THE URGENCY OF PRINCIPAL PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND THE IMPLICATIONS FOR POLICY AND PRACTICE

by

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Abstract

School principals have a significant impact on student achievement, and the need to adequately prepare and develop them is necessary if districts want to positively impact student achievement outcomes. This case study examined 1) the practices and systems that school districts use to support principal professional development (PD) 2) the alignment of district practices and systems to the California Professional Standards for Educational Leaders (CPSEL) and effective professional development constructs, and 3) principal perceptions of the alignment of received professional development to effective professional development constructs, the CPSEL, and their professional development needs. School district administrators and principals representing the Southern San Joaquin Valley of California participated in this research via interviews and focus groups. The findings indicate a lack of a system of support for principal supervisors. Other findings include that few districts use principal action plans to provide differentiated PD and support to principals, and that differentiated PD was primarily based on district initiatives and school site needs, instead of PD needs as identified directly by principals. The PD and supports provided to principals also primarily focused on instructional leadership and organizational management, two PD areas that most align to principal reported PD needs. Districts are investing in

the human capacity of principals by providing principal PD and support. However, there is a lack of leadership development via a systemic framework across districts that provides principal PD and support needed throughout a continuum. Districts need to reexamine their principal supervision structure and utilize the School Administrator System of Support (SASS) suggested by the researcher to intentionally plan for and develop the varied needs of principals throughout their leadership career. The model ensures that principals are not only provided with PD and support based on district initiatives and school needs, but also based on principal identified needs aligned to the CPSEL and effective PD constructs. Consistent with leadership development theory, a systematic approach to principal PD across districts in the state of California, will ensure educational equity and equity in the growth and development of all leaders in the state.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Principals of K-12 schools are accountable for the academic achievement of their students and schools, and report to school boards, district leaders, staff, community, parents, and students. State mandates and increasing accountability for student achievement, graduation rates and college and career preparation, make 21st principal leadership complex and demanding (Fullan 2002; Hargreaves & Goodson, 2006; Manna, 2015). As Scott and Webber (2008) asserted, "principals' roles encompass more diverse duties and expectations, ranging from instructional leader to financial manager to policy developer, decision maker, staff mediator and negotiator, and marketer" (p. 765). Principals also have the second highest impact on student achievement, second only to teachers (Hitt & Tucker, 2016; Leithwood, Harris, & Hopkins, 2008; Manna, 2015; Mitgang, 2008; Rice, 2010). Principals are overwhelmingly responsible for the overall organizational management and instructional leadership of schools and require a specialized set of skills and support to lead effectively. Yet, principals continue to lack the support and professional development (PD) they need, especially when compared to teachers.

The School Leaders Network (2014) reported that in 2011-2012, $90 million in Title II funds were used to develop principal leadership of high poverty schools while $994 million was used to develop teachers. That is a significant difference of $904 million. This demonstrates the inequity in professional development funding, attention and support that exists for principals in both policy and practice. Principals shape the vision that supports school success, and they cultivate a learning environment that sets the condition for academic achievement (Wallace Foundation, 2013). Consequently, principals require the same access to

professional development as teachers, and the PD they receive should be individualized to meet their specific needs (Bottoms & Fry, 2009; Hoffman, 2004; Zellner, Jinkins, Gideon, Doughty, & McNamara, 2002). However, California and other states are falling behind in the development and implementation of support for principals (Kearney, 2010; Riley & Meredith, 2017).

The lack of principal professional development in California and other states impacts principal turnover and strains district fiscal resources (Kaufman, Gates, Harvey, Wang & Barrett, 2017; School Leaders Network, 2014). School districts must invest in principal capital and their development if they want to have a significant impact on student achievement and principal retention (Fullan, 2007; George W. Bush Institute, 2016; Kearney, 2010; Manna, 2015). Principals also report higher job satisfaction and demonstrate increased retention rates when they are provided with professional development (Metlife, 2013; National Center for Education Statistics, 2013). Principals need to be provided with professional development, not just at preparation and induction, but via a continuum, throughout their leadership careers (Day, 2000; Day, Fleenor, Atwater, Sturm & McKee, 2014; George W. Bush Institute, 2016; Mumford, Marks, Connelly, Zaccaro, & Reiter-Palmon, 2000; School Leaders Network, 2014; Scott & Webber, 2008; University of Washington Center for Educational Leadership, 2016). This exemplifies the urgency for school districts and states to develop, support and build the leadership capacity of principals by providing professional development to new and continuing veteran principals.

In most other organizations, employees are provided with a systematic method or continuum of professional development for advancement and are expected to follow steps for their continued growth and development (Scott & Webber, 2008). In education, leaders are often left to their own devices and

provided with “ad hoc, hit-and-miss, on-the-job learning” (Scott & Webber 2008, p. 773). Principals need to be provided with professional development that is aligned to professional standards like the California Professional Standards for Educational Leaders (CPSEL), and aligned with effective professional development constructs (Bottoms & Fry, 2009; Darling-Hammond, LaPointe, Meyerson, Orr & Cohen, 2007; George W. Bush Institute, 2016; Kearney, 2010, 2015; Manna, 2015; Sun, 2011; Zepeda, Parylo & Bengtson, 2014). The alignment of both CPSEL and effective professional development constructs to principal professional development is key to ensure that adequate evaluation and measurement of principal development needs and capacity is assessed, identified, and effectively provided throughout a continuum of principal leadership.

Much of the literature reviewed for this study included implications that call for the need for more rigorous studies that examine school district and principal supervisor practices for principal supervision and development (Kearney, 2010; Riley & Meredith 2017; Rowland, 2017; Scott & Webber, 2008). The literature also indicated the need for more research on state and local coordination on the development of a system of professional development for principals throughout their administrative careers (George W. Bush Institute, 2016; Kearney, 2010).

Statement of the Problem

California principals need professional development to build their leadership capacity not only during principal preparation but throughout their leadership career. School districts have a responsibility to provide professional development to principals and they are lacking in their development and implementation of a system of support (Honig, Copland, Rainey, Lorton, & Newton, 2010; Kearney, 2010; Manna, 2015; Sun, 2011). School districts are also

inconsistent in their identification of a district principal supervisor that monitors and supports the development of school principals, and when one is identified; principal supervision is often fragmented by other duties (Manna, 2015). Moreover, principal supervisors often lack the training and capacity to adequately support and develop principals (Council of Chief State School Officers, 2015).

The California Commission on Teaching Credentialing (CTC) has clearly established the CPSEL to support California principal development. However, many school districts fail to align the CPSEL to principal professional development or utilize them as a framework to identify areas of professional competency, and continued or ongoing principal growth (Kearney, 2010; Manna, 2015; Sun, 2011). Principal PD has a history of being inadequate as well as ineffective and fails to meet the professional development needs as identified by principals (Darling-Hammond et al., 2007). Thus, supporting the need to provide principals with professional development that is aligned to research-based effective professional development constructs: sustained, job-embedded, interactive, collegial, integrated, focused on student learning and provided throughout a continuum (Bishop, Darling-Hammond & Jaquith, 2015; California Department of Education, 2012; Every Student Succeeds Act, 2015; Fogarty & Pete, 2004).

Significance of the Study

The purpose of this study was to conduct an examination of what California school districts are doing to supervise and provide principal professional development that is aligned to standards, and effective professional development constructs throughout a continuum of principal leadership.

The data collected were anticipated to contribute to the current literature and provide insight into the state of principal professional development in Central

California. The data are also intended to inform principal professional development policy and practice to ensure that school districts invest in principal capital and provide a continuum of principal professional development throughout their tenure, to support principal retention and high student achievement outcomes. These efforts contribute to what Kaufman et al. (2017) referred to as the principal pipeline. The principal pipeline initiative supports a continuum of principal pipeline development efforts and specific activities related to the preparation, hiring, development, evaluation, and support of school leaders (Kaufman et al., 2017). By investing in principals and their development, principal capacity and quality can be improved, principal turnover can be reduced, and student achievement can be positively impacted.

Theoretical Framework

The focus of the literature and this research is grounded in theories of leadership development and human capital management. Leadership development asserts that individuals learn at different rates and in different ways (Day et al., 2014). Leaders also require specific skills that are more important and beneficial at different phases in their career. The development of these leadership skills and knowledge are progressive, occur over a career continuum, can begin simple and can become more complex over time (Mumford, et al., 2000). Human capital theory asserts there is an underlying belief in employee learning capacity, and investing in training, education and development of employees results in profit for the organization, the individual and their communities (Aliaga, 2001; Nafukho, Hairston, & Brooks, 2004; Schultz, 1961). Essentially, when school districts invest in principal development throughout a continuum, they are building the capacity of their workforce, and elevating their human capital, and the profit of student achievement.

Research Questions

The research questions developed for this study were designed to incorporate the theoretical framework and gain a deeper understanding of principal professional development in California. This research intended to answer the following research questions:

1. What school district systems of support and personnel are responsible for helping principals grow as leaders?
2. What strategies and practices are used in school districts to provide differentiated professional development and support to principals?
3. What professional development strategies and practices used in school districts are aligned to the California Professional Standards for Educational Leaders (CPSEL) and effective professional development constructs?
4. What are K-12 principal perceptions of the alignment of professional development they have received to effective professional development constructs, the CPSEL and their professional development needs?

Participant interview and focus group questions were specifically created to align to each research question to ensure that adequate data were collected to answer each research question.

Conceptual and Operational Definitions

District: For the purposes of this study, a district is a group of schools located within a geographical boundary, overseen by a local education agency and managed by district administrators who are responsible for the growth and development of principals within the district.

Effective Professional Development: Professional development that is sustained, job-embedded, collegial (Bishop et al., 2015; California Department of Education, 2012; Every Student Succeeds Act, 2015; Fogarty & Pete, 2004), interactive (Every Student Succeeds Act, 2015; Fogarty & Pete, 2004), integrated (Fogarty & Pete, 2004), focused on student learning (California Department of Education, 2012) and provided on a continuum (Bishop et al., 2015).

Principal: A state-credentialed educational administrator who holds the title of school principal or is otherwise administratively responsible for a K-12 public school serving children and youth (George W. Bush Institute, 2016).

Professional Development: Knowledge and skill building activities and opportunities that increase professional capacity and improve practice or performance related to organization and employee goals and needs (Elmore, 2002; Kearney, 2010; Norton, 2008).

Superintendent: For the purposes of this study, a superintendent is defined as one who has the oversight and charge of a place, institution, department, organization, or operation (Superintendent, n.d.)

The second chapter includes a review of the literature that encapsulates the current realities of principal professional development in California, its deficits, inadequacies, and the impact of federal policy. The literature provides research-based solutions, constructs and promising practices to develop and support a system of principal professional development and supervision. It also establishes the answer to why the need for principal professional development is urgent.

CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

School principals have a significant impact on student achievement, and the need to adequately prepare and develop them is urgent (Bottoms & Fry, 2009; Branch, Hanushek, & Rivkin, 2013; Bryk, Sebring, Allensworth, Luppescu & Easton, 2010; Hitt & Tucker, 2016; Hoffman, 200; Leithwood et al., 2008; Manna, 2015; Mitgang, 2008; Rice, 2010; Zellner et al., 2002). To support principal growth and leadership**,** school districts must build principal capacity and provide school principals with robust and continuous professional development. School districts must also utilize professional development practices that align with research based professional leadership standards, namely, the CPSEL and effective professional development constructs: sustained, job-embedded, interactive, collegial, integrated, focused on student learning and provided on a continuum (Bishop et al., 2015; California Department of Education, 2012; Every Student Succeeds Act, 2015; Fogarty & Pete, 2004; Kearney, 2010). However, the research suggests there is a gap in school district and state action and implementation of principal professional development.

California Demographics

California demographics are important to consider in this research because they provide 1) context for the extent of diversity that exists in California, 2) context for school leadership challenges, and development needs specific to California leaders, and 3) because the primary focus of this research is on California K-12 principals. The site selected for this study was a rural, geographical area of Central California known as the Southern San Joaquin Valley, and included the following counties: Kings, Kern, Tulare, Fresno and Madera (League of California Cities, 2018). This area was selected for research

due to the underrepresentation of principal professional development research conducted in these counties. The demographics of this area mirror California in that most of the ethnicity in this region is Hispanic/Latino, contains significant poverty rates, and speaks a language other than English (California Department of Education, n.d.-b).

California has a diverse population of over 39 million and its ethnic makeup consists of 39% Hispanic/Latino, 37% White, 15% Asian, 7% Black/African American, 1.5% American Indian and Alaskan Native and .5% Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander (U.S. Census Bureau, 2017). Forty-four percent of households in California speak a language other than English in their homes and 14.3% of the population live in poverty (U.S. Census Bureau, 2017). In education, California has a K-12 enrollment of over 6 million students and its ethnicity is like the overall population with slightly higher Hispanic/Latino (54%) and lower White (24%) populations (California Department of Education, n.d.-b). In terms of language, 21% of California's students are identified as English Learners and 21% are identified as Fluent English Learners. Almost half of these students (42.8%) speak a language other than English in their homes. Over half of all students (58%) were eligible for free and reduced-priced meals (California Department of Education, n.d.-b).

California's education demographics present specific challenges to school principals. The challenges include meeting a diverse set of student language and economic needs all while providing and working to produce high academic achieving schools. The unique needs of California students require school principals that are adequately developed and supported in their leadership capacity to meet the demands of California students and schools.

Academic Performance

California's diverse student population has struggled to perform on newly initiated state exams including the California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress (CAASPP) (California Department of Education, 2018). The CAASPP is an exam taken by California students in grades 3, 8 and 11, to assess their grade level proficiency in English and math (California Department of Education, 2018). Since the CAASPP exams in English Language Arts (ELA) and mathematics were initiated in 2014/2015, California students have made gradual academic progress (California Department of Education, 2018). In 2016/2017, 48.5% of students met or exceeded ELA grade level standards compared to 44% in 2014/2015. In 2016/2017, 37.6% of students met or exceeded Mathematics grade level standards compared to 33% in 2014/2015 (California Department of Education, 2018). California's student achievement data reflects that not only do principals need to focus on addressing the language and economic needs of students, they must also work to provide curricular and instructional support for teachers and develop an educational program that delivers academic growth and proficiency.

