated this program had awakened her sensitivity to the need to be a responsible person in all areas of her life. She felt confident that her sense of responsibility and thoroughness would be an attribute that would help her when she became a school administrator.

*Research Question 5*

The SREB initiative that called for a new breed of school leaders who would improve curriculum, instruction and student achievement in schools inspired research question five that asked how participation in the UNT/Dallas Public Schools Leadership Development Program had changed the ways the administrative interns perceived educational administration. The responses to four questionnaire items that addressed research question five were displayed in Table 24.
Table 24

Responses to Intern Questionnaire Items Related to Interns’ Perceptions of Educational Administration (N=26)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Percentage of “Yes” Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Do you have broader understanding of educational leadership after participation in this program?</td>
<td>96%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have you gotten a sense thus far in program that the principal can make a difference in school programs?</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has participation in program helped you gain insights into your school, its goals, and how they may be achieved?</td>
<td>96%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has participation in program changed the way you perceive the world of educational leadership?</td>
<td>92%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The responses to questions on the intern questionnaire and the mentor principal questionnaire led the researcher to the conclusion that research question five was a multi-faceted question that needed to be probed from several different points of view. Four interview questions were formulated to further address research question five. The interview questions gave the interns an opportunity to explain how interactions with their mentor principals affected their perceptions of school leadership, to tell what they had learned from their mentor principals about educational leadership, to relate how participation in this program had changed their general perceptions about educational
leadership, and to discuss whether they believed the UNT/DISD program was preparing
them to be the new breed of school leaders.

Twenty-four interns (92%) reported on the questionnaire that participation in the
UNT/DISD program had changed the way they perceived the world of educational
leadership. All 26 interns reported they had become more aware of the pivotal role a
school principal plays in the success or failure of programs on their campuses. It
became apparent to the interns and to the researcher during the interviews that the
interns’ perceptions about educational administration were often influenced by their
relationships with their mentor principals. The interns were encouraged to keep their
responses as objective as possible and to try to separate their feelings toward their
mentor principals from their perceptions about educational leadership.

As displayed in Table 25, the stressfulness of the principal’s job emerged as the
most noted perception of school leadership that interns reported from interactions with
their mentor principals. The interns reported being overwhelmed at how demanding and
time-consuming the principal’s job appeared to be. One intern stated, “It [spending time
with mentor principal] has given me a reality check. It has made me realize how
stressful the job can be.” Another intern reported, “It [school leadership] seems a
daunting task.”

Five interns reported spending time with their mentor principals made them want
to do things differently when they become school administrators. One high school intern
stated she had gained a better understanding of why her principal does things the way
he does and why his style of leadership works for him. That helped the intern realize her
principal’s leadership style would not be her style of leadership when she moved into
school administration. Another intern reported he saw things he would like to do differently, but the mentor principal had also given him some good ideas that he would like “to mimic” when he becomes a principal. Another high school intern who had not spent much time with her mentor principal expressed the desire to be the kind of school leader who would encourage people to be the best they could be. She stated,

I want to be better. I want to really lead the people that work for me and empower them to do their best at what they do and give them the tools they need to do that. I want to be there to help them and encourage them to do that so they can get to where they want to lead. I want them to feel like if they want to be an administrator, they can do that. This is not what I see in my principal.

Table 25

Perceptions of School Leadership Gained by Interns' Interactions with Mentor Principals

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Perceptions of School Leadership</th>
<th>n</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>School leadership is a stressful, demanding job</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interns want to do things differently and “be better” than their mentor principals</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrators need to be instructional leaders</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principal needs to be involved in entire school community</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Money issues that affect education</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School leaders need the ability to multi-task</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principal sets school climate and culture</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School leaders need the ability to “pick your battles”</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Another perception about educational leadership that had changed as a result of the interns’ interactions with their mentor principals was the need for principals to be good instructional leaders. Four interns stated they did not believe current principals were well-versed in the knowledge of how children learn. As one intern put it:

A lot of people who become administrators, like coaches, weren’t as well versed in instruction, but they were well-versed in taking control and making decisions. And those are the kind of people that, historically, they have pointed the finger at. What we need to understand is that we need them to have that knowledge of how children learn in order to supervise our instructors who actually work with our kids…

Another intern stated she perceived the role of school leader to be “changing from a dictator to an instructional leader who is able to go in and guide a teacher on how to teach his/her class.”

Three interns reported they had become more aware of the importance of the school principal being involved in the whole community, not just the school community. The interns reported feeling “a little overwhelmed” at the “awesome responsibility” placed on the school principal. One intern stated, “I see that the principal has the power
to bridge the gap between school and community.” The interns viewed this perception as a diversion from what was expected of principals in the past.

What the interns learned from their UNT course work and related projects also shaped their perceptions about the world of educational leadership. The need to deal with money issues in schools was a big revelation for three interns. The interns said they had never thought about where the money came from to support education until they took the UNT course on school finance. The course work, coupled with working with their principals, brought a new awareness that it was the principal’s responsibility to raise funds and write grants for things like technology and new programs in their schools. The “money side” of educational administration made those interns think more about the community at-large. According to one intern, thinking about where schools got their money made her realize that education was really about “the people, the families” and their needs.

The next interview question posed to the interns was similar to the previous question and asked what the administrative interns had learned from their mentor principals about educational leadership. At the time of the discussion with the interns, the responses to this question naturally fell into two categories – “good” and “bad” traits witnessed by the interns during the time spent with their mentor principals. Table 26 reported the responses to this question that were categorized by the interns as “good” or “bad” traits. No frequencies or percentages were reported, as all interns interviewed gave multiple responses.

Several traits appeared on both sides of the chart, which indicated there were differences in mentor principals’ behaviors, actions, and leadership styles. The principal
traits, both good and bad, witnessed by the interns were spread across all 10 principals in the program. Interns who had previously reported displeasure with their mentor principals added “good” traits to the list, and interns who had expressed satisfaction with their mentors added “bad” traits to the list. That fact indicated to the researcher that the interns were being objective in their evaluations of what they had learned from their mentor principals.

Table 26
What Administrative Interns Reported Learning from Mentor Principals about Educational Leadership

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Good Traits</th>
<th>Bad Traits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Belief that everybody (staff/students) can achieve</td>
<td>Need to believe everyone (staff/students) can achieve</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Works well with a team</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How to motivate teachers and students</td>
<td>Need to support teachers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consistency</td>
<td>Need to be consistent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Importance of being encouraging</td>
<td>Need to be more encouraging</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good organization, preparation and planning</td>
<td>Poor organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Importance of good documentation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Take everything in stride</td>
<td>Not speaking to staff when upset</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stay under control</td>
<td>How to handle stress better</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t have to be hated to be a</td>
<td>Principal becomes the “bad guy”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
good principal

Patience

Be visible to teachers and students

Put instruction first

Everything is for the students

Being persistent to get what you want

To be firm and fair                         Fair treatment of all personnel

Always hear all sides                      How not to interact with people

Lead by example                           Need to delegate responsibilities

Importance of being truthful               Dishonesty

Following the discussions of how interactions with their mentor principals had affected their perceptions of school leadership and what they had learned from their mentor principals about educational leadership, the interns were asked how participation in the UNT/Dallas Public Schools Leadership Development Program had changed their overall perceptions of educational leadership. As indicated earlier in Table 24, 92% of interns responded on the questionnaire that participation in this program had changed their perception of the world of educational leadership. The 18 interns who were interviewed for this study offered many varied ways in which their perceptions of educational administration had changed as a result of participation in the UNT/DISD program. Table 27 displayed all the responses given by the interns during the interview sessions.
Table 27
How Participation in UNT/DISD Program Changed Administrative Interns’ Perceptions of Educational Administration (N=18)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Perceptions Reported by Interns</th>
<th>n</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>More demanding and time-consuming than anticipated</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opportunity to persuade people they can do anything</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scary to think principal is responsible for everyone in school community</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Importance of being actively involved in entire community</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Real focus is on student achievement</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principal needs to be learning all the time</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More political than intern realized</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Made intern aware of need for good administrators</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principal should be more of a supporter of teachers</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principal sets the culture in the school</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The demands of the job and the hours that a principal must work to meet those demands were again (see Table 25) reported by the most interns to be the foremost perception they had gained from participation in the UNT/DISD program. The question of how participation in the program had changed the interns’ perceptions of educational administration elicited the following responses from three interns: “I think it’s a whole lot more work than I ever imagined it to be. I still can’t comprehend how I’m ever going to
get it all done;” “More time consuming than I thought;” and “You have to be dedicated and willing to put in the hours.”

Two interns perceived the role of school administrator as an opportunity to build collaboration among all stakeholders in the school. One intern stated, “I thought the principal just told everybody what to do and they did it, but now I think a principal is a good persuader, not a dictator.” The other intern expressed, “It’s [school leadership] a real opportunity to make other people think they can do anything they want to do, from your faculty, your staff, your students, everybody, letting them realize it’s [the school’s] for everybody.”

One of the interns who spoke about school leadership being an opportunity for collaboration in the above example also stated she perceived educational administration to be scary. She stated, “I think it’s scary to really think that you’re gong to lead every single person who’s in their own little box, their own little world. How do you make them feel global? This is a school; it’s for everybody, it’s not just your little room.” Another intern said participation in this program had “made me a little nervous, in the sense of the accountability of other people’s mistakes. I’m a real perfectionist, and if you mess up and it boils down to me, and I’ve put you over this, I’m still going to be held accountable.”

One intern expressed concern that the world of educational leadership was more political than she had realized. The intern had witnessed her principal making changes in her management style due to a change in area superintendents for DISD. The intern stated, “It’s like someone playing a tune and you can visibly see the principal jumping to things that were not quite her management style.”
The final facet of research question five dealt with whether the interns believed the UNT/DISD program was preparing them to be the new breed of school leaders as called for by SREB. All 18 interns interviewed were excited about the possibility of becoming the new breed of school leaders, if by “new breed” SREB meant principals who focused on academics and how children learn. As stated earlier (see Table 5), six interns reported they were chosen for participation in this program because their principals thought the interns were good instructional leaders on their campuses. Five interns reported they were selected because they were purported to be strong teachers. The interns liked the call from SREB for school leaders to be stronger instructional leaders. One intern stated, “I really liked what I read, in that they [SREB] stressed they wanted principals who always focused on academics.”

Another intern stated she wanted to be a new breed principal because she believed the new breed principal would be able to relate better to the students and the faculty than the current group of principals do. She felt that some of the principals who had been around a long time were out of touch with the children. The intern asserted she believed DISD had its top teachers in this program, so it would be possible for those teachers to emerge as the new breed of school principals.

From their UNT course work, two interns reported seeing a “bigger push” toward a collaborative approach to being a principal. The interns were encouraged by this change, as they said collaboration was a different approach than they had experienced in their schools. They liked the idea of using everybody in their buildings for success, rather than just having a “one person show.” However, one intern expressed concern about the reluctance of people to change. She stated she thought people were afraid to
go about reaching their expectations in different, new ways. Learning how to help
teachers and students adapt to change was a benefit the intern felt she had received
from participation in this program.

Two interns who attended the same interview session expressed sentiments that
were corroborated by their three peers in that interview session. One middle school
female intern believed the interns in the UNT/DISD program could become the new
breed of school leaders “provided we are paired with a principal or assistant principal
who will allow us to continue to develop rather than to conform to what was.” The
second statement was made by a female high school intern who stated, “If we’re to be
the ‘new breed,’ why is the ‘old breed’ mentoring us?”