Teachers

There are over 300,000 teachers in California and most of them are White (63%) followed by Hispanic/Latino (20%). Female teachers also over-represent most teachers (73%) compared to males (27%) (California Department of Education, n.d.-b). California teachers have an average of 12 years teaching experience in their school district and there is currently a student/teacher ratio of 21/1 (California Department of Education, n.d.-b). Teacher ethnicity data fails to align with California's overall population and its K-12 school enrollment (California Department of Education, n.d.-b).

Administrators

There are more teachers than school administrators in California. In fact, there are an estimated 26,893 administrators in California and their ethnicity mirrors that of California teachers: 61% White and 22% Hispanic/Latino (California Department of Education, n.d.-a; California Department of Education, n.d.-b). There are also more female administrators in California (62%) compared to males (38%) (California Department of Education, n.d.-a). Principals also have a student/principal ratio of 243/1 and stay at the same school an average of less than 4 years (California Department of Education, n.d.-a). As a result, California is one of the top 10 worst states with the lowest average years (2.7-3.5) of principals leading the same school (School Leaders Network, 2014). The data question the retention efforts that school districts are making to support and retain principals, including the professional development and support of principals. It also exemplifies the political power and number of teachers compared to principals, which widely influences and impacts policy at both the state and federal level (Manna, 2015).

Administrative Credentials

It is important to know and understand the steps California school principals take to obtain their administrative credential. California administrators have at least three pathways to earn their administrative credential from the CTC: 1) commission-approved traditional preparation program 2) commission-approved alternative (intern) preparation program and 3) commission-approved examination (i.e., California Preliminary Administrative Credential Examination or CPACE) (Commission on Teaching Credentialing, 2015). Individuals who go through an intern or traditional administrator preparation program have 66 CTC approved administrator preparation programs from which they can attend (Commission on

Teaching Credentialing, 2015). Most administrator preparation program providers (53) are Institutions of Higher Education (IHE) and the others are non-IHE (13) (Commission on Teaching Credentialing, 2015). In 2014/2015, California issued 2,599 new Administrative Services Credentials (Commission on Teaching Credentialing, 2016). Many of the administrative credentials were earned through a California State University (CSU) (42%) and through a Private/Independent College or University (43%) (Commission on Teaching Credentialing, 2015). Others (12%) were earned through a Local Education Agency (LEA) and 4% were earned through a University of California (UC) (Commission on Teaching Credentialing, 2015). The data highlight the inconsistent and varied preparation that California administrators receive before entering the profession as principal leaders.

California's data are significant in that its population is diverse and impoverished. Its K-12 student population faces language barriers, and most California students are not meeting grade level standards in ELA and mathematics (California Department of Education, 2018). This presents specific challenges to California's school principals that require support and development. California principals are also entering the profession through varying preparation programs and are not staying in their principal positions very long, emphasizing the need to focus on principal development and retention efforts.

In addition to normal state and school district attention on curriculum, instruction and assessment improvement, California and its school districts need to ensure that they explore all factors, and support all individuals that impact student achievement, specifically principals. These efforts must include strategic and purposeful principal professional development to assist in improving student

achievement outcomes and principal retention, and recognition that principals have a significant impact on student achievement and need to be supported.

Principal Impact & Leadership

Extensive research supports the impact school principals and principal leadership have on instruction and academic achievement. Leithwood et al. (2008) reported that closely behind teacher instruction, principal leadership can impact student learning. In fact, Leithwood et al. (2008) asserted that "school leadership has a greater influence on schools and students when it is widely distributed" (p.28). Strong principal leadership can also result in a positive school culture that supports teacher stability and longevity (Leithwood et al., 2008). Similarly, principals affect student learning by attracting, supporting and retaining a high-quality teaching staff (National Association of Secondary School Principals/National Association of Elementary School Principals, 2013). Teaching staffs are drawn to and will work for a leader that is committed to ensuring that teachers are motivated, safe and supported. In turn, this leads to the retention of an effective teaching workforce and positive impact on student achievement (Mitgang, 2008).

School leadership can also be regarded as multidimensional, having multiple layers of focus including but not limited to, instruction, accountability, management, policies and procedures and promotion of an equitable education (Ylimaki & Jacobson, 2011). As such, principals need to develop and maintain breadth in knowledge and skills in both instructional leadership and management, if they are to demonstrate any impact on teaching and learning (Steinberg & Cox, 2017).

Instructional Leadership

Instructional leadership has been recognized as key to a principal's impact on student achievement and learning (Branch et al., 2013; Bryk et al., 2010; Hitt & Tucker, 2016; Rice, 2010). In fact, Dufour (2002) asserted that instructional leaders need to have up-to-date knowledge on three areas of education if they are to be effective instructional leaders and serve as a resource to support instruction and learning: curriculum, instruction, and assessment. To lead this instructional work specific skills, which include planning, assessing school and educational program needs, and oversight, are required to be effective (Lashway, 2003).

An example of the scope and depth of instructional leadership is exemplified by the Council of Chief State School Officers (2015). The Council of Chief State School Officers (2015) asserted that principals must engage in the following leadership activities directly related to student learning if they are to be effective instructional leaders (Council of Chief State School Officers, 2015):

1. Model learning for others – reflection, personal growth, ethical practice and a focus on improvement
2. Willingly confront issues of equity that impede student learning
3. Recognize and respond to the diverse cultural and learning needs of students
4. Develop staff to increase their capacities for improving student learning
5. Make decisions based on how they will affect student success
6. Understand how all systems affect student success
7. Share and distribute responsibilities for student learning (p. 3)

These instructional leadership practices go beyond the breadth of classroom instruction and highlight myriad of skills that are required to be an effective

instructional leader. These skills require practice, development and they require support.

Effective instructional leaders also lead and facilitate communities of practice. They can impact student achievement by being effective communicators, evaluators of data, instructional resource researchers and by providing teachers with pedagogical practices to support their instruction and sustain a culture of continuous adult learning (Hallinger & Heck, 2010). However, the research surrounding instructional leadership continues to evolve and reflect how other principal practices, outside of instructional leadership, impact student achievement, including the impact of principal organizational management.

Organizational Management

In addition to instructional leadership, principal capacity in organizational management is a factor that impacts student achievement in schools. Organizational management refers to tasks that indirectly support curriculum, instruction, instructional improvement and the direct functioning of the day-to-day operations of a school (Horng & Loeb, 2010). These tasks align to short and long-term school goals and include budget management, school safety, facility maintenance, and hiring. Additional organizational management tasks include responding to school, staff, and district needs as well as providing teachers with resources for successful instruction (Horng & Loeb, 2010). Principal time spent on organizational management can bring significant results.

Horng, Klasik, and Loeb (2010) observed everyday tasks of 65 principals in Florida in 1 week in April 2008 and found that approximately 30% of principals spent their time on administrative tasks including compliance and student supervision, 20% on organizational management activities and less than 10% on instructional leadership focused tasks. When the researchers examined principals'

time use and student performance, using a concise model and control for past student performance, they found that devoting more time to organizational management was correlated with higher student achievement compared to time devoted to day-to-day instruction tasks (e.g., classroom observation, teacher coaching, feedback).

In similar research later conducted by Grissom, Loeb and Master (2013), principals spent less than 13% of their time on instructional tasks that primarily centered on classroom visits. In their examination of the relationship between principal time spent on instruction-related activities in relation to student achievement gains, their findings were consistent with that of Horng et al. (2010). Horng et al. (2010) found that overall, any difference in student achievement or school improvement is not significantly associated with principal time focused on instructional tasks (p.512). Horng et al. (2010) asserted that principal time may be better spent using (instead of collecting) classroom observation data for the management and improvement of the educational program, to attain more favorable achievement outcomes. The research in this area is significant in that it speaks to the importance of the examination of principal professional development; the volume and depth of principal professional development; and the need to strategically support principals beyond the lens of instructional leadership and instruction-related activities.

Principal instructional leadership and organizational management both have a significant influence on academic achievement in schools and principal skills in these areas are critical to school success. Principals are also only second to teachers in having the largest impact on student achievement. If principals are going to influence moving schools toward academic proficiency, they must be provided with just as much support and professional development as teachers.

They also must be supported by school districts that have an established vision and a principal preparation, induction and ongoing professional development plan that supports principal leadership and growth (School Leaders Network, 2014).

Principal Preparation

On a learning and human resource management continuum, principal preparation and induction precede principal professional development and provide foundational training necessary prior to becoming a principal (Odden & Kelly, 2009; Zepeda et al., 2014). It is in the preparation stage that principal preparation programs are critical to the onboarding of novice principals to the profession. Principal preparation programs have a responsibility to utilize research-based approaches to adequately prepare principals for the myriad of leaderships demands, complex situations and challenges they encounter (Darling-Hammond, 2010; Fullan, 2007). Encouraging, researched based, principal preparation program practices were offered by the George W. Bush Institute (2016) that include: a) Program alignment to research-based competencies, b) Evidence of a significant experiential learning component, c) Evidence of a rigorous recruitment and selection process, d) On-the-job support throughout the early years of a principal's career, e) Evidence of a collaborative partnership between the program and the district served, and f) A demonstrated commitment to collecting data that can inform continual improvements to a program. Despite these researched based practices, principal preparation is often criticized as being inadequate to meet the demands of principal leadership. Bishop et al. (2015) asserted that principals require the skills necessary to cultivate effective learning teams. The ability of these learning teams to work effectively impacts their ability to analyze and address student learning needs that affect student achievement. However, despite

the urgency of this practice; credentialing and preparation programs do not always include the development of these skills in their programs.

The alignment of real time principal duties and responsibilities, and the components of a principal preparation program, is vital to adequate principal preparation. Principal preparation lays the foundation for continued principal professional development and growth once in a leadership position. The Wallace Foundation (2016) examined the literature of both qualitative and quantitative research of four organization reports that studied university preparation programs. The Wallace Foundation (2016) found that the four reports centered on several assertions including that "university-based principal preparation is still, largely, not as effective as it needs to be to produce the leaders our nation's schools and students require" (p. 6). In addition, stakeholders including superintendents and universities believe that principal preparation programs could benefit from improvement, and that states can do a better job at promoting higher-quality preparation programs (The Wallace Foundation, 2016). In support, research by Darling-Hammond, Orphanos, LaPointe, and Weeks (2007) found that less than half of California principals reported feeling well-prepared after completion of an administrator preparation program. The purpose of this section is to examine California's approach to principal preparation, the federal and state policies that frame its practices and how it impacts principal professional development.

Federal Policies

Federal and state legislation affects principal preparation requirements and preparation programs. Public Law 114-25, otherwise known as the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) replaced the federal mandate, No Child Left Behind (NCLB). It was enacted in December 2015 by President Barack Obama and contains a section of legislation that mandates school leader development and

support (Every Student Succeeds Act, 2015). ESSA is the latest version of a long-standing initiative that began in 1965 with the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). ESEA was initiated by President Lyndon B. Johnson and arose out of the Civil Rights Movement.

The initiative was established to ensure equity and access of education to all students with specific emphasis on those living in poverty (Klein, 2016). Since then, the initiative has been modified and has evolved over time to meet the demands of increasing academic standards and global competition. The initial federal focus on civil rights morphed into a focus on low performing schools, testing mandates, and the production of high-quality teachers and principals. Title II of ESSA is a response to this global initiative. Title II is designated funding to prepare, train and recruit high-quality teachers, principals or other school leaders.

The purpose of Title II is to provide grants to State educational agencies and subgrants to local educational agencies to:

> (1) increase student achievement consistent with the challenging state academic standards;
>
> (2) improve the quality and effectiveness of teachers, principals, and other school leaders;
>
> (3) increase the number of teachers, principals, and other school leaders who are effective in improving student academic achievement in schools; and
>
> (4) provide low-income and minority students greater access to effective teachers, principals, and other school leaders (Every Student Succeeds Act, sec. 2002, para. 1, 2015).

Title II further states that a state department of education can reserve only three percent or less of their funding amount for sub grants to school districts to

facilitate any of the various identified evidence-based activities for school leader development and support (Every Student Succeeds Act, 2015). Regardless of the bump in allocation, federal funding has always favored teacher development compared to principal development and has contributed to an inequity in professional development funding. The School Leaders Network (2014) reported that in 2011-2012, $90 million in Title II funds were used for principal PD in high poverty schools while over $900 million was used for teacher PD. As such, it is important to examine the alignment of school district federal budget allocations and identified state and school district activities to ensure that adequate development and support are being properly funded and provided to school leaders.

Title II legislation has allowed for increased focus and attention on the need to not only adequately prepare school principals for leadership, but continue to develop them, at both state and local levels, once they are in administrative positions (Every Student Succeeds Act, 2015). The state of California has responded by embarking on a change in its tiered structured administrative credential program with a focus on principal preparation.

California Policies

In addition to the federal government's call to prepare, train and recruit high-quality principals, the CTC has also historically been a driving force in this effort. In 1961, the Fisher Act required California administrative credential holders to have a major in a field of study outside of physical education. (Commission on Teacher Credentialing, 2011). This requirement was due, in part, because most administrative credential holders had an undergraduate degree in physical education, not an academic field. This began a push to make the administrative credential more specialized (Commission on Teacher Credentialing,

2011). Since then, a much more robust credential structure has been developed; however, discussion and debate among the CTC for and against various forms of preparation for the administrative credential, including examination routes to the administrative credential, have been ongoing (Commission on Teacher Credentialing, 2011).