The final two questions on the administrative interns’ questionnaire addressed
the interns’ job aspirations following completion of the two-year UNT/Dallas Public
Schools Leadership Development Program. Twenty-five of the twenty-six interns
responded they hoped to secure an administrative position in the Dallas Public Schools
upon completion of the program. One white female intern from one of the high schools
was the only intern that responded she wished to remain a teacher in DISD. That
response was a contradiction to what the intern reported on a previous item on the
questionnaire that asked if, after one year of participation in the UNT/DISD program, the
intern still had the desire to become a school principal. That intern responded “yes,” she
still had the desire to become a principal. The intern in question did not participate in an
interview, so no clarification of the contradiction was obtained. All 26 interns expressed
interest in seeking employment solely in the Dallas Independent School District upon
completion of the program.
Summary of Findings

This study examined the UNT/Dallas Public Schools Leadership Development Program to determine if the program was progressing toward its stated goals after the first year of the two-year program. The study focused on five research questions that addressed the following facets of the program: the process by which the administrative interns were selected for participation in the program; how participation in the program had changed the involvement of the interns in campus-based decision-making processes at their respective schools; how mentor principals’ perceptions had changed toward their administrative interns as a result of their participation in the program; how participation in the program had affected the perceptions of the interns about themselves in three areas – personally, as a teacher, as a prospective administrator; and how participation in the program had affected the interns' perceptions of educational administration.

Several themes emerged during data analysis in regards to each of the five research questions in this study. In regards to the selection process employed by the UNT/DISD program sponsors, the themes that emerged were: the matter of self-selected versus principal-tapped candidates; the use of inferior admission standards; and whether minority issues were addressed in the selection process. Themes that emerged in regards to changes in the interns’ involvement in campus-based decision-making processes included: the assignment of more school “duties” but no real involvement in administrative decision-making processes; the inability of the interns to affect changes on their campuses due to lack of involvement in campus-based decision-making processes; the importance of the role of the mentor principal to the success of
the interns; the need for more quality internship time and administrative-related
experiences; interns at the elementary schools reported the highest level of satisfaction
with their campus involvement; and the serendipitous effects the interns’ participation in
the program had on administrators and faculty members at the interns’ schools.

Data analysis for research question three that asked how participation in the
UNT/Dallas Public Schools Leadership Development Program had changed the mentor
principals’ perceptions of their interns produced two themes. The majority of principals
reported they viewed their interns differently as a result of their participation in the
program, and most principals had witnessed their interns beginning to make the change
from responding like teachers to thinking like administrators, though most principals
reported the interns vacillated according to the situation.

The emergent themes from research question four that asked how participation
in the UNT/DISD program had changed the interns’ perceptions of themselves
encompassed both the personal and professional aspects of the interns. Themes that
emerged included: the interns’ growth in personal maturity and professionalism; the
belief that participation in the program had made the interns better teachers, as well as
teachers who were beginning to cross the line from responding like teachers to thinking
like administrators; interns' understanding of the principal’s role in the school
community; and the necessity for school leaders to “see the big picture” in school
administration.

Research question five asked how participation in the UNT/DISD program had
changed the interns’ perceptions of educational administration. Themes similar to those
that emerged from research question four also emerged for this research question. The
effect of the principal’s role as mentor on the attitudes the interns developed toward educational leadership emerged as a significant theme in both research questions four and five. The realization of the stressfulness of the principal’s job was another theme that emerged from both research questions. The final theme that emerged from research question five was the desire of the interns to be successful in the program and pursue administrative positions in the Dallas public schools upon completion of the UNT/Dallas Public Schools Leadership Development Program. The implications of all the findings reported in this chapter will be discussed in Chapter 5.
CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The purpose of this research study was to determine if, after one year of operation, the UNT/Dallas Public Schools Leadership Development Program was progressing in accordance with the goals set out for the program. The UNT/Dallas Public Schools Leadership Development Program was born as a result of the call from the Southern Regional Education Board for universities to restructure their traditional school leadership preparation programs and create programs that would place greater emphasis on the knowledge and skills needed by educational leaders to improve curriculum, instruction, and student achievement (Bottoms and O’Neill, 2001). SREB’s goal was for leadership preparation programs to train a new breed of school leaders who were qualified to lead the schools of the future. As a member of SREB’s Leadership Development Network, the educational administration program at the University of North Texas formed a partnership with the Dallas Independent School District to provide a two-year, field-based principal preparation program designed to prepare effective school leaders for Dallas Public Schools.

This study examined the strengths and weaknesses of the program to aid the University of North Texas’ educational administration program in determining what changes, if any, needed to be made to their new partnership program with DISD. After a review of literature of many restructured principal preparation programs across the nation and discussions with the UNT/DISD program sponsors, it was determined this study would focus on the following objectives: (a) to ascertain the process by which the administrative interns were selected for participation in the UNT/DISD program; (b) to
determine if participation in the UNT/DISD program had changed the involvement of the administrative interns in campus-based decision-making; (c) to determine if the mentor principals in the program perceived their administrative interns differently as a result of their participation in the leadership program; (d) to determine how participation in the program had changed the administrative interns’ perceptions of themselves; and (e) to determine how participation in the program had changed the administrative interns’ perceptions of educational administration.

Population and Methodology

Twenty-six teacher-leaders from ten different schools in the Dallas Independent School District were selected by their building principals and UNT faculty members to become administrative interns in the UNT/Dallas Public Schools Leadership Development Program. The cohort that began the program in the fall of 2002 consisted of 19 females and 7 males. The principals from the ten schools in DISD who acted as mentors to the administrative interns were included in the population of the study.

Questionnaires were distributed to the administrative interns to glean information that would reveal how the interns were selected for participation in the program and how their perceptions of themselves and educational administration had changed as a result of participation in the UNT/DISD program. Follow-up focus group interview sessions provided the interns an opportunity to explain the responses given on the questionnaire and to add deeper meaning to the kind and degree of changes they had experienced as a result of participation in the program. Questionnaires were also completed by the ten mentor principals, with follow-up individual interview sessions with eight of the principals at their respective schools. Questions posed to the mentor principals dealt with the kind
and degree of campus-based decision-making processes in which the principals had allowed the interns to participate and how the principals’ perceptions of the interns had changed over the course of the first year of the program.

Personal interviews were conducted with one UNT faculty member and one DISD official. Those interviews provided historical and background information about the formation and development of the UNT/DISD partnership program. The administrative assistant in the educational administration program at UNT was also interviewed to provide enrollment status of the 26 administrative interns in the program. All documents pertaining to the creation and development of the UNT/Dallas Public Schools Leadership Development Program from its inception were reviewed for historical information. The findings of data gathered from all questionnaires, interviews, and documents were presented in Chapter 4. The next section of this chapter will provide a synopsis of the findings of each of the five research questions. The presentation of the research questions’ findings is followed by an interpretation and discussion of the findings. Concluding the chapter are recommendations for future research.

Research Findings

This section reviews the study’s five research questions in light of the findings presented in Chapter 4.

Research Question 1: Process by Which Administrative Interns Were Selected

This study’s first research question addressed the process by which the administrative interns were selected for participation in the UNT/Dallas Public Schools Leadership Development Program. As Table 6 in Chapter 4 showed, eight interns
basically self-selected into the UNT/DISD program, and nine interns were in the “principal-tapped” category of candidates (see Table 6 in Chapter 4). Table 8 (see Chapter 4) revealed seven interns in the UNT/DISD program had not made an acceptable GRE score for admission to the UNT graduate school. Five of the interns had been admitted to the program through an appeals process, and the other two interns were awaiting the completion of the appeals process.

Program sponsors had hoped DISD would take advantage of this program to increase its pool of Hispanic school administrators, as Hispanic children comprised 58.9% of the student population in DISD (see Table 3 in Chapter 3). This cohort of interns included only four Hispanic/Mexican candidates (15.4% of all interns) (see Table 1 and Table 3 in Chapter 3), which was not proportionate to the 58.9% Hispanic student population in DISD. However, the 15.4% Hispanic interns was proportionate to the 12% of Hispanic teachers in DISD who constituted the pool of Hispanic teachers from which to choose candidates for this program (see Table 2 in Chapter 3).

The 12 African-American candidates represented 46.2% of all interns in the UNT/DISD program (see Tables 1 and 2 in Chapter 3). The 46.2% was in alignment with the 41.6% of African-American teachers in DISD (see Table 2 in Chapter 3) and a little higher, proportionately, to the 32.9% African-American student population in DISD (see Table 3 in Chapter 1).

Research Question 2: Assessment of Interns’ Involvement in Campus-based Decision-making as Result of Participation in UNT/DISD Program

Research question two asked if participation in the UNT/Dallas Public Schools Leadership Development Program had changed the involvement of the administrative
interns in campus-based decision-making at their schools, and, if participation had changed, how had it changed. Four (two from the same school) of eighteen interns (see Table 12 in Chapter 4) reported more involvement in campus-based decision-making processes at their schools as a result of participation in the UNT/DISD program. Ten interns reported they had been assigned more “duties” at their schools (see Table 12 in Chapter 4), but those duties could not be classified as decision-making processes that could lead to school improvements. Four other interns reported there was no change in their involvement. All ten mentor principals (see Table 13 in Chapter 4) concurred with the interns that the interns had been assigned more duties and responsibilities during the first year of the UNT/DISD program.

Table 15 (see Chapter 4) showed interns at the three elementary schools reported the most involvement in campus-based decision-making processes and the highest level of satisfaction with the involvement they were allowed at their campuses. Table 16 (see Chapter 4) showed there was less overall involvement and an overall lower level of satisfaction with that involvement at two of the four middle schools than there was at the elementary schools in the program. Administrative interns from two of the three high schools in the program reported the least amount of involvement in decision-making processes and the lowest level of satisfaction with their internship experiences of all interns in the program (see Table 17 in Chapter 4).

Table 18 (see Chapter 4) revealed 10 interns believed they could have an impact on improvements at their campuses as a result of their participation in campus-based decision-making processes. Four other interns stated they would have no impact on school improvements at their campuses.
The interns’ participation in the UNT/Dallas Public Schools Leadership Development Program produced serendipitous effects on the interns’ campuses. Seven of eight mentor principals reported they had personally and professionally benefited from the interns’ participation in the program. Five of eight mentor principals reported they had also seen positive effects on the other teachers at their schools.

Research Question 3: Changes in Mentor Principals’ Perceptions of Administrative Interns

Research question three asked how participation in the UNT/Dallas Public Schools Leadership Development Program had changed the perception of the mentor principals toward their administrative interns. Five mentor principals responded they viewed their interns in a “somewhat” different light. Four principals reported they viewed their interns “a lot” differently, and one principal reported she did not view her interns any differently as a result of their participation in the UNT/DISD program (see Table 19 in Chapter 4).

Five mentor principals reported witnessing the interns having “little” trouble crossing over to thinking like an administrator, and the other five principals reported the interns having a “somewhat” difficult time in making that transition. The eight principals interviewed reported the interns still switched back and forth quite frequently between thinking and responding like teachers and thinking and responding like administrators.

Research Question 4: Changes in Administrative Interns Perceptions of Themselves

The fourth research question asked how participation in the UNT/DISD program had changed the ways the administrative interns perceived themselves. As shown in Table 20 (see Chapter 4), 77% of the 26 interns indicated participation in the UNT/DISD
program had changed how they perceived themselves. Those changes were in three areas: (1) personally; (2) as a teacher; and (3) as a prospective school administrator.

1. Five areas of perceived personal change emerged from the interviews with the interns: no change (2); maturity (5); professional growth (3); highlighted strengths and weaknesses (4); and belief in themselves (4) (see Table 21 in Chapter 4).