The Commission on Teacher Credentialing (2011) current two-tier structured administrative credential program was fully implemented in July 1985. Tier 1 includes a preparation program for a preliminary administrative credential (pre-administrator employment). Tier two includes a preparation program for a clear administrative credential and requires employment as an administrator as a prerequisite to entering tier two (post-administrator employment). At its inception, it was the first credential program in the nation to initiate a process that include two tiers. It also established the basis for the same process for a teaching credential (Commission on Teacher Credentialing, 2011). Shortly after the establishment of the two-tier program in November 1985, the Commons Commission, now the CTC, released the, "*Who Will Teach Our Children Report*" (Commission on Teacher Credentialing, 2011). The report called for the management of schools to be restructured and more clearly define the role of the school principal:

> The principal's role must be more thoroughly defined by California's education community and new effort must be dedicated to developing training programs for principals. Principals must be team leaders, cooperating with teachers to run schools with greater autonomy at the site level. (Commission on Teacher Credentialing, 2011, p. 264)

This assertion highlighted the importance of principal preparation separate from that of teacher preparation, acknowledging that their roles are distinctly different. It also recognized that their relationship was symbiotic and collaborative.

In 2011, the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing raised the years of full-time teaching and/or experience in fields of "pupil personnel, school nurse, teacher librarian, or speech-language pathology or clinical or rehabilitative services" (Commission on Teacher Credentialing, 2017, p. 15) with an employing agency from 3-5 years (Commission on Teacher Credentialing, 2017). Anyone who enters a principal preparation program in California must submit verification of five years of full-time work experience as indicated, prior to admission (Commission on Teacher Credentialing, 2017). Shortly after, in December 2013, California also adopted the "Standards of Quality and Effectiveness: Preliminary Administrative Services Credential Program Standards" (Commission on Teacher Credentialing, 2017, p. 17). These standards were created to ensure that preparation programs were adequately preparing leaders for the profession. The standards require preparation programs to provide internship and field practicum experiences to preliminary administration credential candidates. These experiences ensure that candidates are adequately prepared with hands-on training that aligns to the preparation coursework and reflect real life situations they will encounter when they become principals (Commission on Teacher Credentialing, 2017).

The CTC recognized the need of programs to provide novice leaders with a high standard of preparation and training. The Learning to Lead System, shown in Figure 1, illustrates the CTC continuum of learning for leaders. The CTC asserts that the primary focus of the preliminary services program on the continuum (Tier 1) is to prepare leaders before they enter a principal position (Commission on Teacher Credentialing, 2017). It also highlights that the primary focus of the clear credential program (Tier 2) is the development of educational leaders while they are on the job and experiencing firsthand principal leadership (Commission on Teacher Credentialing, 2017). Both tiers attempt to address the development and

support of principals prior to and during induction and align with the researched based, principal preparation program practices offered earlier by the George W. Bush Institute (2016).

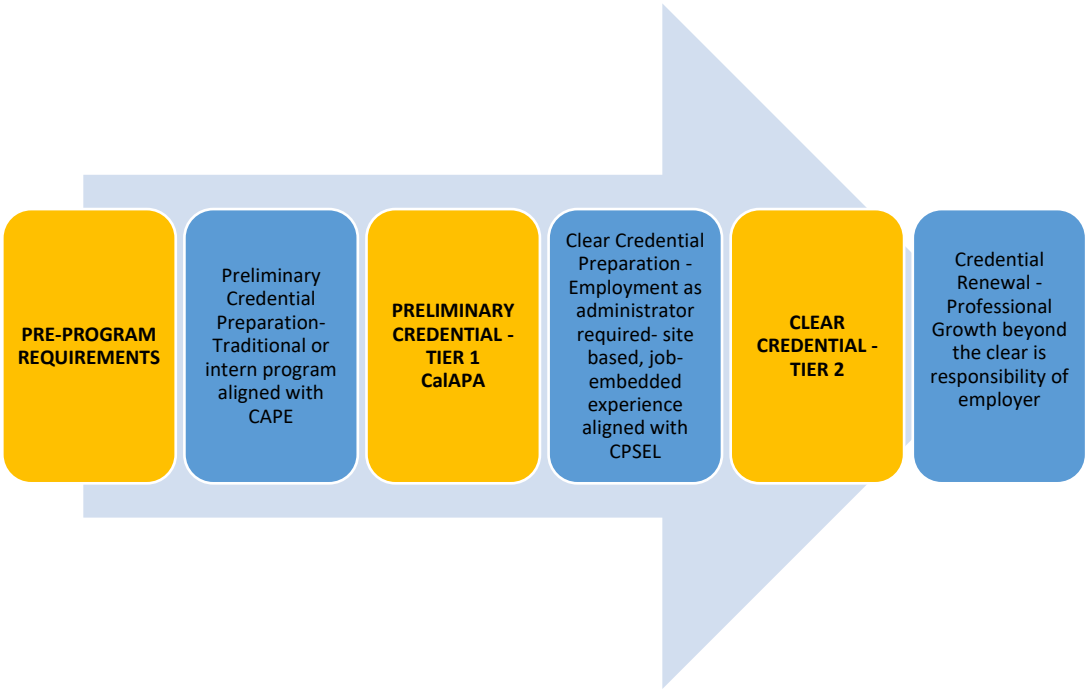

Figure 1. The California learning to lead system
Adapted from Commission on Teacher Credentialing (2017).

Administrator credential preparation program components, training, and examinations remain a focal point at both the federal and state level. Additional changes to California's two-tier administrative credential structure now include the California Administrator Performance Assessment (CalAPA) as a tier 1 requirement on top of other credential requirements (Commission on Teacher Credentialing, 2017). This demonstrates California's sustained progressive stance in its efforts to respond to the demands of school leadership and the alignment of those demands to its administrator preparation program.

California Administrator Performance Assessment (CalAPA). In addition to its two-tier structure and in response to the federal mandate to provide high quality principals to adequately address low performing schools and increase test results; the CTC is in its initial phases of implementation of the California Administrator Performance Assessment (CalAPA). The CalAPA is an assessment that falls between the current two-tier administrative credential preparation program and is to be taken and passed prior to commencement of tier-two.

The CalAPA contains complex assessment tasks and multi-level scoring rubrics linked to the California Administrator Performance Expectations (CAPE), with emphasis on school leadership (Commission on Teacher Credentialing, 2017). The CAPE provide a framework of basic information, skills and abilities that first time administrators should possess in preparation for an administrative position (see Appendix A). There are 20 CAPE that fall under the following six CAPE leadership categories: Visionary Leadership, Instructional Leadership, School Improvement Leadership, Professional Learning and Growth Leadership, Organizational and Systems Leadership and Community Leadership (Commission on Teacher Credentialing, 2017). Together, the CAPE provide a framework of knowledge and skills that need to be addressed and developed to adequately prepare principals for school leadership. They also align to the CalAPA leadership cycles that leaders in training must complete.

The CalAPA consists of three leadership cycle tasks that expect candidates to *investigate*, *plan*, *act*, and *reflect* in the following areas: Data analysis (Leadership Cycle 1), professional learning community facilitation (Leadership Cycle 2), and evaluation and coaching (Leadership Cycle 3) (Commission on Teacher Credentialing, 2017). Leadership Cycle 1 examines a candidate's capacity to perform as an instructional leader and use multiple longitudinal data

sources to inform instructional program practices and ensure educational equity among all students (Commission on Teacher Credentialing, 2017). Leadership Cycle 2 is associated with the leadership needed to facilitate teamwork and the functions of communities of practice and examines the capacity of the candidate to use data to manage data driven collaborative group work. Leadership Cycle 3 focuses on a leader's capacity to coach and evaluate their teaching staff. To demonstrate competency, principals need show they can facilitate a post-observation discussion with teachers about their instructional practices that includes identifying areas of strength and areas of improvement in their practice, all while considering classroom and school context, adult learning constructs and providing research-based instructional support.

The CalAPA is the culminating assessment of leader preparation in California's Tier 1 preliminary administrative credential program. It was explained in this section to exemplify the complexity of principal responsibilities and duties, as well as the length of time, effort and focus spent on preparing aspiring principals in California. The CalAPA assessment seeks to prepare leaders for the principalship but does it do enough? Data analysis, professional learning communities and teacher coaching and evaluation are arguably essential educational leadership skills to attain. It is important to question how well the cycles prepare principals for managerial behaviors including conflict resolution, teambuilding, motivating, inspiring, organizing, building a vision, developing people, networking and monitoring all aspects of a school. Most importantly, we must examine if and how principals are being supported and developed in these areas *after* they become principals. It is not enough to have a rigorous and extensive principal preparation program and not provide principals with ongoing professional development once they become principals.

In review of the literature, California has been a forerunner in maintaining high administrative credentialing standards. Its support and development of principals after they obtain their administrative credential should be equally as rigorous and include alignment with the California Professional Standards for Educational Leaders (CPSEL) to provide school districts with a framework from which to evaluate and develop school principals (Kearney, 2010). State and school district investment in the development of school principals will provide principals with the continuous professional development they need, support their retention and build their leadership capacity beyond preparation (Day, 2000; Day et al., 2014; George W. Bush Institute, 2016; Metlife, 2013; School Leaders Network, 2014; University of Washington Center for Educational Leadership, 2016).

California Professional Standards for Educational Leaders

Since 2001, the CPSEL have been California's structure for the preparation, induction, development and evaluation of educational leaders and are the cornerstone of effective educational leadership in California (Kearney, 2015). Like many other states, California has adapted the standards from the national Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) Standards for School Leaders (2008) and aligned them to fit California's educational system and conditions (Kearney, 2015). Over time, the California educational context evolved, which prompted a re-evaluation of the alignment of the CPSEL to fit California's current state. In 2014, the CTC approved a set of revised CPSEL that reflected 21st Century leadership and California's diverse population. The revised CPSEL include the following six standards and general descriptions from the CTC (2017):

1. **Development and Implementation of a Shared Vision**. Education leaders facilitate the development and implementation of a shared vision of learning and growth of all students
2. **Instructional Leadership**. Education leaders shape a collaborative culture of teaching and learning informed by professional standards and focused on student and professional growth
3. **Management and Learning Environment.** Education leaders manage the organization to cultivate a safe and productive learning and working environment
4. **Family and Community Engagement.** Education leaders collaborate with families and other stakeholders to address diverse student and community interests and mobilize community resources
5. **Ethics and Integrity**. Education leaders make decisions, model, and behave in ways that demonstrate professionalism, ethics, integrity, justice, and equity and hold staff to the same standard
6. **External Context and Policy.** Education leaders influence political, social, economic, legal and cultural contexts affecting education to improve education policies and practices (pp. 32-33)

Each standard also contains elements and indicators. The elements provide three to four focus areas of each standard and the indicators provide examples of how the standard might be executed by a school administrator (see Appendix B). The standards and elements are meant to provide a framework for principal leadership in California and serve as a critical component to principal professional development.

Whereas the CAPE serve as a foundation for principal preparation and induction, the CPSEL serve as a structure to support principal skills, knowledge

and competency throughout and beyond preparation and induction. The updated CPSEL were developed to provide a structure for continuous principal development, professional learning, evaluation and retention (Commission on Teacher Credentialing, 2017). However, many school districts fail to align the CPSEL to principal professional development or utilize them as a framework to identify areas of professional competency or areas for continued and ongoing growth (Kearney, 2010; Manna, 2015; Sun, 2011). Although updating the CPSEL is considered a high impact strategy in improving principal pipelines (Kaufman et al., 2017), many school districts and states fail to utilize them to support principal professional development.

Principal professional development, support and evaluation in most states, including California, do not easily trace back to state adopted professional standards for educational leaders (Sun, 2011). To establish a cycle of continuous improvement in the development of principal leaders, it is critical that California stakeholders apply the CPSEL to the design, development, implementation and evaluation of principal professional development (Kearney, 2010; Manna, 2015). Utilizing the CPSEL statewide would allow for standardized leadership that systematically exemplifies and supports what principals should be able to know and do as principal leaders in California (Kearney, 2010). One of the research questions was written to examine the alignment of principal professional development with the CPSEL in the Central Valley of California. To thoroughly assess this alignment, in depth examination of the descriptions of practice of each of the six CPSEL is necessary to understand what principals are supposed to be able to know and do under each standard.

Descriptions of Practice

WestEd (Kearney, 2015) has conducted extensive work in creating a developmental continuum of expectations for each of the CPSEL. The continuum includes the identification of research-based practices at four different levels: 1) practices directed toward the standard 2) practices approaching the standard 3) practices meeting the standard and 4) practices that exemplify the standard. They refer to these practices as, Descriptions of Practice (DOP). The DOP provide practices for each of the three to four elements under each standard. The practices can be used by both principals and supervisors of principals, to assess the level of principal proficiency of each standard, and as a framework to develop professional learning opportunities for principals at all levels (Kearney, 2015). If principals are to be provided with professional development that aligns to the CPSEL, both principals and supervisors of principals must have a common understanding and knowledge of both the standards and evidence of practices for those standards. Both the DOP and the CPSEL are designed and aligned to be utilized as a guide of research-based practices for principal professional reflection, goal setting, evaluation and professional development (Kearney, 2015).

Professional Development

Purposeful and high-quality principal professional development is necessary for academic achievement, principal retention and teacher retention. However, the body of research that exists on professional development in education is primarily focused on teacher professional development versus principal professional development (Levine, 2015). In review of the literature for this research, it has been noted that educational research in this area is primarily focused on how principals support the professional development of teachers, versus how school districts and states support and provide the professional

development of principals. Several professional development models also exist for teachers and in comparison, are severely lacking for school principals. If principals are responsible for leading effective schools and facilitating high school achievement outcomes, they need professional development and support throughout their tenure.

Adamowski, Therriault and Cavanna (2007) interviewed and surveyed 33 elementary school principals with at least 3 years of experience from public and charter schools in three states. Over 40% of principals reported they needed more training than they had received in the following areas (Adamowski et al., 2007):

1. Managing and analyzing data (63%)
2. Communicating effectively (externally) (52%)
3. Making data-driven decisions (48%)
4. Building a community of learners (44%)
5. Developing a teacher/staff performance accountability system (48%)
6. Building a community of support (43%)
7. Evaluating classroom teachers (41%)
8. Evaluating curriculum (40%) and
9. Designing curriculum (75%) (p.23)

Their findings indicate that even after principals have been on the job for three or more years, they still require support and development, way beyond preparation and induction. This finding is not only reflected in principals nationally, it is also a global principal concern.

Hourani and Stringer (2015) conducted semi-structured interviews in Abu Dhabi with 16 school principals with 5 or more years of principal experience and their results mirrored that of Adamowski et al. (2007). Hourani and Stringer (2015) asked principals about their perceived benefits of professional development

they have received. Hourani and Stringer (2015) also asked principals to report on the skill areas they felt they still lacked and needed support, to meet school improvement expectations. The principals reported they needed more training than they had received in the following areas: conflict resolution with stakeholders, communication with parents, and collaboration with community. Additional support was needed in curriculum, school management, parental involvement, budgets, teacher evaluations, progress monitoring, and vision and mission development The principal participants also reported the need for professional development to be differentiated, hands-on and designed to meet the unique needs of each principal and their school site (Hourani & Stringer, 2015).

Nearly all professional development areas identified by the principals in Abu Dhabi were the professional development areas identified by U.S principals in the research conducted by Adamowski et al. (2007). Both research studies reflect the universal need for continuous principal professional development in areas that critically impact student achievement. Failure to provide principals with adequate and ongoing professional development in these areas not only affects student achievement, it also jeopardizes principal retention.

Principal Retention

Principal departures negatively impact student achievement, school culture and district finances (Béteille, Kalogrides, & Loeb, 2012; School Leaders Network, 2014). When principals do not receive professional development, they are 1.4 times more likely to leave their schools than principals who do (National Center for Education Statistics, 2013). Fuller and Young (2009) studied Texas principal turnover and found that approximately 90% of the principals who left their schools actually left the principalship altogether. Research points to the scenario, that when principals leave, teachers leave. Miller (2009) examined 12

years of North Carolina principal data and found that there is a decrease in academic performance and an increase in teacher turnover 2 years after a principal leaves a school. In turn, when principal retention levels remain high, teacher retention rates remain high (Fuller & Young, 2009; Miller, 2009). Principals are also more likely to leave under performing schools and have higher rates of turnover in rural schools, smaller school districts and schools with larger enrollments (Miami-Dade Pubic Schools, 2010). This supports the research that indicates principals in small school districts have limited access to professional development and mentorship (Manna, 2015; Riley & Meredith, 2017).

The fiscal impact of principal turnover is significant. Nearly 18% of principals in the U.S. exit the principalship within one year and it costs a school district an estimated $75,000 each time a principal leaves a school (School Leaders Network, 2014). Table 1 gives a breakdown of district costs associated with the recruitment, selection, hiring, and training of new principals (School Leaders Network, 2014). Despite the risks and costs associated with principal turnover, school districts can minimize the impact by implementing and following research-based practices and making principal retention efforts a priority.

Boris-Schacter and Langer (2002) asserted that school districts can consider giving assistant principals more school management responsibilities that are normally done by school principals, including budget, data and facilities management and district, state and federal compliance reports. This would allow principals to increase focus on instructional leadership and less on managerial tasks that often get in the way of a focus on instruction (Boris-Schacter & Langer, 2002). School districts can also provide networking opportunities and principal professional learning communities that provide principals with a system of support

Table 1

Principal Pipeline Costs

Pipeline Phase	Lower Expenditure	Higher Expenditure	Typical
Preparation	20,000	150,000	40,000
Hiring	5,850	20,000	6,000
Signing	0	25,000	12,500
Internship	0	85,000	0
Mentoring	11,000	15,000	12,500
Continuing Education	0	8,000	4,000
Total	36,850	303,000	75,000

Note. Adapted from "Churn, the High Cost of Principal Turnover," by School Leaders Network, 2014, Principal Pipeline Costs, p. 4.

(Bottoms & Fry, 2009). In support of these practices, the School Leaders Network (2014) asserts that school districts need to:

1. Invest in principal professional development that is ongoing and beyond pipeline investments
2. Provide individualized coaching beyond the first two years
3. Revise the structure of the district office so that principals are provided with adequate district supervision and support (p.2)

In support of the need to revise the structure of district office personnel to ensure adequate district supervision, the Council of Chief State School Officers (2015) reported there is no consistent principal supervisor position across the nation and job descriptions and titles of principal supervisors equally vary.

The research-based practices identified support the need for principal professional development, and when implemented, can positively impact principal retention rates. Field survey research conducted by Metlife (2013) found that

principals who were provided professional learning opportunities with colleagues were 14% more satisfied with their job and 7% less likely to consider leaving their positions (p.34). Metlife (2013) also reported that principals who received professional development were more likely to remain at the same school and less likely to move to another school or leave the principalship, compared to principals who did not receive professional development. School districts and states need to know and understand the impact of principal turnover and make principal professional development a priority.

Professional Development Definition & Constructs

Varying definitions exist for professional development. However, common definition characteristics of professional development center on knowledge and skill building opportunities that increase professional capacity and improve performance related to organization and employee goals and needs (Elmore, 2002; Kearney, 2010; Norton, 2008). The National Staff Development Council, now referred to as Learning Forward, advocated for a change in the US government's definition of professional development to better align with their Standards for Professional Learning (Learning Forward, n.d.). As a result, in 2015, the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) revised their definition of professional development to include specific types of activities for professional development (Learning Forward, n.d..).

Learning Forward (n.d.) asserted that the ESSA definition of professional development activities included: sustained (not stand-alone, 1-day, or short-term workshops), intensive, collaborative, job- embedded, data-driven, and classroom-focused (Learning Forward, Definition of Professional Development, n.d.). The types of professional development activities identified by ESSA align with that of the California Department of Education (2012) and seminal researchers, Fogarty

and Pete (2004). Based on their extensive literature review in best practices in professional development, Fogarty and Pete (2004) identify five critical constructs of rigorous professional development:

(1) Sustained: training is implemented over time.

(2) Job-embedded: training occurs and/or continues at the work site.

(3) Interactive: training invites, involves and engages participants.

(4) Collegial: training builds and supports a community of learners.

(5) Integrated: training that is eclectic (web-based, online, text, face to face) (p. 63).

Professional development is sustained when it is provided for at least one year or over multiple years and provided school or district wide (Fogarty & Pete, 2004). Professional development is job-embedded when it is provided with onsite, continuous guided and independent practice, coaching and direct feedback (Fogarty & Pete, 2004). Professional development that is interactive involves collaborative partner and small or whole group interaction and working together (Fogarty & Pete, 2004). Collegial models of professional development look like professional learning communities that are built on trust and connectivity and include sharing of information and a collegial support network; and professional development that is integrated includes multiple modes of delivery including but not limited to webinars, websites or face-to-face methods (Fogarty & Pete, 2004).

These research-based constructs delineate how professional development should be implemented and applied if it is going to be rigorous and effective. The constructs also support what the state superintendent of California identifies as key professional development constructs for the California educational system (California Department of Education, 2012). For those reasons, the five constructs identified by Fogarty and Pete (2004) and two other constructs supported by

subsequent research: focused on student learning (California Department of Education, 2012) and provided on a continuum (Bishop et al., 2015), will be utilized for the purposes of this research. The seven constructs were used in this research to measure California's Southern San Joaquin Valley K-12 principal perceptions of the alignment of professional development they have received, to the effective professional development constructs identified.

In addition to effective professional development research-based constructs, the literature also supports the assertion that principals need and require specific principal professional development (Honig & Rainey, 2012; Rowland, 2017; Zepeda et al., 2014). Principals are often placed under the umbrella of "school leadership", which encompasses the shared leadership and contributions of teachers, counselors and other staff to the functioning and overall success of a school (Manna, 2015). Manna (2015) argued that although shared or distributive leadership is positive and needed, it often overshadows the distinct role and responsibility of the principal. For example, principal leaders and teacher leaders have different responsibility levels. While they may have a common vision and instructional focus, the school principal is ultimately responsible for assigning and supporting teachers in their leadership roles and they are responsible for the success or failure of those shared outcomes. Therefore, specialized professional development for principals is necessary and should include a myriad of research based professional development practices.

Principal Professional Development

California and other states realize the impact and believe professional development of principals is a priority, however, they are falling behind in the development and implementation of support for principals (Kearney, 2010). Qualitative research conducted by Riley and Meredith (2017) included the

gathering of telephone interview and survey data from state offices of education teams that included administrators and line staff from 28 states, including California. The states and team members participated in two action groups, one that focused on principal evaluation and one that focused on principal support/professional learning. The findings of Riley and Meredith (2017) asserted that the top priority for participating states was improving principal support and professional development. More than two-thirds of survey respondents identified each of the following areas of principal professional development work as a current or emerging priority for their state: Principal mentoring and coaching (77%), professional development of novice principals (75%), professional development of veteran principals (73%), principal capacity to provide feedback and develop teachers (71%), and developing principals of low-performing or hard-to-staff schools (69%)" (Riley & Meredith, 2017, p. 3). And although 75% of the research participants reported principal professional development as a priority, only 6% reported making past progress in this area (Riley & Meredith, 2017). One of the reported challenges to improving in this area included school or district size and context. Rural schools were reported as being geographically isolated, having multiple administrator roles and lacking in administrative peers from whom to obtain mentorship (Manna, 2015; Riley & Meredith, 2017). It is important to note that although California was one of the participating states in their research, they did not receive survey responses from California participants. Nonetheless, the overall findings are significant in that they support principal professional development as a high priority need for states and highlight the gap in work that is yet to be facilitated in this area, specifically in California.

In comparison to other states, California is lacking in the development of a robust infrastructure for ongoing principal professional development. Research by

Darling-Hammond et al. (2007) determined this finding after conducting a national study on professional development of eight states, including California. The researchers obtained both qualitative and quantitative data via case studies, interviews with key stakeholders, review of documents and surveying over 1000 principals. California principals found their experiences with professional development somewhat less useful in improving their practice when compared to principals nationally (Darling-Hammond et al., 2007). California principals were less likely to have access to mentoring, coaching or a principal's network of ongoing, on the job support, compared to principals in other states (Darling-Hammond et al., 2007, p. 25). California principals were also less likely to have had an administrative internship to accompany their principal preparation program (Darling-Hammond et al., 2007, p. 24). Although these findings are alarming for California, they have not gone unnoticed by the state of California.

The state of California acknowledges the deficits in their infrastructure to support principal growth and development. The California Department of Education (2012) asserted that much of the gap is contributed to ongoing budget restraints that have affected the start and stop of principal support programs and institutions that had once proven to be effective. The California Department of Education (2012) also asserted that California needs to rebuild a professional learning system that is framed in the following research-based constructs for effective professional learning and development: sustained, content-embedded, collegial and connected to practice; focused on student learning; and aligned with school improvement efforts (California Department of Education, 2012).

Principal Professional Development Practices

Principals have a unique impact on student achievement and their professional development needs are no less unique at the beginning of and

throughout their tenure. Although principals in California are required to go through a principal preparation program prior to entering a principal position, support and development once they enter a principal position is often random and minimal. Like teachers, principals require a continuum of individualized professional development and support throughout their careers and have varying levels of experience and knowledge that need to be nurtured and developed throughout that continuum (Scott & Webber, 2008). Principals need professional development that is aligned to standards (CPSEL, Standards for Professional Learning) and includes practices that allow principals to interact and utilize the support of other principals, like a principal professional learning community (Bottoms & Fry, 2009; Kearney, 2010; Zepeda et al., 2014). Similar research findings by Bishop et al. (2015) identified three prominent features of effective principal learning and development, the first of which included collegial learning networks of principals for ongoing support and problem solving. The second included providing principals with a continuum of professional development throughout their career that include veteran principal mentorship, and the third included providing professional development that is hands-on, and grounded and embedded into practice (Bishop et al., 2015; Zepeda et al., 2014). Some states and school districts have recognized the importance of these efforts and have already begun to implement these best practices.

Rowland (2017) identified a few school districts in various states that have implemented instructional rounds with their principals. As defined by Rowland (2017), instructional rounds involve a group of principals that walk classrooms together, observe instructional practices, collect data and collectively analyze and discuss their findings with a focus on improving instruction and developing their own instructional leadership. Rowland (2017) also found that the Oakland Unified

School District in California established a district-wide team of coaches that were assigned to work one-on-one with principals to develop growth goals, analyze school data, and evaluate principal progress throughout. Although these are promising pockets of best practices that are occurring throughout the nation, they are still not enough, and state politics are affecting progress in principal support and development.

Manna (2015) argued that principals are left out of top state policy agendas in comparison to teachers for a few reasons. For one, familiarity, policy makers and society are much more familiar with school teachers and have much more interaction with teachers than principals. Second, prior research, historically, educational research has primarily focused on teachers and how they impact instruction and learning and not much focus has been on principal impact. Third, bias towards classroom, most people are parents of school age children and funding that is not going into classrooms can be considered wasteful spending. Lastly, sheer numbers, teachers and teacher association numbers outweigh administrator numbers and political clout (Manna, 2015). To ignite change and gain a more purposeful state focus on principal development, principals must demonstrate that they produce highly effective school cultures, succeed in the implementation of state initiatives (e.g., standards, achievement) and support and develop teachers so that it affects their instruction and supports their leadership (Manna, 2015). Research such as this dissertation, and advocacy at both the local and state level are equally critical to pushing this agenda item forward.

District Principal Supervision

Because principals work under the direct supervision of school district superintendents or district office designee; school districts have a responsibility to adequately supervise and support principal professional learning and development

(George W. Bush Institute & American Institutes for Research, 2016). In fact, when principal supervisors help principals grow as instructional leaders, they can positively affect student achievement results (Council of Chief State School Officers, 2015). However, school districts are inconsistent in their identification of a district principal supervisor that supervises and supports the development of school principals, and when one is identified; principal supervision is often fragmented by other duties. Moreover, principal supervisors often lack the training and capacity to adequately support and develop principals (Council of Chief State School Officers, 2015).

To define and support improved principal supervision practice, the Council of Chief State School Officers (2015) asserts that the following theoretical points must be considered when establishing the responsibility and scope of work of principal supervision:

1. The supervision of principals should be a primary responsibility, not an afterthought.
2. Principal supervisors should receive training in the supervision process and have ongoing opportunities for reflection and professional development to improve their practice.
3. The primary focus of principal supervisors should be to improve principal performance.
4. Principal supervision should be ongoing, connected to the principal's growth from year to year, and grounded in a coaching relationship.
5. Principal supervision should be driven by a vision of the supervisor and principal as leaders of professional learning communities.
6. Principal supervision should be informed by multiple data sources.