2. There were four areas that emerged in regards to the interns’ perceptions of themselves as teachers: no change (1); made them a better teacher (8); had to learn cooperation (1); and crossing the line from thinking like a teacher to thinking like an administrator (8) (see Table 22 in Chapter 4). Eighty-eight percent of all interns (see Table 20 in Chapter 4) reported they were beginning to think more like an administrator and less like a teacher as a result of participation in the program.

3. Four themes also emerged in regards to how participation in the program had changed the interns’ perceptions about themselves as prospective school administrators: made them more global minded (6); gave them a better understanding of what principals do (7); showed the need for collaboration between teachers and principals (3); and gained confidence in the ability to be an administrator (2) (see Table 23 in Chapter 4). All 26 interns (100%) responded, after one year of participation in the UNT/DISD program, they still had the desire to become a school principal.

Research Question 5: Changes in Administrative Interns’ Perceptions of Educational Administration

The final research question asked how participation in the UNT/Dallas Public Schools Leadership Development Program had changed the ways the administrative interns perceived the world of educational administration. Table 24 (see Chapter 4)
showed 96% of administrative interns reported they had a broader understanding of educational leadership after one year of participation in the UNT/DISD program than they had previous to being in the program. All 26 interns (100%) reported they had gotten a sense thus far in the program that the school principal could make a difference in the success or failure of programs initiated in the schools.

Ninety-two percent of interns indicated participation in the program had changed the way they perceived the world of educational leadership. Some of those changed perceptions included: the school administrator’s position was more demanding and time-consuming than the interns anticipated; importance of the school principal being actively involved in the entire community; opportunity for school leaders to persuade people they could do anything they wanted to do; principal’s responsibility for everyone in the school; and the importance of the principal in placing the real focus in schools on student achievement (see Table 25 and Table 27 in Chapter 4).

Five interns reported they had decided they wanted to be better, or at least different, administrators than their mentor principals. Four interns reported, after interactions with their mentor principals, they realized the importance of school principals being good instructional leaders (see Table 25 in Chapter 4).

All 18 interns interviewed reported they were excited about the possibility of becoming the new breed of school leaders, if by “new breed” SREB meant principals who focused on academics and how children learn. The interns believed they could be the new breed of school leaders if they were allowed to continue to develop rather than being forced to conform to the status quo.
Interpretation and Discussion of Findings

Several themes emerged from the data analysis in regards to each of the five research questions. The themes from research questions two and three overlapped, as did the themes from research questions four and five, so those research questions and themes were combined in the following discussion.

Research Question 1

Research question one explored the process by which administrative interns were selected for participation in the UNT/Dallas Public Schools Leadership Development Program. Emergent themes in regards to this question included: the matter of self-selected versus principal-tapped candidates in the program; ability of interns to meet UNT graduate school admission standards; and the consideration of minority issues in the selection process employed by UNT and DISD for the program.

Self-selection versus principal-recommended selection process

Many restructured principal preparation programs across the nation were critical of the “self-selection” aspect of traditional preparation programs. Sponsors of the revamped programs supported school district recruitment of the “best and brightest” teachers into leadership development programs as one way to improve the quality of school leaders (Smith, 1990; Sorenson and Machell, 1996; Vornberg and Davis, 1997). UNT and DISD structured their new principal preparation program based on this research premise and made it a requirement of the program that all participants be recommended by their building principals. The theory supporting that deviation from UNT’s traditional principal preparation program was the principals would select teachers who were strong instructional leaders and who believed all children could achieve at
high levels, as well as teachers in whom the principals had observed leadership abilities or the potential for leadership.

As stated in Chapter 4, four administrative interns who were accepted into the UNT/Dallas Public Schools Leadership Development Program were already enrolled in other principal preparation programs when they learned about this new DISD program. The interns and their principals reported it made the interns easy selection candidates for this program. The interns simply “switched over” to the UNT/DISD program, so, in reality, they were self-selected candidates to a principal preparation program who merely received the endorsement of their building principals. However, receiving the endorsement of the school principal could have an added effect on the success of the interns in the program, as 88% of all interns reported on the questionnaire they felt a greater pressure to be successful in the program because they had been selected by the school district to participate in the UNT/DISD program.

Four other interns reported they were in the process of looking for a leadership program in which to enroll in the fall of 2002. Those interns stated if they had not learned about this new UNT/DISD program, they would have enrolled in a traditional university program of their own choosing. All those interns’ principals reported the principals were aware those specific people were interested in pursuing educational administration, so that made those interns easy selection candidates as well. These facts placed the four interns in the self-selection category, along with the first four interns above. Those eight interns equated to 44% of the 18 cohort members who were interviewed being self-selected candidates versus candidates who had never
considered entering an educational administration program prior to recommendation by their principal.

The self-selected versus recommended-by-principal participation issue was broached with the DISD official during his interview. The DISD official stated he was not concerned many of the candidates selected for the UNT/DISD program were teachers who were previously enrolled in or looking for leadership preparation programs, because all the candidates still had to be recommended by their principals to get in the program. The DISD official believed the fact the principals had recommended those specific people for the program signified the teachers selected were worthy candidates for participation in the program or their principals would not have recommended them. The “halo” effect of the interns being selected by their principals, as mentioned above, could be a positive factor in the success of the self-selected candidates.

The question of the importance of the self-selection issue toward the future success of the interns still remained at the time of this study. There were no previous research studies that proved self-selected candidates to principal preparation programs were any less successful when they entered the workforce as school principals than were those candidates who were recommended by their supervisors for admission to a program. Many program evaluators in the literature reviews were critical of the self-selection process and touted the new method of admission-by-principal-recommendation in their programs but had no empirical research to substantiate those claims (Mulkeen and Tetenbaum, 1990; Playko and Daresh, 1992; Sorenson and Machell, 1996). It remains to be seen if the 44% of interns who self-selected into the UNT/DISD program will be as successful in procuring administrative positions at the
completion of the program as those interns who did not self-select. Follow-up studies of the two groups of interns would be necessary to determine which group was more successful in achieving their goal of securing an administrative position in DISD.

In addition to determining which group would be more successful in procuring an administrative job, it would be equally as important to find some method of determining which group of interns made better school leaders once they were in the workforce. How does one measure the success of a school leader? That would appear to be a difficult research problem because of the many variables that may be attributed to school improvements and student achievement that ultimately relate to the perceived success or failure of school leaders. However, that would be the type of research that would be necessary before principal preparation program sponsors could confidently proclaim that supervisor-recommended participation in leadership programs was superior to self-selection and was one of the answers to getting higher-quality program candidates who become successful school leaders.

*Ability of Interns to Meet Admission Standards*

Another concern that emerged from the review of literature on the selection process was too many candidates were admitted to programs through “watered down” admission standards (Creighton & Jones, 2001; Mulkeen and Tetenbaum, 1990). Seven of the twenty-six interns in the UNT/Dallas Public Schools Leadership Development Program failed to achieve a satisfactory qualifying score on the GRE. All seven interns filed an appeal with the UNT graduate school. Five interns were granted admission after the appeal process and two were still waiting for the completion of the appeal process at the time of this study.
Would the low GRE scores make a difference in the interns being successful in completing the full two years of the principal preparation program? At the time of this study all seven interns were continuing in the program. Six of the seven interns were enthusiastic participants in the focus group interview sessions for this study, and all six spoke passionately about their jobs and their involvement in the UNT/DISD program. One intern reported to the researcher in an informal conversation at his school that he had made a “B” in one of his UNT courses, and he was unhappy with that grade, as he had hoped to perform better in the class. However, a grade of “B” has historically been an acceptable grade in most UNT graduate school courses of study, and there is no evidence to suggest that grades of “B” deter graduates from procuring employment upon graduation.

Are those seven candidates lesser-quality university students, and will they possibly be ineffective school leaders, because of their low GRE scores? That question raised the age-old question of whether standardized test scores are valid predictors of a person’s ability to succeed. None of those seven interns were the self-selection candidates discussed above; they were all recommended by their building principals. Recommendation by building principals should have indicated the interns were good instructional leaders and people with leadership potential or already proven leadership abilities, and none of those capabilities were dependent upon a satisfactory GRE score. Whether those seven interns develop into quality potential school leaders will have to be determined at the end of the UNT/DISD program when the interns enter the pool of available candidates for hire in the Dallas School District.
The DISD Special Assistant to the Superintendent, Higher Education Linkages, stated during his interview that one of the goals for the UNT/DISD program was to enlarge the pool of quality prospective administrators for the Dallas Public Schools. The UNT professor and program sponsor who was interviewed also stated it was his hope that the UNT/DISD program would attract the “best and brightest” of DISD’s teachers. If low GRE scores equated to lesser quality candidates and not the “brightest” candidates, then the issue of admitting program participants based on “watered down” admission standards would be an area of the selection process that would need to be scrutinized by the program sponsors before the next cohort of interns was selected in the spring of 2004.

Inclusion of Minority Candidates in the Program

Another theme that emerged in regards to the selection process was the inclusion of minority, especially Hispanic, candidates in the UNT/Dallas Public Schools Leadership Development Program. As discussed in chapter two, the call for more minority school administrators had grown as a result of the increased minority enrollments in school districts across the nation (Jacobson, 1996; Playko and Daresh, 1992). DISD was a school district with a 58.9% Hispanic student population being served by a teaching staff that included only 12% Hispanic teachers. The UNT/Dallas Public Schools Leadership Development Program included four Hispanic/Mexican interns, which represented 15.4% of all interns. With only 12% of all DISD teachers being Hispanic, the 15.4% of interns in the program was more than representative of the total Hispanic teacher population in DISD.
The low number of Hispanic teachers from which to recruit prospective administrators was labeled as a major concern of the Dallas Public School District by the DISD official who was interviewed for this study. He stated he made efforts to include more Hispanic participants in the UNT/DISD program by encouraging school principals to look especially hard for Hispanic teachers that might be interested in pursuing educational administration. He further stated program sponsors made efforts to not overlook any Hispanic candidates that were “in the initial cuts” for selection into the program. No extra points were given in the selection process, but if there were Hispanic candidates who might have been “marginal” in regards to GRE scores and grade point averages, they were kept on the list for further review. None of the seven interns who were admitted to the program through the UNT appeals process were of Hispanic origin.

The one intern who was transferred to a new school so she could participate in the UNT/Dallas Public Schools Leadership Development Program was a Hispanic female. None of the program sponsors reported the switch was made because the candidate was Hispanic, but the program sponsors were making extra efforts to get more Hispanic participants in the program. In response to the question, “Was this program intended to bring more minority candidates into principal preparation programs,” the DISD official stated:

The one where we made the switch to get her in was a minority candidate that was a really bright lady, she was bilingual, she wanted in the program; so, we found a way to do that. I think we can do that with a clear conscience.
Some of the minority mentor principals in the UNT/DISD program also mentioned the need to have more minority, especially Hispanic, prospective principals in preparation programs. When asked for their recommendations on how to accomplish that goal in light of the small number of Hispanic teachers from which to choose, the principals had no concrete answers. They simply said the district needed to make a more concerted effort to seek out and find qualified Hispanic candidates, even if that meant looking outside the Dallas district.

Looking outside the district for bilingual teachers was a tactic already employed by DISD officials, with not much success. The DISD Special Assistant to the Superintendent reported that he and the DISD superintendent had recently returned from a trip to south Texas, which was predominately populated by Hispanic people. That trip made them aware the need for Hispanic teachers and administrators was even greater in the southern area of the state, so there was no impetus for the bilingual teachers to leave that area and move to Dallas.

Though the need for more minority school leaders was expressed by researchers, program evaluators, DISD officials, and DISD minority school principals, there was no research found to prove that minority students responded better or achieved more when they attended schools led by principals from their same minority group. The desire to have more minority school leaders appeared to stem from social and equity issues more than it did from proven statistics about student achievement. The only reason given by one of the DISD mentor principals to have more minority school leaders in the district was that “we know and understand our kind of people better than anyone else does.” Though that may be a valid reason to encourage more
minority candidates to enter principal preparation programs, it was not a reason supported by empirical research.

Did the UNT/Dallas Public Schools Leadership Development Program meet its prescribed goals in regards to the selection process for participating administrative interns? One of the stated goals of the program was to provide DISD with a principal preparation program in which they could place principal-selected teacher-leaders for training. That goal was met, as 25 of the 26 interns in the program were recommended for participation in the program by their building principals. The fact that eight of the interns self-selected prior to receiving an endorsement from their principal should not have an effect on the performance of those interns in the program. All eight interns met UNT admissions’ requirements without going through an appeals process.

Another goal of the program was to increase the pool of “highly qualified people for administrative positions” in the Dallas Public Schools. The fact that seven interns were admitted to the program through an appeals process due to low GRE scores cast doubts as to whether those interns could be considered “highly qualified people.” “Watered-down” admission standards will be a facet of the program that will need to be discussed among the UNT and DISD program sponsors prior to beginning the selection process for the next cohort of interns. The program sponsors will need to answer the question, “What constitutes ‘quality’ people?”

Though not stated as a goal in the UNT/DISD partnership agreement, the desire to include as many minority candidates, especially Hispanic candidates, as possible was a strong desire of both DISD and UNT program sponsors. The UNT/DISD program sponsors made strong efforts to include Hispanic candidates, and the percentage of
Hispanic candidates in the program exceeded the percentage of available Hispanic teachers from which to choose candidates. The percentage of African-American candidates in the program exceeded the percentage of African-American students and teachers in DISD. The number of women candidates in the program was in alignment with the number of women teachers in DISD. Thus, it may be concluded that the UNT/Dallas Public Schools Leadership Development Program made a concerted effort to include minority and women candidates in the cohort.

Research Questions 2 and 3

Research question two asked how participation in the UNT/DISD program had changed the involvement of the administrative interns in campus-based decision-making, and research question three asked how the mentor principals’ perceptions of the interns had changed over the course of the first year of the program. Themes that emerged from research question two and research question three overlapped, as the mentor principals’ perceptions of their interns had an effect on the amount and kind of decision-making processes in which the principals allowed the interns to participate. Emergent themes in regards to changes in the interns’ involvement in campus-based decision-making processes fell into the following categories: the effect assignment of more school “duties” but very little involvement in administrative decision-making processes had on the interns’ inability to affect changes on their campuses; the importance of the role of the mentor principal to the interns’ satisfaction with their internship experience; the need for more quality internship time and administrative-related experiences; and the serendipitous effects the interns’ participation in the program had on administrators and faculty members at the interns’ schools.
Involvement of Interns in Campus-Based Decision-Making Processes

One of the goals of the UNT/DISD program was for the administrative interns’ hands-on learning experiences to be directly related to the schools and their needs, as it was the intent of the program for the interns to work with the principals on improvements in the schools. That goal was to be accomplished by the interns’ participation in campus-based decision-making processes at the schools that would have an impact on school improvements. It was reported in chapter four only four interns from three of the schools were involved in campus-based decision-making processes at their schools in which they had not been involved prior to participation in the UNT/DISD program. The majority of interns reported they had been assigned more activities and responsibilities at their schools, but most of the activities could have been classified as “duties” rather than involvement in decision-making processes. That assessment by the interns was corroborated by the mentor principals who described the same assignments of additional duties as reported by the interns.

At all school levels in the program, the interns’ satisfaction with their internship experiences was directly related to the amount of involvement in campus-based decision-making in which the interns were allowed to participate. Interns from the three elementary schools reported the highest level of satisfaction with their internship experiences, and they were the interns who reported the highest levels of involvement in decision-making at their campuses. Interns from one of the high schools also reported a high level of satisfaction with their internship experience, because the interns had a very attentive and inclusive mentor principal.
The elementary school interns were confident involvement in decision-making processes provided them the opportunity to have an impact on improvements at their schools. Those interns spoke admiringly and positively about the collaborative relationships they had built with their mentor principals as a result of participation in the UNT/DISD program. The interns felt they were respected and their opinions were heard and considered by their mentor principals. One intern stated, “Instead of her [principal] just saying here’s what we are doing, she’ll ask us what we think.” Another intern concurred with that statement, saying, “She looks at us for more input instead of her just direct decision making.” And a third intern stated:

The principal’s willingness to allow us to track a program from beginning to end will have an impact on changes on our campus. There’s a little more punch behind what I say now. It’s not just a general question; it’s being viewed as an official directive and things are getting done.

Middle school interns reported less involvement in decision-making than their elementary school peers, but the middle school interns, with the exception of one intern, were still fairly satisfied with their internship experiences. The interns stated they were all very busy with their teaching duties and other leadership roles at their schools, so they were satisfied their mentor principals allowed them to sit in on some administrative meetings, though they were not involved in any decision-making at those meetings. Most middle school interns also spoke about admiring the good work of their mentor principals. The interns stated they appreciated the time their mentor principals had spent with them during the first year of the program, but the interns were aware they
were not involved in making decisions that would have an impact on school improvements.

The middle school intern who was unhappy with her lack of involvement in decision-making activities was the intern who had been moved to a different school in DISD so she could participate in the UNT/DISD program. Most of the concerns reported by that intern were centered on her feelings of alienation as a result of being moved to a different school. The intern reported difficulty in assimilating into the new environment and being accepted by both her peers and the school principal. The intern felt her exclusion from most activities in which her program teammate participated was due to her being transferred to the school solely for the opportunity to participate in the UNT/DISD program. Though the intern was appreciative to be in the program, she did state she was not sure being in the program was worth everything she had endured that first year. The intern stated, “It’s [being accepted] been a challenge.”

Interns from two of the high schools in the program reported the least amount of involvement in decision-making; thus, they were the least satisfied with their internship experiences. The responses garnered from one of those two high school principal’s questionnaire in regards to the amount of involvement by that school’s interns were not in alignment with the responses given by the interns from that school to similar questions. The principal reported her interns were involved in “a lot” of campus-based decision-making processes and that they took part in “some” administrative meetings and activities. The interns from that school reported the least amount of involvement in campus-based decision-making processes of any of the interns and also reported they never met or worked with their principal. All the interns’ involvement at the school was
with the assistant principals, and none of what the interns did was administrative-related work that required decisions to be made.

The mentor principal from the second of those high schools stated he was aware he had “brought his interns along more slowly” than most of the other mentor principals. He further stated, “I give them as much autonomy as possible on the projects I give them… I always watch over their shoulder to make sure the decisions they make are not going to be detrimental to our programs or to the students.” The interns from his school were especially frustrated by their lack of involvement in administrative meetings and decision-making processes. One intern stated, “I’m not sure what kind of impact we’ll have on improvements at our campus, because we haven’t been considered for implementing any improvements.” Not surprisingly, interns from those two schools reported they planned to be “better” or, at least, “different” administrators than were their mentor principals.

In general, the mentor principals perceived their interns to be involved in more campus-based decision-making processes than was perceived by the interns. That difference in perception could be attributed to something as simple as the interns and mentor principals classifying school duties and responsibilities differently. For example, one principal assigned his intern the responsibility of overseeing security in the parking lot. That principal considered the assignment as an administrative task, and the intern perceived the assignment as just one more duty he had to fulfill at the school. The fact that interns were so involved in leadership roles at their campuses prior to participation in the UNT/DISD program also could have affected the mentor principals' perceptions
about the interns’ involvement in campus-based decision-making processes during the first year of the program.

_The Importance of the Role of the Mentor Principal_

Assigning active school principals to serve as mentors to administrative interns was a practice that had become an integral part of most of the reformed educational administration preparation programs. Though not supported by any empirical research, it was a consensus among program sponsors the mentor was key to a successful internship for the aspiring principal (Pence, 1989; William and Hudson, 2001; Wilmore, 1999).

Many mentor principals in the UNT/DISD program reported they were reluctant to include the interns in any real decision-making processes. One principal admitted, “It’s really up to the principal how much you want them involved.” The reason most often stated by the principals for not including the interns in more decision-making processes was a lack of enough time on the part of the mentor principals as well as the interns. The principals believed the interns were already involved in so many activities and projects at the schools and in their UNT course work that they did not have enough time to be more involved in administrative decision making processes. As one mentor principal stated, “With the class load they have, plus the work they have here at school, it’s overwhelming.”

Administrative interns who had interested and supportive mentor principals reported more positive experiences in all areas of campus involvement. Those interns were excited about what they were learning in their UNT classes, as they were being allowed to translate that learning into real-world experiences at their schools. The
interns reported having good working relationships with their principals and were complimentary about them when they shared with their peers during the interview what they had learned about educational leadership from their principals. Being asked for their opinions and their input on decisions raised the interns’ self-confidence levels and made the interns believe they could become good school leaders. One intern stated, “Any time my principal gives me something new to do, I think I become a better leader,” and another intern said, “My mentor is very patient and willing to share information needed for my success.”

Mentor principals who did not spend much time with their interns or allow them to have input into administrative decision-making processes at the school were not as highly regarded by their interns as were the other mentor principals. One intern stated, “I personally never actually have conversations with our building principal about this program. We’ve only met with our principal one time about this program, and that was in the initial stages…” Interns who were not included in decision-making processes reported dissatisfaction with most everything their principals did, whether those things involved the UNT/DISD program or simply regular school functions. Those interns were more critical of their mentor principals and stated they aspired to be a different sort of school leader when they entered the world of educational leadership:

I want to be better. I want to really lead the people that work for me and empower them to do their best at what they do. I want to give them the tools they need to do that and be there to help them and encourage them to do that so they can get to where they want to lead. This is not what I see in my principal.
The UNT and DISD program sponsors also reported their awareness of the need for good mentor principals to the success of the program. When asked what improvements to the program or changes in the program he would recommend for the next cohort, the DISD official stated,

In the next round, I think we need to put more emphasis on the selection of principals than we did. Other than in the selection of them, I would have them involved in more things…I’m not sure how much has been done with the principals.

The UNT professor who was a program sponsor agreed with the DISD official’s assessment of the importance of the mentor principals. In response to the same question asked of the DISD official above, the UNT professor stated,

Something that I’ll be real strong on is the selection of mentor principals. We need guidelines. I didn’t get the opportunity to interact with the area superintendents. We worked through the DISD Higher Education Linkage official, so I had to tell him what we needed and he carried the word. So, the selection of the principals and their complete understanding of what we’re looking for in terms of students is a change that needs to be made.

Several mentor principals agreed with the UNT professor’s statement that the principals needed guidelines by which to operate. The principals said, while they did not need training in how to be a mentor, they would have appreciated more guidance and direction about the types of activities and administrative duties the principals were expected to assign their interns. Many mentor principals also expressed the desire to meet more often with their peers in the program so they could exchange ideas about the
activities and projects in which each of the principals allowed their interns to participate. The principals believed meeting with their peers would be advantageous to all the interns, as it would be one measure to possibly encourage those principals who were not as willing to allow their interns to participate in administrative decisions to include their interns in more campus-based decision-making processes.