7. Principal supervision should be consistent with adult learning and professional development best practices, including collaboration and a sense of shared ownership (p.5).

The theoretical considerations support the importance of an identified district principal supervisor that provides strategic and purposeful principal supervision that includes principal professional development, and is grounded in research, theory and standards.

Model Principal Supervisor Professional Standards

In 2015, the Council of Chief State School Officers (2015) established the Model Principal Supervisor Professional Standards, as shown in Figure 2, and aligned them with the 2015 Professional Standards for Education Leaders (PSEL). They aligned both sets of standards to exemplify the responsibility that principal supervisors have in supporting and developing principal competency in each of the PSEL, and the specific actions they must take to support principals (Council of Chief State School Officers, 2015). The first four standards focus on the principal supervisor's role in supporting and building the instructional leadership capacity of principals. Standards 5 and 6 emphasize the cohesive function of the district from district to school site, by maintaining consistent contact between both to inform policies and practices. The final two standards support the building of principal supervisor capacity and effectiveness (Council of Chief State School Officers, 2015). The standards provide comprehensive principal supervisor support to principals and provide school districts with a framework to inform the recruitment, selection, induction, professional development, and evaluation of supervisors of principals, inclusive of superintendents and other district personnel (Council of Chief State School Officers, 2015).

Standard 1	Principals dedicate their time to helping principals grow as instructional leaders
Standard 2	Principal supervisors coach and support individual principals and engage in effective professional learning strategies to help principals grow as instructional leaders
Standard 3	Principal supervisors use evidence of principal effectiveness to determine necessary improvements in principals' practice to foster a positive educational environment that supports the diverse cultural and learning needs of students
Standard 4	Principal supervisors engage principals in the formal district principal evaluation process in ways that help them grow as instructional leaders
Standard 5	Principal supervisors advocate for and inform the coherence of organizational vision, policies and strategies to support schools and student learning
Standard 6	Principal supervisors assist the district in ensuring the community of schools with which they engage are culturally/socially responsive and have equitable access to resources necessary for the success of each student
Standard 7	Principal supervisors engage in their own development and continuous improvement to help principals grow as instructional leaders
Standard 8	Principal supervisors lead strategic change that continuously elevates the performance of schools and sustains high-quality educational programs and opportunities across the district

Figure 2. Adapted from *"*"Model Principal Supervisor Professional Standards," Council of Chief State School Officers, 2015.

In addition to the model principal supervisor professional standards, the Principal Support Framework also supports district principal supervision and describes key actions that district offices can take to support the instructional leadership of principals. Although the focus of this model is specific to instructional leadership, action area two emphasizes the establishment of a system of support for developing principals as instructional leaders that can be used in all areas of principal leadership and development.

Principal Support Framework

The principal support framework describes key actions of district offices that effectively support principals in three action areas: 1) a shared vision of

principals as instructional leaders 2) a system of support for developing principals as instructional leaders and 3) a strategic partnership between principals and the district office (University of Washington Center for Educational Leadership, 2016). Specific to this research, action area two promotes a focus on a district's systematic approach to principal development that is strategically designed to meet the individual PD needs of principals (University of Washington Center for Educational Leadership, 2016). This action area also provides pertinent guiding questions to assist districts in assessing their levels of a system in place to facilitate adequate principal supervision and provide effective principal PD within their district. The guiding questions include:

1. To what extent do principals receive differentiated support focused on their development as instructional leaders?
2. How does the school system ensure that principal supervisors have the requisite skills and disposition to support principals' growth as instructional leaders?
3. To what extent do principals have frequent opportunities to access and utilize each other as resources for learning and performance improvement?
4. In what ways do principals have access to quality professional development tools and resources needed to improve their performance?
5. How do principal supervisors collaborate with other central office staff to align systems and resources to support principals as instructional leaders?
6. To what extent is principal supervisor evaluation tied directly to the instructional leadership success of the principals being supported?

7. To what extent are principal supervisors able to prioritize working with principals as the day-to-day focus of their work?
8. To what extent do principal supervisors receive the resources, support and professional development they need to successfully support principals as instructional leaders? (University of Washington Center for Educational Leadership, 2016, p. 2).

The guiding questions not only offer professional development practices that are focused on instructional leadership; they offer a set of evaluation questions that can be applied to general district principal supervision and professional development practices.

The theoretical considerations for principal supervision, model principal supervisor professional standards, and the principal support framework, support the need for school districts to provide: 1) direct and adequate principal supervision and support 2) principal support and development that is aligned to standards, research and theory, and 3) cohesive and systematic principal development and support from principal preparation and throughout a principal's leadership career. School districts have a responsibility to support and develop their principals, and if they want to see results, they must invest in and provide a continuum of principal professional development.

Theoretical Framework

Leadership Development

The focus of the literature and this research is grounded in theories of leadership development and human capital management. As noted by Day (2000) leadership development is defined as "expanding the collective capacity of organizational members to engage effectively in leadership roles and processes"

(p. 582). Different from leader development where development is focused solely on the individual leader; leadership development includes the development of the leaders and the leader in relation to their colleagues and other members within their organization. (Day, 2000; Day et al., 2014). Instead of focusing on leader personality, leader character traits and leader behavior, leadership development emphasizes the interpersonal factors of leadership including the long-term adult development and skill development of leaders (Day et al., 2014). As such, leadership development asserts that individuals learn at different rates and in different ways throughout their development (Day et al., 2014). The theory also claims that leaders require specific skills that are more important and beneficial at different phases in their career. The development of these leadership skills and knowledge are progressive, occur over a career continuum, can begin simple and can become more complex over time (Mumford et al., 2000). Leadership development theory supports the literature and need for school districts to provide principals with professional development and training on a continuum, and throughout their tenure, not just at preparation and induction.

Human Capital Theory

Lepak and Snell (1999) argue that when organizations invest in the training and development of their employees, they are purposefully protecting and elevating their human capital. Human capital is defined as a deliberate investment in knowledge and skills of workers that yields returns (Schultz, 1961) and human capital is defined as education that prepares a workforce (Mincer, 1962). Human capital theory insists there is an underlying belief in employee learning capacity, and investing in training, education and development of employees results in profit for the organization, the individual and their communities (Aliaga, 2001; Nafukho et al., 2004; Schultz, 1961). Essentially, when school districts invest in principal

development, they are building the capacity of their workforce and elevating their human capital. By enhancing their human capital, they in turn, are increasing the impact that school principals already have on student achievement. Because of the high yield of these efforts, related frameworks in education that focus on human capital management and the recruitment, development, and retention of school leaders have emerged.

Principal talent management. The George W. Bush Institute (2016) reports that school districts fail to implement cohesive management systems and practices that recruit and retain principals while ensuring effective leadership development. In response, they offer a systematic approach to principal talent management (PTM) that maintains two primary outcomes: student achievement and principal retention (George W. Bush Institute, 2016). The PTM framework contains six components that encompass a principal's career continuum: 1) working conditions, 2) preparation, 3) recruitment and selection, 4) professional learning, 5) performance evaluation, and 6) compensation and incentives (George W. Bush Institute, 2016, p.6). The key to cohesive leadership development of the framework is to ensure that each component is rooted in standards (like the CPSEL), closely communicated and coordinated within and between organizations that oversee each component and supported by the principal's working environment (George W. Bush Institute, 2016).

The PTM framework integrates both leadership development and human capital theory, supports the literature, and this research. It reinforces that professional standards must be aligned to principal professional development, and throughout the human resource continuum, for long term principal professional development and support. It also supports the establishment of a cohesive

leadership development system to ensure effective student achievement outcomes and principal retention.

Clearly, the literature review reflects that principals have a direct impact on school improvement and student achievement. The roles and responsibilities of California principals are without question, unique, extensive and demanding. School districts have a responsibility to support and develop their principals, yet, principal supervision, funding and action to support the development of school principals is lacking and insufficient. The CPSEL and effective professional development constructs provide a conceptual framework that supports principal professional development. The theoretical frameworks also support the investment in principal growth and development throughout a continuum of principal leadership. Accordingly, if states and school districts want to see achievement results, they must invest in principal professional development.

Chapter 3 includes the methodology used for this research study. The chapter provides a detailed summary of the research questions, qualitative research design, data collection methods including site and research participant selection, instrumentation, and data analysis. For data analysis, the chapter explains the hybrid thematic analysis steps that were used for data analysis and reporting of the research.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

The progress in the establishment and implementation of professional development support for principals in California is inadequate (Kearney, 2010) and the need to keep this issue at the top of state and local agendas is urgent. The purpose of this study was to address the inadequacy of principal professional development by conducting an examination of what California school districts are doing to supervise and provide principal professional development that is aligned to standards, and effective professional development constructs. This study also intended to answer the following research questions:

1. What school district systems of support and personnel are responsible for helping principals grow as leaders?
2. What strategies and practices are used in school districts to provide differentiated professional development and support to principals?
3. What professional development strategies and practices used in school districts are aligned to the California Professional Standards for Educational Leaders (CPSEL) and effective professional development constructs?
4. What are K-12 principal perceptions of the alignment of professional development they have received to effective professional development constructs, the CPSEL and their professional development needs?

The data collected were anticipated to address the inadequate school district systems of support and development of principals that include principal supervision and effective professional development that is provided throughout a principal's leadership career. The data will provide insight into the state of school

district efforts to align principal professional development to the CPSEL, and effective professional development constructs throughout a continuum of principal leadership in Central California. The data is also expected to inform and improve research-based principal professional development policy and practices throughout school districts in California.

Methods

Researcher's Worldview

The research methods for this study align to the social constructivist worldview. The social constructivist worldview assumes that "individuals seek understanding of the world in which they live and work" and is most common in qualitative research (Creswell, 2009, p. 8). Social constructivists also asserted that "knowledge is created through the exploration of beliefs, perceptions and experiences" and are often obtained and understood in research via interviews and focus groups (Wright, O'Brien, Nimmon, Law, & Mylopoulos, 2016, p. 1). The methods of this research aligned to social constructivism in that the methods sought to understand school district and principal experiences with professional development throughout a principal's career via interviews and focus groups. The methods also explored the alignment of principal professional development experiences to professional standards and professional development constructs, all while seeking to understand, and acknowledge the researchers personal experience as a principal and its influence on the research.

My current role as a sixth-year secondary principal provides me with insight into the daily work of principals, and the ability to engage with the principal's world. My principal experience was also the basis for the focus of this study and research questions. My personal experience with principal professional

development, or the lack thereof, throughout my career, influenced my interest in gaining a deeper understanding of other principal's experiences with professional development in relation to mine. My principal experience also shaped my assertion for the need for principal professional development throughout a continuum of leadership.

Because of my personal history and experience as a principal, and with principal professional development, it was important to "challenge, elaborate and refine" my assumptions throughout the research process (Wright et al., 2016, p. 2). It was important to acknowledge that as I drew upon my personal principal experiences to understand and generate meaning from the field, it prevented a completely objective view of the focus of study (Wright et al., 2016). As such, steps to ensure credibility and transferability were taken as discussed and addressed later in this chapter.

Research Methodology and Design

A qualitative case study design was used to obtain the data for this research. Case studies explore individuals, activities, or processes in depth (Creswell, 2009). They also are bounded by a pre-determined scope of study determined by the researcher (Bhattacharya, 2018). The case study for this research encompassed the geographical area of the Southern San Joaquin Valley and nine school districts within that area. The bounded geographical area and school district participants are defined in detail under the site selection section of this chapter. Using a case study design for this study allowed for the collection of data directly from research participants in the identified geographical area, and the collection of data needed to answer the research questions.

Qualitative researchers typically collect data in the participant's natural setting via interaction and use inductive data analysis, building themes and

patterns as they emerge from these interactions (Bailey, 2007; Creswell, 2009). The data for this case study was obtained by conducting semi-structured interviews with K-12 superintendents and/or their designee, and semi-structured focus group interviews with K-12 school principals. Individual and group interviews are a common method of obtaining qualitative case study data in education and the social sciences (Dowling, Lloyd, & Suchet-Pearson, 2016) and in research specific to principal professional development (Parylo, 2012). Interviews also generate social interactions that are not fixed or stable but spirited and powerful (Freebody, 2012) and allow the researcher to maintain control of the questioning (Creswell, 2009). The interviewing of superintendents and principals provided historical and experiential data specific to the research questions and the geographical area selected for the research (Creswell, 2009).

Site Selection

The focus of this case study research was on a geographical area of California known as the Southern San Joaquin Valley, and included the following counties: Kings, Kern, Tulare, Fresno and Madera (League of California Cities, 2018). The League of California Cities (2018) identified 37 cities within these five counties (see Appendix C). Because many of the cities listed are known as rural cities; the U.S. Department of Education Rural and Low-Income School Program (RLIS) allocation spreadsheet was used to identify the school districts, and the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) locale code was used to identify each school district in these cities (U.S. Department of Education, n.d.). The NCES locale code identifies school districts as either city, suburban, town or rural and each identifier contains three subtypes: large, midsize and small (Geverdt, 2015). Using the RLIS allocation spreadsheet data, the following criteria were then used to identify school districts for this research:

1. School district is identified as a regular public-school district (Excludes independent charter school districts)
2. School district has five or more schools that include high school, middle school and elementary schools (Excludes primary and secondary only grade level school districts)
3. School district is identified as having one or more of the following NCES locale codes: city, suburban, town, rural, large, midsize or small.

One additional criterion was added that was not directly related to the RLIS eligibility list:

4. School district superintendent has been in current position for at least 6 months

The methods to select the school districts for this research were intended to obtain a sample of school districts that was diverse and representative of all NCES locales within the cities identified and contained a superintendent that has worked within the school district system for at least 6 months. The following school districts that met the established criteria for this research were identified as follows in Table 2.

The geographical section of California and its school districts were selected for this study due to the limited amount of research that has been conducted with principals in this area, specific to principal professional development, as well as the proximity of the geographical area to the researcher. It is important to note that one school district was eliminated from the list because it is the school district in which the researcher works, and four school districts were eliminated from the list due to not meeting the established criteria.

Table 2

School District Research Participants

School District	City	County	District Type	NCES Locale
Fresno Unified	Fresno	Fresno	Regular Public	Large, Suburban Large
Bakersfield City	Bakersfield	Kern	Regular Public	Large, Suburban Large
Clovis Unified	Clovis	Fresno	Regular Public	Large, Suburban Large, Rural Fringe
Central Unified	Fresno	Fresno	Regular Public	Midsize, Suburban Midsize, Rural Fringe, Rural Distant
Visalia Unified	Visalia	Tulare	Regular Public	Midsize, Suburban Midsize, Rural Fringe
Fowler Unified	Fowler	Fresno	Regular Public	Suburban Large, Town Fringe
Sanger Unified	Sanger	Fresno	Regular Public	Suburban Large, Town Fringe, Rural Fringe, Rural Distant
Farmersville Unified	Farmersville	Tulare	Regular Public	Suburban Midsize
Lindsay Unified	Lindsay	Tulare	Regular Public	Town Fringe
Selma Unified	Selma	Fresno	Regular Public	Town Fringe, Rural Fringe, Rural Distant
Kings Canyon Joint Unified	Reedley	Fresno	Regular Public	Town Distant, Rural Fringe, Rural Distant
Cutler-Orosi Joint Unified	Orosi	Tulare	Regular Public	Town Distant, Rural Fringe, Rural Distant

Participants

A purposive sample of superintendents or designee from each of the 12 school districts were selected to participate in an interview. A total of nine interviews from nine different districts were conducted with a school district administrator. The other three districts did not respond or declined to be interviewed. A total of five principal focus groups were held with five out of the nine school districts. The school districts were categorized by similar NCES locale codes for a total of five categories. As shown in Table 3, the districts were categorized by NCES to ensure a range of principal and school district locales for the research.

Table 3

District Participant NCES Locales and Counties

Category	NCES Locale	School Districts	County	Site Selected
1	Large, Suburban Large	Fresno Unified Bakersfield City Clovis Unified	Fresno Kern Fresno	Fresno Unified Bakersfield City Clovis Unified
2	Midsize, Suburban Midsize	Central Unified Visalia Unified Farmersville Unified	Fresno Tulare Tulare	Central Unified Visalia Unified Farmersville Unified
3	Suburban Large, Town Fringe	Fowler Unified Sanger Unified	Fresno Fresno	Fowler Unified Sanger Unified
4	Town Fringe	Lindsay Unified Selma Unified	Tulare Fresno	Lindsay Unified Selma Unified
5	Town Distant, Rural Fringe, Rural Distant	Kings Canyon Joint Unified Cutler-Orosi Joint Unified	Fresno Tulare	Kings Canyon Joint Unified Cutler-Orosi Joint Unified

District administrators from the nine districts were asked for principal participation in a focus group. Principals from five of the nine districts agreed to participate in a focus group with their principal colleagues. A total of 17 principals participated in the focus groups and each focus group contained three to four principals. Both novice and veteran principals were allowed to participate in the research, no specific criteria was used to select principal participants. Principals were selected for this research because of their leadership position and ability to provide personal insight about their experiences and perceptions of principal professional development in their school districts.

Data Sources

Data sources for qualitative case study research often include multiple sources (Williams, 2007). The data collection sources for this research included:

1. Individual semi-structured interviews with school district superintendents or designee
2. Semi-structured focus groups with school principals
3. Review of school district documents that include professional development plans and agendas specific to principals and Title I funds

The data sources utilized for this research were selected to provide a robust collection of data from individuals who have the closest experience with the research topic and to support credibility and transferability of the research (Williams, 2007).

Procedures

Superintendent/designee interviews. Individual superintendent participants and their secretaries were sent an email. A follow up phone call by

the researcher, to the superintendent secretary, was made three-five days after the email to confirm receipt of email. The email provided a description and purpose of the research and interview, estimated duration of the interview, and asked if a separate district designee would be best to interview. The email contained a request for an interview date, time, location and method (face to face or video conference via zoom) that was most convenient for the interviewee. The email also suggested that if a designee is identified by the superintendent, the researcher email be forwarded to the designee with a copy to the researcher, to establish communication between the designee and the researcher. The designee was provided the same email information including description and purpose of the research and interview, estimated duration of the interview and request for an interview date, time, location and method (face to face or video conference via zoom) that was convenient for the interviewee. Once the interviewee was identified, they were asked to identify their preferred method of communication: email, phone call, text, other and whether direct or indirect communication is preferred (via secretary or another designee).

Principal focus groups. During the district administrator interviews, each administrator was asked how to best approach their principals to provide them with an opportunity to participate in a focus group. Some district administrators opted for this researcher to send them an email inviting principals to participate in a focus group, which they then forwarded to their principals. The principal participants then contacted this principal via email. Some district administrators contacted their principals directly to see if they were interested in participating in a focus group, and then forwarded their principal email responses to me so that I could follow up with them collectively.

Once the principal participants were identified, a group email with each district principal focus group was created to thank them for volunteering to participate in the research and to arrange a focus group date, time and location that best met their needs. The researcher also attached a consent form to each email and provided all principal participants with opt-in and opt-out options for participation in the focus group. The principals were advised that the information obtained from the focus group would be used for research purposes only and would not be shared or sold.

Principals were provided a 2-week schedule of various dates and times available for a focus group. Once a date, time and location were established, the researcher sent out an email reminder to the principal group the day before each focus group to confirm the date, time and location. The researcher then facilitated each focus group with protocols established by the researcher.

Protocols. For the interviews and focus groups, two interview protocols were created by the researcher that included open-ended questions to elicit data necessary to answer each research question. One interview protocol was created for the superintendent interviews and one interview protocol was created for the principal focus groups. Specific questions were developed for both sets of participants. The questions used were created by the researcher and adapted from the Principal Support Framework (University of Washington Center for Educational Leadership, 2016) and the American School Leader Panel (ASLP) survey (Johnston, Kaufman, & Thompson, 2016). Participant interview and focus group questions were specifically created to align to each research question to ensure that adequate data were collected to answer each research question (see Appendix D).

Semi-structured interviews and focus group are standard techniques for conducting interviews in qualitative studies and were utilized in this research (Bailey, 2007). Both the superintendent interviews and principal focus groups were semi-structured and audiotaped. TranscribeMe transcription services were utilized to transcribe the audio data collected. The transcriptions were uploaded into Google Docs and the data was thoroughly analyzed via code and theme identification and via reflection comments.

Data Analysis

A hybrid thematic analysis approach was taken for data analysis. Hybrid thematic analysis includes both an inductive and deductive approach to data analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Nowell, Norris, White & Moules, 2017; Yukhymenko, Brown, Lawless, Brodowinska & Mullin, 2014). These approaches include "thematic coding that allows a balance of inductive coding (derived from the raw data) and deductive coding (derived from theoretical framework)" (Yukhymenko et al., 2014, p. 98). The induction portion of the data analysis for this research included the gathering of raw data collected from both the district administrator interviews and principal focus groups. For inductive analysis of the data, all transcribed data (each administrator interview and principal focus group protocol question) were coded via color coding, coloring similar themes and comments in one color. Comments were then written in comment section of the Google doc, summarizing key themes and points for each interview question. Using reflexivity, personal reflections and questions were also commented throughout the analysis that the researcher felt could be useful when writing out findings and possible implications of the data.

A separate Google sheet was also created that contained all interview questions (vertically) and all districts (horizontally). A separate tab was created

for district administrator data and for principal data. The summarized comments made in the Google doc transcriptions were then added to each corresponding interview question and district. This allowed the researcher to view responses and themes across districts, identifying similarities and differences in responses and themes across districts.

The deductive portion of the data analysis was the application of the data collected to the six CPSEL and the seven effective professional development constructs, and identification of where they converged. Both inductive and deductive approaches provide data that is derived from a predetermined framework, a priori, and from data that emerges and drives theory (Nowell et al., 2017).

The hybrid thematic analysis for this research followed the six stages as identified and used by Fereday and Muir-Cochrane (2006) to code and summarize the coded themes:

1. Develop code manual
2. Test the reliability of code
3. Summarize data and identify initial themes
4. Apply template of codes and additional coding
5. Connect the codes and identify themes
6. Corroborate and legitimize coded themes (p.5)

Following these steps allowed the researcher to organize and thoroughly review the data. For deductive analysis, all raw data were coded and themed using Google Docs and Google Sheets. The pre-determined codes and corresponding raw data were then put into a Microsoft Word table. Utilizing the hybrid thematic analysis approach allowed the researcher to examine the variance in participant perceptions and any possible unexpected phenomenon (Nowell et al., 2017).

For data analysis, a preliminary codebook was created by the researcher that included the six CPSEL and the seven effective professional development constructs (Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006). The preliminary codes were used to assist the researcher in data analysis, relating school district professional development strategies and practices to the CPSEL: Development and implementation of a shared vision; instructional leadership; management and learning environment; family and community engagement; ethics and integrity; and external context and policy. Preliminary codes were used to assist the researcher in data analysis relating school district professional development strategies and practices to effective professional development constructs: Sustained, job-embedded, interactive, collegial, integrated, focused on student learning and provided on a continuum (Bishop et al., 2015; California Department of Education, 2012; Every Student Succeeds Act, 2015; Fogarty & Pete, 2004; Kearney, 2010).

Any additional codes and themes that were counter to the preliminary codes were also added as needed to the data to accurately capture the data collected. The data collection and results were reported in narrative form that included a table matrix of findings and their relation to the CPSEL and effective professional development constructs. The data collected informed the implications for professional development policy and practices for the retention and development of principals and student achievement in California.

Credibility and Transferability

Specific steps and actions were taken to ensure credibility and transferability of the research. The researcher ensured they were immersed in the data and data collections process by providing thick description of the data, rereading the raw descriptive data, and documenting thoughts, insights and

personal reflection about the data throughout via reflexive journaling (Bailey, 2007; Nowell et al., 2017). To ensure proper coding and theming of data, the researcher followed the six steps as outlined in the data analysis section by Fereday and Muir-Cochrane (2006) and moved back and forth between the stages throughout the duration of the data collection to ensure a reflective and rigorous process (Nowell et al., 2017; Yukhymenko et al., 2014). All actions to ensure credibility and transferability were purposefully taken. The qualitative research was intentionally conducted in a manner that was ethical and followed research-based practices to ensure results were rigorous and beneficial (Nowell et al., 2017).

Ethical Considerations

All participants in this study included voluntary participation, and all participants were given the option to opt out of the study at any given time. The confidentiality of all participants was maintained throughout the study by providing school districts with a letter identifier instead of identifying them by name. District administrator and principal participants were also provided with letter identifiers as needed to maintain confidentiality. The data was maintained in a computer that only the researcher had access to via password entry. Participant information including districts, district administrators and principals was not shared outside of the report of the research. In addition to a consent form provided to each participant, consent language was also included in each interview and focus group protocol that allowed participants to consent to participation in the study. Participants that were interested were provided with a summary of the results upon the conclusion of the study. All aspects of the study, including interview and focus group protocols and questions were reviewed by the California State University, Fresno Institutional Review Board for approval. The

data collection included adults only, no one under the age of 18, and the research focus pertained to risks not greater than those encountered during daily life.

CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS

The purpose of this research was to examine 1) the established practices and systems that school districts have in place to support principal professional growth and development; 2) the strategies and practices used in school districts to provide differentiated professional development and support to principals; 3) the alignment of district practices and systems that support principal professional growth and development to the CPSEL and effective professional development constructs; and 4) principal perceptions of the alignment of professional development they have received to effective professional development constructs, the CPSEL, and their professional development needs. The methods utilized to collect the data for this study included semi-structured interviews with district administrators and the facilitation of semi-structured focus groups with school principals.

School district administrators and principals representing the Southern San Joaquin Valley of California case study region were interviewed and participated in this research. Nine school district administrators from nine different school districts were interviewed, and five principal focus groups were conducted with five of the nine school districts. A total of 17 principals, nine district administrators, and nine school districts participated in this research.

School Districts and District Administrator Interviews

The district and district administrator sample size represented a cross-section of school districts in the Southern San Joaquin Valley of California. Eight out of nine school district administrators interviewed were district superintendents and one superintendent deferred the interview to their area administrator, which is

similar to an assistant superintendent position. More than half of the district administrators interviewed were male (56%) and 44% were female. The number of years district administrators had been in their position ranged from 7 months to 4.5 years, with an average of 2.04 years in their current position. Every NCES locale category was represented in this sample. The NCES locale code identifies school districts as either city, suburban, town or rural and each identifier contains three subtypes: large, midsize and small (Geverdt, 2015). The demographics of the school districts and school district administrators are represented in Table 4.

Table 4.

School District and District Administrator Research Participants

School District	District Type	NCES Locale & Category	District Admin Gender	Years in Position
A	Regular Public	Large, Suburban Large, Rural Fringe (1)	Female	1.5 years
B	Regular Public	Town Distant, Rural Fringe, Rural Distant (5)	Male	1.5 years
C	Regular Public	Midsize, Suburban Midsize, Rural Fringe, Rural Distant (2)	Male	7 months
D	Regular Public	Town Fringe, Rural Fringe, Rural Distant (4)	Female	3.5 years
E	Regular Public	Suburban Large, Town Fringe, Rural Fringe, Rural Distant (3)	Female	7 months
F	Regular Public	Suburban Large, Town Fringe (3)	Male	7 months
G	Regular Public	Midsize, Suburban Midsize, Rural Fringe (2)	Male	2.5 years
H	Regular Public	Suburban Midsize (2)	Male	3 years
I	Regular Public	Town Distant, Rural Fringe, Rural Distant (5)	Female	4.5 years

District Administrator Interviews

Nine district administrators from nine different districts in the California Southern San Joaquin Valley were interviewed by this researcher. All district administrators consented to the interviews and recording of the interviews. District administrators were asked questions that were closely aligned to the research questions. Their responses to each interview question were coded and themed and are provided in narrative form in this chapter under each corresponding research question.