Administrative interns also had some recommendations for ways to improve the involvement of their mentor principals. The interns suggested their mentor principals should occasionally attend one of the UNT classes with their interns. The interns believed class attendance would heighten the interest of the mentor principals in what the interns were learning and would provide an opportunity for the interns and mentor principals to form a bond that might carryover to the campus environment to precipitate a more collaborative relationship between the interns and their mentor principals. One intern also suggested the program sponsors should “build some kind of schedule that every principal should meet with their interns a certain amount of time every week.” Another intern suggested instituting a requirement that principals meet periodically with other mentor principals to “debrief.”

In summary, the kind and degree of involvement in decision-making processes by the interns directly affected the quality of the internship experiences of the interns. Since the amount and nature of involvement was controlled by the mentor principals, one could conclude the role of the mentor principal was important to an intern’s feelings of success with their internship experience in the UNT/Dallas Public Schools Leadership Development Program. Upon completion of this study of the UNT/DISD program after one year of operation, this researcher concurred with the assessment of other program
evaluators (Zellner, Jinkins, Gideon, Doughty, and McNamara, 2002) that the role of the mentor principal was the most critical factor relating to the enthusiasm, satisfaction, and success of the interns in the program.

**The Importance and Structure of the Internship**

The internship component of the UNT/DISD program was not included as one of the research questions in this study. However, the structure and importance of the internship was a theme that emerged during the interns’ and mentor principals’ discussions concerning the involvement of interns in campus-based decision-making processes. The internship in the UNT/Dallas Public Schools Leadership Development Program was embedded in the program rather than being confined to a full-time, one semester internship that was a part of the traditional principal preparation program at UNT. The administrative interns were released from their teaching duties at noon, once a week, so they could attend UNT classes and related activities. The interns’ UNT, 125 hour internship requirement was to be fulfilled at various times throughout the school days during the two-year time-span of the program.

As noted earlier in this discussion, many mentor principals reported the lack of enough time as a reason they did not involve their interns in more administrative duties and decision making processes. Principals were busy with the every-day responsibilities of running schools and attending to all their faculty members, not just the administrative interns in the UNT/DISD program. The principals did not have any extra time in their already overly crowded schedules to meet with their interns and spend quality time with them. Many principals expressed the desire to spend more time with their interns but stated it was simply not possible. The fact that the interns were still full-time teachers at
the schools and had limited amounts of available time to spend with the mentor principals during the school day precluded adequate meeting time.

Another time issue reported by both interns and mentor principals was that the interns were already involved in so many activities and projects at their respective schools, the interns did not have time to add any more activities or projects to their full schedules. The principals reported they recommended the interns chosen for participation in the program because the interns were already involved in so many leadership capacities at their schools. One mentor principal stated, “To get them involved more, something would have to give – either their class work or giving them an additional period off. One of my candidates also coaches, so he’s pretty busy.” Another principal occasionally hired substitute teachers to allow her interns time to work on additional school projects related to their UNT course work.

However, the principal who hired substitute teachers so her interns could have more time to spend on the UNT/DISD program was an unusual case. Substitute teacher pay was another issue the interns reported as being a detriment to their having enough time to spend with their mentor principals or doing UNT-related school projects. Many principals were not willing to hire substitute teachers to cover interns’ classes when they needed time to work on internship projects or even attend their UNT classes.

The interns reported a misunderstanding among program sponsors and mentor principals created the substitute teacher pay problem. In the early stages of program development, it was stated substitute teacher pay would come from the district budget. However, once the program had started, mentor principals were told funds for substitute teacher pay would have to come from the individual school’s budget. Thus, some
principals were reluctant to get substitute teachers for their interns. The interns were responsible for getting other teachers in the school to cover their classes for them, which, in turn, created some hard feelings among the teachers on those campuses.

Interns who reported they spent a lot of time with their mentor principals revealed much of the time spent was talking about and dealing with regular school issues and problems that were a part of the normal school day prior to their participation in the UNT/Dallas Public Schools Leadership Development Program. However, one intern who reported she spent a great deal of time with her mentor principal was fortunate because the principal had removed the intern from the classroom for the duration of the UNT/DISD program and assigned the intern to an administrative position in the school. That young lady was the only intern of the 26 who had been relieved of her teaching duties at her school. All other interns had to try and make time whenever possible to accumulate the program required 125 internship hours.

The embedded internship emerged as a great concern for the administrative interns and the mentor principals. The majority of interns expressed the desire to have more internship time to spend with their mentor principals. Following are quotes from several interns that are representative of the concerns expressed by the majority of interns during the focus group interviews:

“Perhaps we could cut down on a class or so and make it up with internship time. Maybe a couple of times during the semester we wouldn’t come here [UNT downtown class site] for class. It’s difficult to do things outside of here [UNT classroom], because it’s difficult to get subs to cover our classes.”
“We have two stresses; we’re trying to become this principal, and get to know everything we need to know, but at the same time, we still have to input grades, grade papers, etc. That’s kind of hard, still being a teacher, while learning to be a principal.”

“I feel like there’s this whole thinking like a teacher versus thinking like an administrator and that’s all consuming while I’m at school. And my first graders – ‘Are they reading?’ While trying to think like an administrator, I’m still worried about my 21 little first graders.”

“Waiving [embedding] the internship was a serious disadvantage for us because of the fact that we do need at least a semester, if not a whole year, of thinking as a principal, working through that, doing that day to day to day; because, it is going to be absolute shock when the rubber hits the road.”

“I’m a teacher and until you relieve me of my duties as a teacher, I can’t fully participate as an administrative intern. The action happens during the day. Before and after school you can do certain things, but I would far prefer an on-the-job training situation.”

Based on the input from the administrative interns and the mentor principals, it would behoove the UNT and DISD program sponsors to re-evaluate the embedded internship component of the UNT/Dallas Public Schools Leadership Development Program. Affecting changes on their campuses that would help improve student achievement was one of the goals of the UNT/DISD program. Those changes were meant to occur through the administrative interns’ participation in campus-based decision-making processes. Time for quality participation in decision-making activities
may not be possible under the current structure of the embedded internship that does not allow adequate time and energy for the interns or the mentor principals to perform to the best of their abilities.

**Serendipitous Effects of Interns’ Participation in UNT/DISD Program**

The administrative interns’ participation in the UNT/Dallas Public Schools Leadership Development Program produced some unexpected results on seven campuses in the program. Many mentor principals seemed to be “reliving” the days of their involvement in principal preparation programs as a result of their interactions with the interns at their schools. The principals were excited about what the interns were learning in their UNT classes and expressed joy at being able to discuss educational issues with the interns. Principals also believed their interactions with the interns provided an opportunity for the principals to reassess their approaches to school leadership, as the principals were forced to really think about “why” they did things the way they did in order to be able to better articulate their reasons for the interns. Several principals appeared to be having fun with the new challenges brought to them by the interns. Working with the interns had provided the principals an opportunity to once again be a teacher, and the principals were enjoying that aspect of the program.

Faculty members at the interns’ schools were also affected by the interns’ participation in the UNT/DISD program. Some teachers were affected positively and others were affected negatively. Seeing their colleagues being successful in a university program had inspired many teachers at the interns’ schools to inquire about how they could get in the program in the future. One principal reported, “I had other teachers calling me, wanting to transfer here because they knew we were going to be in the
program,” and an administrative intern said, “I know of two teachers at my campus who would like to be in this program the next time.”

Other teachers at the schools became interested in pursuing new career paths in education, other than educational administration, as a result of watching the interns succeed in the program. One mentor principal reported, “I see other people now wanting to jump on the bandwagon and do other things. I have some asking what it would take to become a specialist and another one asking about being a test coordinator.” Many teachers at the interns’ schools had gained a new respect for their colleagues and often approached the interns when the teachers needed questions answered or help with a problem. A middle school principal reported, “They’ve [other teachers at the school] gotten more respect for them [interns] and what they’re doing.”

Several interns reported other teachers at their schools were already treating the interns like another administrator on the campus and were using the interns as liaisons between the faculty and the school principal.

On the negative side, some teachers were reported to be jealous of their colleagues who were in the UNT/DISD program. One mentor principal reported, “Initially, we had envy. About 10 or 15 others came to find out how they could get in the program, especially because of the release time.” Release time was reported to be an issue on another campus, as the mentor principal reported, “I think there is a little dissatisfaction in that the interns leave in the middle of the day to go to class. That creates an inconvenience for all other teachers at school.” A male intern reported, “There are quite a few individuals that I believe are upset about it [interns being in program]. I can tell by the little remarks they make. It makes one step up to the plate.”
Some teachers’ negative attitudes toward the interns improved after the teachers saw how hard the interns worked and how committed they were to being successful in the program. As one intern reported, “At first they’re [other teachers] real hesitant, but when you put them at ease and let them know that I’m [the intern] never going to be the principal at this school to supervise my own colleagues, they’re O.K.” Several interns reported some teachers at their schools had expressed the teachers were glad they were not in the program because of the hard work that was involved.

Research Questions 4 and 5

Themes that emerged from research questions four and five also overlapped and have been included in the following discussion. Research question four asked how participation in the UNT/DISD program had changed the interns’ perceptions of themselves, and research question five asked how participation in the UNT/DISD program had changed the interns’ perceptions of educational administration. The emergent themes from the last two research questions encompassed both the personal and professional aspects of the interns and included: the interns’ growth in personal and professional maturity; the interns’ realistic perceptions of educational leadership as influenced by their mentor principals and their UNT classes; and the desire of the interns to be successful in the program and pursue administrative positions in the Dallas public schools upon completion of the UNT/Dallas Public Schools Leadership Development Program.

Interns’ Growth in Personal and Professional Maturity

As outlined in chapter four, the majority of interns reported growth in personal maturity and professionalism as a result of participation in the UNT/DISD program. The
interns were encouraged by their abilities to successfully handle the UNT course work. Many interns had not been students in quite some time, and the challenges of the course work and UNT-assigned projects were invigorating for the interns, as evidenced by the following statement: “I feel that I’m meeting a challenge that I have longed for for a while. Just the rigor of the subjects has been very encouraging.”

The interns reported being especially interested in the law and finance courses, as that information was new to the interns and they liked taking the information back to their campuses and sharing it with their mentor principals and colleagues. Several interns had been asked to present staff development workshops for their colleagues on the new information the interns had learned in the law class. Other interns reported involvement in their campus budget process, as a result of an assignment in the finance course, had opened the door for them to be more involved in other things at their schools. Gaining that new information from the UNT courses was reported to boost the interns’ confidence levels, as one intern stated, “My confidence level has risen. When you’re put in this type position and you learn so much, your confidence is built,” and another intern said, “I have learned a great deal, and I really believe in myself.”

The growth in personal maturity carried over to the interns’ professional lives, as many interns reported becoming better teachers as a result of participation in the UNT classes. One intern stated, “I think it’s [UNT/DISD program] an excellent program to give teachers an opportunity to grow and not just be stalemated.” Several interns explained it was looking at their teaching habits from an administrator’s perspective that had made them better teachers during their participation in the program.
Looking at themselves as teachers and observing their colleagues from an administrative perspective made the interns aware of the importance of school leaders to think and act globally. The revelation that a school administrator was responsible for everyone in the school and everything that occurred on a school campus was one of the perceptions the interns gained from participation in the UNT/DISD program. The need to “see the big picture” was one aspect of school administration that caused the interns’ to perceive the school principal’s job as “a daunting task.”