Research Question 1

What school district systems of support and personnel are responsible for helping principals grow as leaders?

The school district personnel that are responsible for helping principals grow as leaders varied among the nine districts. The three smaller rural school district administrators reported the superintendent as the direct supervisor of principals. The other six school district administrators reported other district-level administrators as being responsible for helping principals grow as leaders including, area superintendent, area administrator, director, assistant superintendent of educational services, and assistant superintendent of curriculum. Two school district administrators reported they recently hired a district administrator specifically for principal supervision. One district administrator reported hiring two "principal supervisors" and the other district administrator reported hiring an "assistant superintendent of educational services" for the direct supervision of principals.

District Systems of Principal Support

The district administrators reported several school district systems that help principals grow as leaders. The district administrator responses are indicated in Table 5. Their responses centered on activities that support principal instructional leadership based on school site needs and district initiatives. The activities were categorized into six themes: individual principal support, principal group support, PD, school year leadership preparation, mentoring/coaching and school accountability support.

Principal Supervision Prioritization

In addition to school systems of support, school administrators were asked to report on the extent principal supervisors are able to prioritize working with principals as the day-to-day focus of their work. Five out of nine school district administrators reported that calendaring regular scheduled meetings with principals was critical to ensuring principal supervision is a day-to-day focus of principal supervisors in their district. One large school district administrator reported that principal supervision in their district is “Strategically calendared - we have area superintendent division meetings then we have area superintendent meetings with principals - cyclical, calendared events, very structured, to ensure a communication pipeline" (District Administrator A, personal communication, January 24, 2019). Two different district administrators also reported, “The primary responsibility of cabinet is to spend time with principals” (District Administrator B, personal communication, January 25, 2019) and “The first responsibility of area superintendents is principal supervision” (District Administrator G, personal communication, February 12, 2019). Another suburban large district administrator did not emphasize calendaring time for principal supervision and instead reported,

> This is always hard. It's just getting out to school sites, I mean, we do everything to put that as first priority is, be at the school sites. So, we try to be out of the office as much as possible so that we can be part of their day-to-day focus on work. (District Administrator E, personal communication, February 8, 2019)

Table 5

School District Systems of Support

System of Support	Activity
Individual Principal Support	School Site Visits Area Superintendent Standings Goal Development Principal Action Plan
Principal Group Support	Administration Meetings Administrator Leadership Team (ALT) Meetings Management Meetings Principal PLC Time Grade Level Principal Meetings
Professional Development	Break-Out Sessions Leadership Academies Outside Consultant Book Studies
School Year Leadership Preparation	Pre-Charge, Charge, Advance (administrator meetings held before the school year begins) Leadership Development Retreat Leadership Meetings
Mentoring/Coaching	Feedback Re-designing coaching model (moving to more site-based versus district-based) Collective district administration discussion about principal needs On-site school, classroom and principal visitation
School Accountability Support	School Review Classroom Walkthroughs Site Plan Review Instructional Rounds Summit (Report out of goals based on school site data) Mid-Year Review

Support for Principal Supervisors

District administrators were asked about the resources, support, and professional development that is provided to principal supervisors to successfully support principals as leaders. None of the nine district administrators reported a specific system of support to develop the district administrator responsible for principal supervision. One district administrator reported, "This is an area of improvement," (District Administrator C, personal communication, February 6, 2019) while another reported, "There is no formal structure for that" (District Administrator G, personal communication, February 12, 2019). Other forms of principal supervisor support reported included regular district cabinet meetings, cabinet book studies, and attending the same professional development as principals.

Summary

The school district administrators interviewed reported varying systems of support and personnel responsible for helping principals grow as leaders. The district systems of support and activities provided for principals primarily centered on instructional leadership. They also included regularly planned individual and group forms of principal support provided by district administrators and principal supervisors. Most school administrators reported intentionally calendaring scheduled meetings with principals to ensure principal supervision is a day-to-day focus of principal supervisors in their district. However, one district administrator reported challenges to maintaining a daily focus on principal supervision. In relation to principal supervisor support, all nine school district administrators were unable to identify district resources, support, and professional development that is provided specifically to principal supervisors to successfully support principals as leaders.

Research Question 2

What strategies and practices are used in school districts to provide differentiated professional development and support to principals?

School district administrators reported several strategies and practices they utilize to provide differentiated PD and support to principals. Five responses included a focus on differentiated PD that is determined by school site needs and district initiatives. One district administrator reported that the PD principals receive is provided, "Indirectly and often based on site data and needs, and focused on school, staff, versus principal specific needs, more reactionary" (District Administrator C, personal communication, February 6, 2019). Other district administrators reported that differentiated principal PD in their district is "Based on school site needs and data" (District Administrator E, personal communication, February 8, 2019), "Focused on district or school site initiatives or challenges" (District Administrator F, personal communication, January 25, 2019), and "Some PD is specific to grade levels or initiatives specific to school sites" (District Administrator H, personal communication, February 14, 2019). The district administrator responses varied across districts, and reflected practices and strategies utilized to provide differentiated PD to principals that were primarily determined by district and school site needs.

The district administrator strategies and practices reported were themed and coded as indicated in Table 6. The primary strategies utilized by districts to provide differentiated principal PD and support emerged into four key themes, mentoring/coaching, individual principal support, principal preparation, and collective principal PD.

Table 6

Differentiated Principal PD Strategies and Practices

Strategy	Practice
Mentoring/Coaching	Different levels of mentoring – Tailored mentoring Ongoing, hands-on, supervision and mentoring Coaching up
Individual Principal Support	Principal Individual Education Plan - Personalized Principal Action Plan Individual Coaching Evaluation Process Establish goals with the superintendent PD based on need
Principal Preparation	County Office Principal Preparation Program First-year principal onboarding support
Collective Principal PD	Leaders of Learning Principals sent to training together District Collaborative Teams

Principal Professional Development

The district PD activities provided specifically for principals and distinct from those provided for teachers included similar systems of support and activities indicated in Table 7. This area of questioning also provided some district administrator responses that included specific PD topics that were reported as distinctly different than teacher PD topics. The district PD activities were also provided by both internal and external methods of support and delivery as illustrated in Table 7.

Table 7

District PD Specifically for Principals

Delivery	Activities	Topics
Internal (District)	Break-Out Charge Sessions Leadership Academies Leadership Meetings Professional Development Days Achievement Teams Leaders of Learning	Coherence Professional Learning Communities Nuts and Bolts - Evaluation & Budgets Five Dimensions of Instruction
External	Consultant County Offices of Education ACSA- Association of California School Administrators Solution Tree Lozano Smith Law Firm CVELI - Central Valley Educational Leadership Institute CALI - T4Learning	Data Analysis Growth Mindset Teacher Efficacy Administrator Preparation Programs ACSA Institutes Universal Design for Learning FRISK™ - Documentation Model Coherence Professional Learning Communities

A district administrator also reported that utilizing their school site budgets, "principals have autonomy to send staff and self to training as needed - principal directed" (District Administrator H, personal communication, February 14, 2019). Three of the nine district administrators reported that learning directors and co-administrators also attend the same PD as principals. Another district administrator reported that the district focuses on principal PD "alongside teachers" and on "topics relevant to current issues" (District Administrator A, personal communication, January 24, 2019). One district administrator, new to their district, reported that the focus on principal leadership was new this year stating, "My understanding of what happened last year compared to this year in

our conversations is that there was very little leadership professional development with our principals" (District Administrator C, personal communication, February 6, 2019). Another district administrator elaborated on their monthly scheduled district meetings with principals,

> Every C&I meeting is professional development. It's not a sit and get. It's a professional development. So that happens once a month, and it's according to whatever we're seeing out there as a need. All the coaches are there, all the middle management, and all the principals. (District Administrator I, personal communication, February 6, 2019).

Principal Professional Development Tools and Resources

The PD tools and resources reported by district administrators as being available to principals to support their individual growth and development mirrored the internal and external activities and providers indicated in Table 7. District administrators also reported additional specific principal PD tools and resources that included "Protocol binders from each department, budget meetings w/finance team, online sexual harassment/child abuse" (District Administrator A, personal communication, January 24, 2019); "Google Doc folders and modeling" (District Administrator C, personal communication, February 6, 2019); and "Access to books and other colleagues" (District Administrator E, personal communication, February 8, 2019).

Individual Principal Professional Development Needs

The school districts vary in their methods to determine the individual PD needs of principals. Three out of the nine school district administrators reported no specific system in place to support their efforts in this area. One district administrator reported they have, "Nothing in place right now but need to

interview principals and ask where they see themselves in 5 years, what they need in order to make them more effective as principals and come up with a PD plan" (District Administrator C, personal communication, February 6, 2019). While another district administrator reported, "We just try and align it [principal professional development] with the district goal and vision" (District Administrator H, personal communication, February 14, 2019).

Two district administrators reported utilizing surveys to determine individual principal PD needs, "We have climate assessment so every employee in [the district], for a month, takes an online survey where they evaluate their principals, so the feedback from that is used to identify areas" (District Administrator A, personal communication, January 24, 2019). Another district administrator reported,

> Principal Surveys, I had them [principals] rate, a myriad of topics, go ahead and rate what your greatest needs are. And then, sometimes it's based off district data. And that's the hard part. It's the differentiative part. Well, some may need this. Others don't. So, we kind of struggle with that sometimes… (District Administrator E, personal communication, February 8, 2019).

Other methods used to determine individual principal PD needs included district administrator and principal communications, development of a principal action plan based on principal supervisor input and observation, and the principal evaluation and hiring process.

Specific to the principal hiring process, one district administrator reported that principal "strengths and weaknesses" are identified when they are hired. The district administrator reported that the district knows and identifies these areas when they begin as principals, and that information informs the type of support and PD the principal needs and is provided. Principal supervisors then conduct weekly check-ins with principals in those areas.

The principal evaluation tool was also reported by two district administrators as a method used to determine individual principal PD needs. One district administrator reported that their principal evaluation tool is aligned to the CPSEL descriptions of practice and the principal "evaluation process is used to ask, what did you do to extend your growth? How did you fill your own professional toolkit this year?" (District Administrator D, personal communication, February 8, 2019). District administrator B reported that principals meet with him and have a "Two-hour eval held each summer and one-hour each winter break - ask how we can help them and what they need for support" (District Administrator B, personal communication, January 25, 2019).

Principal Professional Development Throughout a Continuum

None of the school district administrators described a specific system in place to support and provide principals with PD throughout a continuum, from novice to veteran principals. One district administrator reported, "Only monthly meetings right now and a focus on district initiatives and pushing those forward versus how we're going to continue this PD for your professional growth" (District Administrator C, personal communication, February 6, 2019). Four of the nine district administrators responded by referencing support provided to novice principals that included one-to-one mentoring, strategically pairing of novice principals with veteran principals, new principal orientation and sending all new principals to the ACSA Principal Academy. One district administrator elaborated on their methods to support novice principals,

> So, I pair them [new principals] up with an experienced person. For example, principal A. She's paired up with principal B, principal of the year for [X County], and that's who her mentor is… And I insist that they meet a minimum of bi-weekly so that they can just have somebody to talk to,

> somebody to bounce things off of, and to kind of check in (District Administrator I, personal communication, February 6, 2019).

District administrator I reported further that the superintendent meets with the principal supervisors for a two-hour monthly meeting and inquires, “So, how's the coaching going? How is principal A doing? She's stressed. I can tell she's stressed. How are you supporting her?” (District Administrator I, personal communication, February 6, 2019).

For veteran principals, two responses centered on 1) providing information to veteran principals to ensure they stay current and compliant with new laws and initiatives, and 2) participation of some veteran principals in a district principal leadership group that works closely with district administration to provide principal insight and feedback to district administration. One district administrator also reported, “Once we've established that basic foundation of PD or training [for novice principals], then it is done based on the needs perceived by the principal supervisor and the area superintendent and the principal” (District Administrator G, personal communication, February 12, 2019).

Summary

A myriad of strategies and practices are used in school districts to provide PD and support to principals. These efforts are also provided both internally and externally. Most of the strategies and practices reported are determined by school site data, school site needs and district-wide initiatives. Few district strategies and practices that provide differentiation of principal PD based on individual principal needs were reported. Formal district systems that support and provide a continuum of principal PD were also absent across all school districts. However, purposeful novice principal systems of support and development were reported. The principal PD provided by districts is tailored to principal school site needs,

district needs, and observed needs as principals and district administration move throughout the school year.

Research Question 3

What professional development strategies and practices used in school districts are aligned to the California Professional Standards for Educational Leaders (CPSEL) and effective professional development constructs?

To begin to answer this research question, district administrators were generally asked how their district uses the CPSEL to provide principal PD. All but three of the district administrators interviewed responded by reporting that the CPSEL are aligned to their principal evaluation tool. One of the district administrators reported the evaluation tool is aligned but "not in place yet" (District Administrator H, personal communication, February 14, 2019). Another explained that their principal evaluation practice is based on the CPSEL and the "area superintendent communicates in the context of those standards - providing support as needed, mentor for example or specific training" (District Administrator A, personal communication, January 24, 2019).

CPSEL and Principal Professional Development Needs

When asked how their district uses the CPSEL to identify principal PD needs, eight out of nine district administrators provided no direct response to the alignment of principal PD with the CPSEL. One district administrator reported, "We don't necessarily use that to guide PD" (District Administrator G, personal communication, February 12, 2019) and another reported, "We are still growing in that area" (District Administrator D, personal communication, February 8, 2019). The one district that reported utilizing the CPSEL to identify principal PD needs

explained that “Principals select two CPSEL and develop growth goals based on those two CPSEL - Principals rate themselves & develop goals” (District Administrator E, personal communication, February 8, 2019). Although the CPSEL were not used by most school districts to intentionally identify principal PD needs, most of the PD content and topics aligned to the CPSEL.