The perceptions of educational leadership reported by the interns in chapter four signified the interns were making the transition from thinking like teachers to thinking and responding like school administrators. Though the interns and the mentor principals reported the interns “flipped back and forth” between thinking like teachers and thinking like administrators, most interns felt confident, when given enough time, they were making a smooth transition to becoming a school leader. The embedded internship experience was again reported to be a problem that prevented the interns from making the full transition, as the interns were still responsible for the students in their classrooms. As one intern stated, “Right now, it feels like, other than some of the assignments, we’re just teaching and taking college courses.” Another intern stated, “It’s kind of hard, still being a teacher, while learning to be a principal.”

**Interns’ Realistic Perceptions of Educational Leadership**

As stated in the above discussion of research questions two and three, the actions of the mentor principals had a direct effect on the administrative interns’ perceptions of educational leadership. The perceptions reported by the interns in chapter four were both positive and negative, but the interns were able to discern the
differences and maintained a realistic perception of the world of educational leadership. The interns' interactions with their mentor principals had provided the interns a realistic view of the demanding and time-consuming job of a school principal. The interactions had also shown the interns qualities and traits of their mentor principals the interns wanted to emulate, as well as those qualities the interns recognized as being counterproductive to healthy, positive school environments that were focused on higher student achievement for all students.

The interns had mentally processed everything they had learned from their mentor principals and compared that information to what they had learned in the UNT classes. Participation in the UNT classes had provided an academic foundation upon which the interns could base their perceptions of educational leadership in light of what they had learned from their mentor principals. The course work and UNT projects helped the interns separate the “good” traits from the “bad” traits they witnessed in their mentor principals and allowed the interns who had not had a positive internship experience to still form positive perceptions of educational administration, in spite of their relationships with their mentor principals.

Desire of Interns to be Successful in Program and Pursue Administrative Positions in DISD upon Completion of Program

Though most of the interns' reported perceptions of educational administration centered on the stressfulness of the principal's job, all 26 interns were fully committed to completing the UNT/DISD two-year program and pursuing administrative positions in the Dallas School District upon completion of the program. The interns were excited at the prospect they could be the school leaders of the future who brought backgrounds of
strong instructional leadership to the position of school principal. As one intern stated, “I
find that most administrators that I’ve worked with know nothing about how children
learn. Most of them don’t know anything about instruction.” Many interns in this cohort
were selected for participation in the program because of their knowledge of how
children learn; thus, the interns believed they would be better school administrators than
principals with whom they had worked in the past.

It was understandable that the interns who had good internship experiences at
their schools and good relationships with their mentor principals were enthusiastic about
continuing in the UNT/DISD program and becoming DISD’s future school leaders. On
the other hand, it was admirable that the interns who had not had good internship
experiences or good relationships with their mentor principals were equally as
enthusiastic about continuing in the program and pursuing an administrative position in
DISD upon completion of the program. The interns who had not had as good of
internship experiences as the others seemed even more determined to become school
leaders so they could follow the good practices of educational leadership they had
crafted from the combination of learning what “not” to do and the new information
learned in the UNT classes.

The administrative interns were not guaranteed an administrative position in
DISD upon completion of the UNT/DISD program. Though the interns stated they were
aware there were no guarantees of an administrative job at the end of the two-year
program, several interns stated they did not believe DISD would be paying half the
tuition for the interns in the program if DISD did not intend to keep the interns in the
Dallas School District. Whether or not the interns are offered administrative positions in
DISD at the end of the program could become a problem-area for the UNT/DISD program. If all interns are not offered administrative positions upon completion of the program, the UNT/DISD program could lose a lot of its credibility with teachers and principals in the Dallas School District.

Six of the eight mentor principals interviewed addressed the concerns that the interns be offered administrative positions in DISD at the end of the program. Several principals spoke passionately about their belief that the interns trained in this UNT/DISD cohort would emerge as stronger new leaders than other new graduates of traditional preparation programs. The mentor principals believed these interns should be given the opportunity to practice their skills in DISD. The principals referred to the on-the-job training these interns had received as being superior to the type of principal training the mentor principals had received. As one elementary school principal stated,

If the district will create a pool, then they won’t have to do a lot of training in terms of new rookies…We’re giving them [interns] on-the-job training. By the time they’re [the interns] ready for an assistant principal’s or dean’s job, or whatever they’re seeking, you’re not going to have to spend a lot of time training them or orienting them to what needs to be done.

One high school principal spoke emphatically about the importance of DISD placing the interns from this program in administrative positions in the district:

The district needs to have in mind what their expectations are for these interns upon completion of the program. I know they’re not guaranteed a position, but they need to look very closely at them and not just stick them in some kind of lesser position, because the reputation of the district is at stake. If you get a lot of
interns out there and they come to the end of their program, and the district only places 25% of them, it’s not going to be good for the district.

A middle school principal agreed with the above statement and said, “I hope these people are given an opportunity to move forward and exercise all this knowledge they’ve learned. They will be the kind of administrators that we want to be a part of our district in this ‘No Child Left Behind.’”

Two middle school principals offered a more global view of their expectations for the interns upon completion of the program. The principals reported they had encouraged the interns from their schools to be open to the idea of seeking administrative positions in districts other than DISD. One principal stated,

I think they [interns] need to be made aware that it doesn’t stop here. You’re [the interns] marketable, and even though your training may come from Dallas, you can go outside Dallas and be equally as marketable, if not more. Don’t get stuck in a box because Dallas trained you.

The DISD Special Assistant to the Superintendent, Higher Education Linkages, was asked during his interview if the UNT/DISD program participants had been promised administrative jobs following completion of the program. The official explained that DISD had a “pretty arduous process for hiring new administrators,” as the district could have as many as 150-200 applicants for principalships each year, with usually less than 50 open positions to fill. The initial stages of the hiring process included applicants going through a screening and testing process to “cull out” applicants and determine which applicants would be invited to “a big reception” and have their résumés passed on to the eight area superintendents for the possibility of being hired as a school
principal in DISD. The interns from the UNT/DISD program, along with graduates of other Dallas School District principal preparation programs, would be allowed to skip the initial screening and testing phase and automatically enter the pool of candidates to be considered for an administrative position. The DISD official stated the pool of candidates coming out of all DISD’s principal preparation programs was “a pretty big pool. All the people that go through it are not going to get administrative jobs.”

Implications of Research Findings for Principal Preparation Programs

This study of the UNT/Dallas Public Schools Leadership Development Program produced implications that could have effects on the continuation and success of this program, as well as the implementation and success of future principal preparation programs.

Intern Selection Process

The question of whether self-selected or principal-tapped candidates become better school leaders could not be answered in this research study, as the study was an interim evaluation of the UNT/DISD program after only one year of operation. However, it was determined from this study that the self-selected candidates were qualified candidates for the program, as all eight of the self-selected interns had made acceptable scores on the GRE, did not have to enter the program through an appeals process, and were continuing in the program.

The majority of interns reported they felt greater pressure to be successful in the program because they had been selected by their school district for participation in the program. That fact could imply principal-tapped candidates in preparation programs would put forth greater effort to work hard and impress those school district officials who
had recommended the interns for the program. However, there is no evidence to suggest the principal-tapped candidates would actually be more successful, make better grades, or produce superior class projects than the self-selected candidates.

It remains to be seen if the 44% of interns who self-selected into the UNT/DISD program will be as successful in procuring administrative positions at the completion of the program as those who did not self-select. It will also benefit principal preparation program sponsors to track the self-selected interns to determine if those interns become successful school leaders after they enter the workforce. Though recruitment by school district officials was touted by many program sponsors as a necessity for getting quality candidates into preparation programs, the results of this study suggest “different” methods of selecting candidates, such as principals tapping teachers, have not been proven to be “better” methods than self-selection. Further research is needed before that determination can be made.

One of the UNT/DISD program criteria was that all interns meet UNT admissions standards. The findings from this study revealed seven administrative interns who had less-than-acceptable GRE scores were admitted to the UNT/DISD program through an appeals process. Admitting program participants based upon “watered down” admission standards could have serious implications for the success, or lack of success, of those seven interns in completing the program, as well as when the interns become school administrators. If any of the seven interns fail to complete the two-year UNT/DISD program, or are not placed in administrative positions upon completion of the program, the admittance on appeal would need to be considered as a possible factor that contributed to those failures. If, after more research, low GRE scores prove to equate to
lesser quality candidates, then the issue of admitting program participants based on “watered down” admission standards will be an area of the selection process that will need to be scrutinized by the UNT/DISD program sponsors, as well as principal preparation program sponsors everywhere.

The UNT/DISD program proved to be successful in forming a cohort of interns that was representative of the ethnic minority make-up of teachers in the Dallas School District, though the cohort was not representative of the student population in DISD. DISD’s student population was predominately Hispanic, but there was not a large pool of Hispanic teachers in DISD from which to choose candidates for the UNT/DISD program. Program sponsors made an effort to include as many Hispanic candidates as possible in the program. However, with one of the criteria of the selection process stating that participants be nominated by the district from the ranks of teachers in the district, it will be necessary for the UNT/DISD program sponsors to change that criteria if they do not want future cohorts to have the same problem of attracting enough Hispanic candidates to be representative of the large Hispanic student population in DISD. DISD experiences the same shortage of bilingual teachers as does many other school districts in the nation, so the UNT/DISD program, as well as other preparation programs in the nation, will need to find more creative ways to attract Hispanic candidates to teacher education and principal preparation programs.

Involvement of Interns in Campus-Based Decision-Making Processes That Would Lead to School Improvements

One of the stated goals of the UNT/Dallas Public Schools Leadership Development Program was for UNT to provide a school leadership program in which
DISD interns would work with their principals to improve their schools. The findings of this study of the UNT/DISD program showed the correlation between the interns’ involvement in decision-making processes that would empower the interns to have an impact on school improvements and the role of the mentor principals. The elementary school interns had the most fulfilling internship experiences and interactions with their mentor principals and reported feeling confident they were having an impact on school improvements at their campuses. That finding could suggest elementary schools are better suited to be on-the-job training grounds than are middle or high schools. It may be possible that the configuration of elementary schools lends itself to more collaboration among the principal and faculty of those schools, because elementary schools are not as departmentalized as are the middle and high schools.

The fact that some interns at the middle schools and two high schools did not have positive internship experiences or nurturing relationships with their mentor principals, which led to feelings the interns were not having an impact on school improvements, should not preclude those schools from being included in principal preparation programs in the future. The UNT/DISD program sponsors, as well as other principal preparation program sponsors, must make a more concerted effort to choose mentor principals that are willing to spend time with and energy on their interns. Program sponsors also need to provide more guidelines for the mentor principals about what the principals’ roles should entail. There needs to be one program sponsor who oversees all the mentor principals in a program so the principals know to whom they are accountable during the course of the program. Though it would seem fair to choose different DISD schools for the next cohort, this researcher would suggest the program
sponsors retain those mentor principals who did an excellent job mentoring their interns in this cohort. Perhaps those “good” mentor principals could act as mentors to the new principals who would be participating in the program for the first time in future cohorts.

The embedded nature of the internship proved to be responsible for some of the shortcomings reported by the interns in regards to the amount of involvement they experienced on their campuses. Program sponsors will need to rethink the embedded internship component of the UNT/DISD program if they expect the next cohort of interns to have more positive internship experiences. As the principals and interns reported, there simply was not enough time for the interns to be involved in more campus-based decision-making processes while being full-time teachers. The duration of a principal preparation program would most likely need to be spread over more than two years if the program did not include the embedded internship component. Interns in the UNT/DISD program stated they would prefer a longer program with a full semester, or even a full year, internship than a program with an embedded internship.

Interns and mentor principals were excited about the UNT/DISD principal preparation program and expressed a strong desire for the program to continue, in spite of the minor problems reported in this study. Representative comments from interns included: “Great idea! It is an excellent program in spite of its imperfections;” “I wish it could have begun long ago. I have enjoyed every minute;” and “This is an awesome program, and it’s great to be a part of a cohort. I’m hoping we can be a support for each other.” The positive effects the interns’ participation in the program had on their principals and the interns’ colleagues at their schools provided another justification for continuing the program. Principal preparation programs need to be constantly evaluated.
to insure they are meeting the needs of the participants of the programs and the schools that will benefit from having better trained leaders.

*Interns’ Desires to Become School Administrators in DISD*

All 26 interns expressed the desire to become a school administrator in DISD upon completion of the two-year UNT/DISD program. The fact that the interns were recommended by their principals for participation in the program could have added to the interns’ confidence that they would be moved into administrative positions after completion of the program. Securing an administrative position, whether it be as a school principal, an academic dean, an athletic director, or central office administrator, will probably not be an attainable goal for all 26 interns in the program. Program sponsors need to be prepared to help the graduates of the program deal with the reality that not all the interns are well-suited for administrative roles. Graduates of the program will also need to be counseled on keeping their options open and exploring administrative possibilities in school districts other than Dallas.

*Recommendations for Further Study*

Continuing research on many areas of the UNT/Dallas Public Schools Leadership Development Program and other principal preparation programs is necessary to aid program sponsors in developing and implementing the most effective programs possible to train future school leaders. This study was an interim evaluation of the two-year program after one year of operation; thus, there are many areas for future research based upon this study.

In regards to the selection process used in the UNT/DISD program, it will be imperative for research to be conducted at the conclusion of the two-year program to
track the success of the seven interns who were admitted to the program through an appeals process due to low GRE scores. It will be helpful for the program sponsors to know if those seven interns completed the two-year UNT/DISD program successfully and if they were able to secure administrative positions upon completion of the program. Further research is also recommended to determine what, if any, effect the self-selected versus principal-tapped selection method had on the interns’ abilities to secure administrative positions upon completion of the program.

During the interviews, when the interns were asked about their participation in campus-based decision-making processes, one intern’s response was: “That would be a good question to ask next year.” That intern was correct, as exploring the level of intern involvement in campus-based decision-making processes will be an important research topic at the end of the two-year program. The majority of interns were not being included in decision-making activities at their schools during the first year of the program, and the interns were hopeful that situation would change in the second year of the program. It will be important to the success of the next cohort for a researcher to determine if the level of involvement in campus-based decision-making increases during the second year of the program.

It is recommended that this study be replicated at the end of the two-year program to determine whether the selection methods and the interns’ involvement in campus-based decision-making have had an effect on the success of the interns in the UNT/DISD program. The interns’ perceptions of themselves and educational administration should also be included in the replication study to determine if those
perceptions have changed and whether all 26 interns are still interested in being a school administrator at the end of the program.

The role of the principal as mentor is another area that needs further study. It would be helpful to future principal preparation programs to determine what qualities possessed by principals are beneficial to making a principal an effective mentor. Researchers need to determine if a principal’s effectiveness in running his/her school has any bearing on whether that principal would make a good mentor. It would also be helpful for researchers to determine what expectations are held by the principals who are selected to be mentors in a principal preparation program. A survey of principals who have served as mentors concerning the types and level of involvement the principals allowed their interns would be beneficial in setting guidelines for future cohorts. It would also be helpful to determine if principals needed additional training on how to be a good mentor before they are assigned that duty by their school district. The answers to all these research questions would provide much needed data that could have a positive effect on the principal as mentor component of future principal preparation programs.

Another research area that needs to be explored is the serendipitous effects the interns’ participation in this program had on the mentor principals and the interns’ colleagues at the schools. Research should be conducted to determine whether there is more interest by the other teachers in pursuing professional goals as a result of their interactions with the UNT/DISD interns and whether those teachers have acted on their expressed interest. A study should also be done with the mentor principals to ascertain what effects the interns’ participation in the program had on the principals. These
research implications apply to all principal preparation programs, not only the UNT/ DISD program.

There are many implications for further research that would extend beyond just the end of the two-year UNT/DISD program. A longitudinal study to track the 26 interns in this cohort for a period of at least five years is recommended to provide valuable information for all principal preparation program sponsors. Researchers need to determine if the highly touted “different” methods of training future school leaders that were discussed in the review of literature are superior to the methods used in traditional preparation programs. Tracking graduates of one of the restructured principal preparation programs, such as the UNT/DISD program, and comparing those results to research study results of graduates of traditional preparation programs will be the only way to prove the new methods are effective and whether they are better or worse than the old methods. Researchers will need to determine how many of the 26 UNT/DISD program interns are successful in procuring an administrative position, either in DISD or elsewhere, during the years following the end of the two-year program.

Possibly the most pertinent study would be a study to compare the effectiveness of the UNT/DISD program graduates as school leaders to the effectiveness of school leaders who are trained in traditional preparation programs. This type of study would require a special research design to account for and measure the multitude of variables that have an effect on successful schools and student achievement. Without this type of comparison research, there is no valid proof that the restructured principal preparation programs do a better job of training future school leaders than do the traditional preparation programs.
Conclusion

As a member of SREB’s Leadership Development Network, the educational administration program at the University of North Texas formed a partnership with the Dallas Independent School District to provide a two-year, field-based principal preparation program designed to prepare effective school leaders for Dallas Public Schools. This evaluation study of the UNT/Dallas Public Schools Leadership Development Program found that the program was progressing toward its stated goals in many areas after one year of operation of the program. The study also revealed a few problem areas in the program.

The program was partially successful in its selection process in that it did provide an opportunity for DISD to have a role in the selection of teacher-leaders from the district to participate as administrative interns in the program. The inclusion of a representative number of minority candidates in the program was also a positive attribute of the selection process. Admitting interns who did not meet required university admission standards was an area of the selection process that will need closer scrutiny by program sponsors for future cohorts.

Administrative interns were not involved in campus-based decision-making processes to the extent hoped for by the interns and program sponsors. However, this was the first year of the two-year program, so it could be possible that the level of involvement will increase in the second year, after the interns have taken more university courses and gained more knowledge of educational leadership. The role of the mentor principal emerged as being the key factor in the amount of involvement by the interns and the interns’ level of satisfaction with the internship experience. The
selection of mentor principals for future cohorts is another area that will require closer scrutiny by program sponsors. The embedded internship component of the UNT/DISD program also emerged as a contributing factor to the interns’ lack of involvement in campus-based decision-making processes. Program sponsors will also need to reevaluate the internship component of the program prior to beginning the next cohort.

Though this study revealed the UNT/Dallas Public Schools Leadership Development Program experienced some problems in its first year of operation, the administrative interns and mentor principals whole-heartedly support the “grow-your-own” program as a viable program to provide the Dallas School District with a pool of well-trained, competent school leaders for the future. The administrative interns are excited at the prospect of becoming the “new breed” of school leaders and are looking forward to serving the Dallas Public Schools in an administrative capacity in the future.

A significant finding from this study was the absence of empirical research to support all the claims by program evaluators of the restructured principal preparation programs that the educational training methods employed in these revamped programs were superior to the methods used in traditional preparation programs. Future research should be conducted by impartial, non-biased researchers and include comparison studies between the graduates of restructured programs and graduates of traditional programs to determine if there really is a difference in school improvements and student achievement based upon the nature of the training of the school leader.
APPENDIX A

ADMINISTRATIVE INTERN QUESTIONNAIRE
ADMINISTRATIVE INTERN QUESTIONNAIRE
UNT/Dallas Public Schools Leadership Development Program

You have been asked to complete this questionnaire because you are a participant in the UNT/Dallas Public Schools Leadership Development program. Your responses to the following questions will remain anonymous.

INSTRUCTIONS – Please answer each question according to specific instructions given for that particular section.

Section I – Recruitment and Selection of Program Participants
CIRCLE ONE

1. Were you asked by your building principal to consider participation in this program?  Yes  No

   If yes, what reason did your principal give for selecting you as one of the program participants?
   ______________________________________________________________
   ______________________________________________________________

2. Did you approach your building principal first and express an interest in participating in this program? Yes  No

3. To your knowledge, are there teachers at your school who applied for admission to this program and were not accepted? Yes  No

   Don’t know

4. If there are teachers at your school who applied for this program and were not accepted, has their attitude toward you changed since your acceptance into the program? Yes  No

   If yes, how has their attitude changed?
   ______________________________________________________________
   ______________________________________________________________

5. Do you feel a greater pressure to be successful in this program as a result of being selected by your school district to participate in the program? Yes  No

6. Have the assistant principals at your school been helpful and willing to share their knowledge and expertise with you? Yes  No

7. Have the assistant principals at your school been cautious, guarded, and afraid that you might take their place? Yes  No
Section II – Graduate School Requirements

8. Please place a check [ ] in front of each of the UNT Toulouse School of Graduate Studies requirements which you have met:

_____ Official transcripts from all colleges attended have been submitted to the UNT Toulouse School of Graduate Studies.

_____ I have taken the GRE (Graduate Record Examination).

_____ I have submitted a completed Toulouse School of Graduate Studies application form.

_____ I have paid the $50 graduate school application fee.

Section III – UNT Educational Administration Program Requirements

9. Please place a check [ ] in front of each of the following UNT educational administration program requirements which you have met:

_____ I received an acceptable score of 338 or above on the verbal section and 374 or above on the quantitative section of the GRE.

_____ I have submitted an Application Form for a Master's Degree in Educational Administration and Principal Certification.

_____ I have submitted an Essay Form describing why I am seeking a master's degree in Educational Administration.

_____ I have submitted the Supervisor Recommendation Form.

_____ I have submitted a current resume.
Section IV – Campus-Based Decision Making

10. Prior to participation in this program, did you hold any leadership positions at your school?  
   Yes  No
   If yes, what positions did you hold?__________________________________
   _________________________________________________________________
   _________________________________________________________________

11. Prior to participation in this program, were you involved in any campus-based decision making processes at your school?  
   Yes  No
   If yes, in what decisions were you involved?___________________________
   _________________________________________________________________
   _________________________________________________________________

12. Is the faculty at your school receptive to new ideas and different leadership principles being transferred from your university classroom to your workplace?  
   Yes  No

13. Is the leadership at your school receptive to new ideas and different leadership principles being transferred from your university classroom to your workplace?  
   Yes  No

14. Have any of the field-based projects you have been required to complete for your university course work been directly related to real-world problems or projects at your school?  
   Yes  No
   If yes, briefly describe those projects.______________________________
   _________________________________________________________________
   _________________________________________________________________

15. Have you received cooperation and encouragement from teachers and administrators in your school when you initiated a field-based project or tried to incorporate something new you have learned in one of your classes?  
   Yes  No

16. Has your university course work thus far been beneficial to any school improvement projects you have been assigned by your principal or chosen for yourself?  
   Yes  No

17. What impact do you believe your participation in this program will have on improvements at your campus?______________________________________
Section V – Mentor Principals

18. Was there an initial meeting between your mentor principal, a university supervisor, and yourself that focused on the purposes of your participation in this program, including your internship, and the roles of each party? Yes No

19. How many times a week do you meet with your principal when he/she is acting in the capacity as your mentor in this university program?

________________________________________________________________________

20. What is the average length of time you spend with your mentor principal each time he/she meets with you?

________________________________________________________________________

21. Does your mentor principal assign you certain school improvement projects and activities because of your participation in this program? Yes No

If yes, what activities have you been assigned?

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

22. Does your mentor principal appear interested in your progress and act as a willing guide to steer you through this program? Yes No

23. Do you and your mentor principal have a problem adjusting to one another’s personal characteristics? Yes No

24. Is there a conflict between your principal’s administrative style and your own? Yes No

25. Has the time you have spent with your mentor principal been beneficial to your learning experience? Yes No

26. Would you benefit from having more internship time to spend with your principal/mentor, performing administrative tasks? Yes No
Section VI – Educational Administration

27. Has your participation in this program changed the way you perceive yourself?  
   Yes  No

28. Do you find yourself beginning to think more like an “administrator” and less like a “teacher” as a result of your participation in this program?  
   Yes  No

29. Now that you have spent a little time on the administrative side, do you have a different view of the teachers in your school?  
   Yes  No

30. Do you feel the teachers at your school have a limited understanding of the complexities of schools and the nature of administration and leadership?  
   Yes  No

31. Has your confidence in assuming leadership positions increased as a result of your participation in this program?  
   Yes  No

32. After one year of participation in this program, do you still have the desire to become a school principal?  
   Yes  No

33. After participation in this program, have you learned more about your personal leadership style?  
   Yes  No

34. Do you have a broader understanding of educational leadership than you did before you began this program?  
   Yes  No

35. Have you gotten a sense thus far in the program that the principal of a school can make a difference in the programs that are set up in his/her school?  
   Yes  No

36. Has participation in this program helped you gain insights into your school, its goals, and how they may be achieved?  
   Yes  No

37. Has participation in this program changed the way you perceive the world of educational leadership?  
   Yes  No
Section VII – Background and Activities
Please answer the following questions by placing a check [ ] in front of the appropriate answer or by filling in the blank.

38. What is your sex?  _____Male    _____Female

39. What is your age range? _____Less than 30 years old _____31-40 years old
 _____41-50 years old   _____Over 50 years old

40. What is your ethnicity? _____American Indian, Inuit, or Aleut
 _____Black or African American
 _____Mexican American
 _____Asian/Pacific Islander
 _____Other Hispanic or Latin American
 _____White
 _____Other

41. From which type of program did you receive your teacher certification?
 _____Traditional university program      _____Emergency or alternative certification program

42. Approximately what overall grade point average (GPA) did you receive as an undergraduate?
______________________________________________________________________

43. Including this year, how many years of teaching experience do you have in total (including public and non-public schools)?
______________________________________________________________________

44. Including this year, how many years have you been at your present school?__________

45. What is your current academic job responsibility? (For example, “Middle school math teacher”)  ___________________________________________________________________

46. What extra-curricular activities do you moderate?_______________________________

47. What do you hope will be the primary activity in your job following completion of this program?
 _____Teaching       _____Administrator      _____Central Office Staff

48. Where do you hope to be employed after receiving a master's degree from this program?  (Please check ONLY ONE.)
 _____Dallas ISD     _____Any school district other than Dallas ISD
APPENDIX B

MENTOR PRINCIPAL QUESTIONNAIRE
Mentor Principal Questionnaire
UNT/Dallas Public Schools Leadership Development Program

You have been asked to complete this questionnaire because one or more teachers from your school is a participant in the UNT/Dallas Public Schools Leadership Development program, and, as their supervisor, you are fulfilling the role of "mentor" for these teachers. Your responses to the following questions will remain confidential, and you will not be identified by name in any reports relating to this study.

INSTRUCTIONS – Please answer each question in accordance with the format of the question.

Section I – Recruitment and Selection of Program Participants

1. Who was involved in identifying teachers from your school to participate in this program?

_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________

2. Were the teachers who were chosen for participation in this program selected only from the pool of "teacher-leaders" at your school; i.e., those teachers who currently hold a leadership position at your school? (Please circle yes or no.)  Yes  No

For questions 3 and 4, please place a check [ ] in front of only one answer per question.

3. To what extent were there complaints from those teachers who applied for participation in this program but were not chosen?
   ___none   ___very little   ___some   ___a lot

4. To what extent do you support the "grow-your-own" philosophy; i.e., school districts selecting their "stars" for participation in leadership preparation programs such as the UNT/Dallas Public Schools Leadership Development Program?
   ___none   ___very little   ___some   ___a lot

Section II – Assessment of Participants in the Program

5. In your role as mentor, how many times per week do you meet with each of your teachers who is a participant in this program?

_____________________________________________________________________

185
6. In your role as mentor, what is the average length of time you spend per meeting with each of your teachers who is a participant in this program?

_________________________________________________________________

For questions 7 – 12, please place a check [ ] in front of only one answer per question.

7. To what extent are the teachers who are participating in this program now included in decision-making processes at your school?

___none          ___very little          ___some          ___a lot

8. To what extent do you view these teachers in a different light, now that they are participating in this program?

___none          ___very little          ___some          ___a lot

9. To what extent do you assign these teachers different projects and responsibilities than you did prior to their participation in this program?

___none          ___very little          ___some          ___a lot

10. To what extent have the teachers participating in this program received recognition at your school to the point where other faculty members are aware of their involvement in this program?

___none          ___very little          ___some          ___a lot

11. To what extent do the teachers who are participating in this program take part in administrative meetings or any other events that are seen as “administrative” driven?

___none          ___very little          ___some          ___a lot

12. To what extent have you witnessed the teachers participating in this program having a difficult time moving from responding like teachers to thinking like administrators?

___none          ___very little          ___some          ___a lot
Section III – Background

13. What is your sex?  _____Male    _____Female

14. What is your ethnicity? _____American Indian, Inuit, or Aleut
   _____Black or African American
   _____Mexican American
   _____Asian/Pacific Islander
   _____Other Hispanic or Latin American
   _____White
   _____Other

15. Including this year, in total, how many years have you been a principal (in public and non-public schools)?_______________________

16. Including this year, how many years have you been at your present school as a:
   teacher____________________________________
   assistant principal____________________________
   principal____________________________________

For questions 17 and 18, please place a check [ ] in front of only one answer per question.

17. To what extent did you have training from the University of North Texas to prepare you for the role of “mentor” in this program?
   ____none            ____very little           ____some             ____a lot

18. To what extent did you have training from the Dallas ISD to prepare you for the role of “mentor” in this program?
   ____none            ____very little           ____some             ____a lot

THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR FILLING OUT THIS QUESTIONNAIRE. IF YOUR RETURN ENVELOPE HAS BEEN MISPLACED, PLEASE MAIL THIS QUESTIONNAIRE TO:

Carol A. Newman
10857 Scotspring Lane
Dallas, TX 75218-1216
APPENDIX C

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS
Administrative Intern Structured Focus Group Interview Questions

Questions asked of each of the administrative intern groups during the structured focus group interviews:

1. In what types of campus-based decision-making processes have you been involved as a result of your participation in the UNT/Dallas Public Schools Leadership Development program? Is this different than your involvement prior to your participation in the program? If so, how is it different?

2. Describe any of your UNT program projects that have been adopted or implemented into practice at your school.

3. What kind of cooperation have you gotten from other teachers and administrators in your school when you initiated a “field-based” project or tried to incorporate something new you have learned in one of your classes?

4. What impact do you believe your participation in this program will have on improvements at your campus?

5. Which UNT courses have been the most beneficial to your understanding of educational leadership? Which have been the least beneficial? Why?

6. How has participation in this program changed your perception of yourself in three areas: personally; as a teacher; as a prospective school principal?

7. How has the opportunity to interact with your principal/mentor affected your perception of school leadership?

8. What have you learned from your mentor/principal about educational leadership?

9. How has participation in this program changed your perception of educational leadership?
Additional Focus Group Interview Questions
Based on Questionnaires

1. Would you have ever entered an administrative preparation program if your principal had not tapped you and told you you could do it?

2. How do you feel about this “grow-your-own” program? Good idea?

3. What about the insular nature of the program (no students from outside DISD to mix and exchange ideas with? Does this bother you?

4. Only @ 2/3 of you said you had an initial meeting with someone from UNT, your principal and yourself at the beginning of this program. Do you think you all needed more information and guidance from the beginning?

5. The questionnaires indicated that most of you are not spending much time with your principals as your mentors. Do you think that is a weakness in the program? How could it be improved?

6. All but one person said they could benefit from more time spent as an intern with your principal, doing administrative tasks. Do you think that would be more beneficial than some of your course work? How could you do that?

7. Half the class got teacher certifications through emergency or alternative programs. Tell me about those programs. What was undergraduate degree in? (Put on post-it paper.)

8. This program is based on an SREB initiative that hopes to develop a “new breed” of school leaders who are committed to making a difference in improving schools and student achievement. Do you feel like your first year in this program is taking you in that direction?
UNIVERSITY OF NORTH TEXAS
RESEARCH CONSENT FORM

Subject Name: ___________________________ Date: ___________________

Title of Study: Interim Evaluation of the UNT/Dallas Public Schools Leadership Development Program: A Working Model

Principal Investigator: Carol A. Newman

Before agreeing to participate in this research study, it is important that you read and understand the following explanation of the proposed procedures. It describes the procedures, benefits, risks, and discomforts of the study. It also describes your right to withdraw from the study at any time. It is important for you to understand that no guarantees or assurances can be made as to the results of the study.

Purpose of the study and how long it will last: This study is being conducted to evaluate the effectiveness of the UNT/Dallas Public Schools Leadership Development Program and to determine if the program is meeting the established goals set out for the program after one year of operation. The study will last for approximately one month, beginning in mid-April and ending in mid-May, 2003.

Description of the study including the procedures to be used: Qualitative research methods will be used in this study. Participants will be asked to complete a 6-page questionnaire. Focus group interview sessions will also be held with the participants in small groups. Some individual, private interviews will also be conducted. Historical documents relating to the program will be reviewed.

Description of procedures/elements that may result in discomfort or inconvenience: None of the procedures should cause any discomfort for any participant. Every effort will be made to conduct the interviews on Wednesdays during the participants’ regularly scheduled UNT class times so as to not inconvenience the participants.

Description of the procedures/elements that are associated with foreseeable risks: There are no foreseeable risks involved with participation in this study.

Benefits to the subjects or others: Participants in this study could benefit from program improvements, if the study reveals a need for changes to some areas of the program. UNT and Dallas ISD officials will benefit from the results of the study in planning and implementing the second year of the 2-year program, as well as making changes for future programs.
Confidentiality of research records: Participants’ names will not be used in any published reports relating to this study. All notes and tape recordings will be destroyed at the end of the study.

Review for protection of participants:

This research study has been reviewed and approved by the UNT Committee for the Protection of Human Subjects (940) 565-3940.

RESEARCH SUBJECTS’ RIGHTS: I have read or have had read to me all of the above.

Carol A. Newman has explained the study to me and answered all of my questions. I have been told the risks or discomforts and possible benefits of the study.

I understand that I do not have to take part in this study, and my refusal to participate or to withdraw will involve no penalty or loss of rights or benefits or legal recourse to which I am entitled. The study personnel may choose to stop my participation at any time.

In case there are problems or questions, I have been told I can call Dr. Frank Kemerer at 940-565-4800 or Carol A. Newman at 214-553-9259.

I understand my rights as a research subject, and I voluntarily consent to participate in this study. I understand what the study is about and how and why it is being done. I have been told I will receive a signed copy of this consent form.

______________________________________________________ __________
Subject’s Signature Date

______________________________________________________ __________
Witnesses’ Signature Date

For the Investigator or Designee:

I certify that I have reviewed the contents of this form with the person signing above, who, in my opinion, understood the explanation. I have explained the known benefits and risks of the research.

______________________________________________________ __________
Principal Investigator’s Signature Date
REFERENCES


UNT/Dallas Public Schools Leadership Development Proposal (2001). Denton, TX: University of North Texas, Department of Educational Administration.