Principal Professional Development Topics, Delivery & Duration

Utilizing a pre-determined codebook that included the six CPSEL (Development and Implementation of a Shared Vision, Instructional Leadership, Management and Learning Environment, Family and Community Engagement, Ethics and Integrity, and External Context and Policy), the principal PD topics district administrators reported were aligned to the CPSEL as illustrated in Table 8. The principal PD topics mostly aligned with the instructional leadership standard with the management and learning environment standard following closely behind. Few topics aligned with the remaining standards and no topics were found to align with the family and community engagement standard.

The district administrators reported that principal PD was primarily delivered face-to-face, and delivered both internally and externally, and on and off campus. The duration of the principal PD provided varied across districts. District administrator E reported that principal PD was provided “On the job, collaborative and throughout the entire year” (District Administrator E, personal communication, February 8, 2019). District administrator H reported that principal PD was provided “Primarily off-campus- short term” (District Administrator H, personal communication, February 14, 2019) and another

Table 8

Principal PD Alignment to CPSEL

CPSEL	Principal PD Topics
Development and Implementation of a Shared Vision.	Core Values Visioning Mission and Goals Internal Coherence Teacher PLC Universal Design for Learning Instructional Rounds Growth Mindset
Instructional Leadership	Internal Coherence Visible Learning AVID Assessment Standards Data Analysis Teacher PLC CAASPP Assessment Academic Discourse English Language Arts Text Adoption Process Five Dimensions of Instruction Innovation Technology Special Education Universal Design for Learning Instructional Rounds Reading Literacy Formative Assessment Kagan Instructional Strategies Growth Mindset Teacher Efficacy
Management and Learning Environment	School Safety Active Shooter Suicide Prevention PBIS Culture and Climate Crucial Conversations Relationship Building Social Emotional Learning with Adults Teacher Evaluation Budgets
Family and Community Engagement	
Ethics and Integrity	FRISK™ - Documentation Model Discipline Inclusive Decision Making Flippen Training (360 Survey) Special Education CAASPP Assessment
External Context and Policy	FRISK™ - Documentation Model Discipline

reported principal PD was “continuous, monthly, and embedded - via coaches at school sites” (District Administrator I, personal communication, February 6, 2019).

Utilizing a pre-determined codebook that included the seven effective PD constructs (sustained, job-embedded, interactive, collegial, integrated, focused on student learning, and provided on a continuum), the delivery of principal PD reported by district administrators was aligned to the PD constructs as illustrated in Table 9. The delivery of principal PD varied in each district. Not all district administrators reported the duration and delivery of their principal PD and not all seven effective PD constructs were reported to be provided by any of the nine district administrators.

Summary

The primary practice utilized by school districts that is aligned to the CPSEL is the principal evaluation tool and process. However, not all district principal evaluations were reported to be aligned to the CPSEL, and the district administrators did not report that the evaluation tool was utilized to determine principal PD, except for district E. The principal PD topics mostly aligned to the CPSEL, however, the CPSEL was not purposefully utilized to develop and determine principal PD. The principal PD provided by the districts, aligned with all seven effective PD constructs, however, the same alignment was unable to be reached when reviewing the principal PD provided at each individual district. Therefore, the alignments are only based on what was reported by each district administrator and does not represent alignment across districts.

Table 9

Principal PD Alignment to Effective PD Constructs

Effective PD Constructs	Codes in Context
Sustained	Continuous PD Monthly PD PD Embedded – (via coaches at school sites) PD on the job Collaborative PD PD provided throughout the entire year
Interactive	PD days for principals and co-admin Principals trained side by side with the coaches
Collegial	PD on the job Collaborative PD PD provided throughout the entire year Principals trained side by side with the coaches
Job-Embedded	PD on the job Collaborative PD PD provided throughout the entire year PD provided face to face
Integrated	Face-to-face PD PD on the job
Focused on Student Learning	Leaders of Learning (every other week) Instructional leadership focused PD
Continuum of PD throughout Career	PD/training for new principals PD of veteran principals based on needs perceived by principal supervisor & principal

Principal Focus Groups

The principal participant sample size represented a cross-section of school districts in the Southern San Joaquin Valley of California. Principal focus groups were held with five out of the nine school districts. Each focus group was held on a separate date and time. More than half of the principal participants were female (58%) and 42% were male. The number of years principals had been in their position ranged from six months to eight years, with an average of three years in their current position. Nine principals worked in elementary schools, three principals worked in middle schools and two principals worked at high school level. Every NCES locale category was represented in this principal sample except for locale four (Town Fringe, Rural Fringe, Rural Distant).

Table 10 represents the five principal focus groups representing five different districts, districts A, B, E, H, and I. The table also represents the demographics of each principal participant in each district focus group. As indicated in Table 10, District A focus group contained three principals; District B focus group contained four principals; District E focus group contained three principals; District H focus group contained three principals; and District I focus group contained four principals.

A total of 17 principals from five different school districts participated in a focus group with other principals in their district. All focus groups were facilitated by this researcher and all principals consented to participation and recording of the interviews. Principals were asked questions that were closely aligned to the research questions. Their responses to each focus group question were coded and themed and are provided in a narrative form in this chapter under each corresponding research question.

Table 10

School District and Principal Research Participants

School District	NCES Locale & Category	Principal Gender	Total Years as a Principal	Years in Position
A	Large, Suburban	Female	3 years	3 years
	Large, Rural	Male	4 years	4 years
	Fringe (1)	Male	5 years	5 years
B	Town Distant,	Male	14 years	5 years
	Rural Fringe,	Male	6 years	3 years
	Rural Distant (5)	Female	5 years	5 years
		Female	6 months	6 months
E	Suburban Large,	Female	9 years	1 year
	Town Fringe,	Male	7 years	2 years
	Rural Fringe,	Male	8 years	8 years
	Rural Distant (3)			
H	Suburban	Female	1st year	6 months
	Midsize (2)	Female	7 years	4 years
		Female	2 years	2 years
I	Town Distant,	Female	6 months	6 months
	Rural Fringe,	Female	6 months	6 months
	Rural Distant (5)	Female	3 years	3 years
		Male	4 years	4 years

Research Question 1

What school district systems of support and personnel are responsible for helping principals grow as leaders?

The school district personnel reported to be responsible for helping principals grow as leaders varied between principal groups. Two principal groups reported the person responsible for their supervision and growth was their assistant superintendent. The three other principal groups each reported varied principal supervisors, one group reported it was their deputy assistant superintendent, one

group reported it was their area administrator, and one group reported it was their superintendent.

In addition to district personnel, the principals reported several school district systems that are in place that help them grow as leaders. One of the systems reported included district administrator school site visits and discussions with principals at their school sites. A response from one principal provided an example of the school site visitation system of support they receive in their district,

> The area administrators do visit school sites. We have monthly administrative PLC meetings which include PD embedded in those. We have summit meetings where we're outlining our goals and next steps, and we have goal setting meetings with our area administrators, and then we have follow-up meetings and walkthroughs which align to those goals (District E Principal, personal communication, March 8, 2019).

A principal from another district reported a similar experience with their district supervisor,

> Yeah, so the area superintendent, which is my boss, will meet me on a monthly basis. When I was fairly new, it was twice a month. And I kind of go through and talk about how the school's doing, go through different scenarios, ask about certain questions, how they can support us, guiding us in the right direction, leading us in the right direction (District A Principal, personal communication, March 4, 2019).

Some of the principals also reported mentoring/coaching and feedback as a form of district support. One principal reported,

> I might say, at our principal's meetings, we get feedback. We'll go through scenarios and then if there's an issue on-campus, often times the assistant superintendent will come out to the school site to walk through various situations. So one-on-one mentoring (District A Principal, personal communication, March 4, 2019).

A principal from another district reported their experience with mentoring provided by their school district for support,

> I'm a first-year principal. So, I have a mentor, a first-year principal mentor. He's our former superintendent. So, I meet with him either once or twice a month and then by telephone whenever I need him to-- just if I have issues that come up or for [inaudible] purposes. We just talk about everything at my school site, and he helps me with planning (District B Principal, personal communication, February 27, 2019).

Overall, the principal responses centered on several district supports that were categorized into five themes. The themes included 1) individual principal support 2) principal group support 3) professional development 4) mentoring/coaching and 5) school accountability support and feedback. The principal responses were categorized as noted in Table 11.

Table 11

School District Systems of Support Reported by Principals

System of Support	Activity
Individual Principal Support	Standing Meetings School Site Visits (District Admin) Site Visitation Schedule Conferences ACSA Trainings
Principal Group Support	Principal Meetings Group Feedback Grade Level PLC Monthly Admin PLC Monthly Leadership Meetings Scenarios
Professional Development	Staff development for leaders PD w/teachers at their school sites Conferences Leadership Institute County Office Leadership Forums Summer Institute ACSA Trainings
Mentoring/Coaching	First Year Principal Mentor Partnering with another principal Internal and external 1-1 coaches 1-1 meetings with area administrator 1-1 Mentoring
School Accountability Support & Feedback	PGLE System Summit meetings School Site Visits (District Admin) Standing Meetings

Summary

Every principal group identified a district administrator that was responsible for their growth and development, however, the district administrator identified varied across districts. The principals in all groups provided a robust list of district systems of support and activities provided for principals and varied across districts as well. However, there were several common systems of support that were reported across four out of five principal groups 1) principal and district administration meetings 2) district administrator school site visitation 3) principal mentoring/coaching and 4) internal and external principal professional development opportunities.

Research Question 2

What strategies and practices are used in school districts to provide differentiated professional development and support to principals?

The principals were asked to report what PD they received that was specifically for principals and distinct from the PD provided for teachers. Their responses centered on several types of support and activities that were categorized into five themes 1) individual principal support 2) principal group support 3) professional development 4) school year leadership preparation and 5) mentoring/coaching. Table 12 illustrates the principal responses and how the responses were categorized.

All principals reported feeling supported by their school districts in this area. The principals also reported they are provided with PD from both their district and outside systems including but not limited to county office of education, the Association of California School Administrators (ACSA) and consultants. One principal shared they were participating in an ACSA academy

Table 12

Principal Professional Development Activities Reported by Principals

System of Support	Activity
Individual Principal Support	First Year Principal Mentor PLC coaches for each principal Partnering with another principal Internal and external 1-1 coaches 1-1 meetings with area administrator ACSA Trainings
Principal Group Support	Monthly Administrator Meetings District Leadership Meetings Hot Topics Leadership Academy Summer Institute
Professional Development	Staff development for leaders PD w/teachers at their school sites Curriculum and Instruction Trainings PLC Training County Office Trainings Summer Institute ACSA Trainings Professional learning for site leaders External Consultants Administrator specific workshops Leadership Academy Monthly Administrator Meetings - PD embedded in each meeting
School Year Leadership Preparation	Charge Administrator retreat
Mentoring/Coaching	First Year Principal Mentor PLC coaches for each principal Partnering with another principal Internal and external 1-1 coaches 1-1 meetings with area administrator

that was supported by their district,

> I'm currently in the curriculum and instruction academy at ACSA. And that was the one that Mr. [Assistant Superintendent] had approved for me to go this year. And so, I've been a part of that all year and I'm still in it. (District H Principal, personal communication, February 28, 2019)

Professional Development Tools & Resources

The principals also shared specific tools and resources they have access to for additional support. The tools and resources accessible to support their individual growth and development varied across principal groups, however, three principal groups reported they have access to leadership books and book studies facilitated by their district administration. The other tools and resources reported were different for each principal group. The principal groups reported they had access to conferences, district instructional coaches, professional magazines, online professional websites and site budgets they could utilize to send themselves and their staff to training. One principal from District E reported, "Basically anything that's going to the teachers we have access to" (District E Principal, personal communication, March 8, 2019). A principal from another principal group reported,

> I do know that outside of the district, we can go and seek out any professional development that we want, and we can fund it with our site budgets, our discretionary funds, and I know I feel supported to go find whatever professional development I want to go be a part of. It's not necessarily offered from within, though if we had a need, we could go to the district office and say, "Is there anybody who is an expert in this area," they would point us in the right direction
> (District A Principal, personal communication, March 4, 2019).

Individual Professional Development Needs

The individual PD needs of principals were determined by different methods. Two principal groups reported that their PD needs are determined by the

evaluation process and three principal groups reported their needs are determined as they develop goals with their district supervisor. One principal explained,

> We have individual goal setting that we meet one on one with our area administrators. And so, if there's things coming up that align to what some of those goals are, they can send us in that direction or connect us with it. They're also really good about if we see things that we feel we need that might be specific to our personal needs or specific to our site, if we said, "There's a training over here," they're open to us attending conferences and stuff that align to our needs (District Principal A, personal communication, March 4, 2019).

A principal from another district shared that goal setting with their assistant superintendent was a new practice that began after the assistant superintendent was recently hired,

> He's very good about trying to support principals and develop principals and leadership. So, prior to that, we didn't have that development and even in my prior district, it was very limited on that development or support. It was just kind of, you're just baptized by fire essentially till my first year was you know --(District Principal H, personal communication, February 28, 2019).

The evaluation process with a focus on goal development was also reported as a new practice in determining the individual PD needs of principals in another district. A principal from district B reported that the administrator evaluation system changed in their school district this school year and setting goals with the superintendent was a new practice. Another principal from the same district added that principals were also tasked with developing specific personal goals at the beginning of the year at their back-to-school leadership institute.

Continuum of Principal Professional Development

Each principal focus group was specifically asked, how and what does your school system have in place to support and provide principals with PD throughout a continuum? Novice to veteran principals? None of the five principal focus

groups reported a specific system of support that provided novice to veteran principals with PD throughout varying stages of principal leadership. One veteran principal from district H reported,

> It's not really separated. I don't think it's separated. We all go to the same trainings, district-wide we can do our own, but it's not-- I go to what they [principal colleagues] go to whether I need it or not. (District Principal H, personal communication, February 28, 2019).

A first-year principal from another district talked about their experience with their assigned mentor,

> It hasn't been really-- not a lot of structure to it other than, "Here. Here's some handouts that might help you, and where are you at?" It's been very helpful with conversations though because he's always left, and I've always had a couple good ideas that I want to use, so that's been really helpful. But other than that, I mean, I really can't put my finger on anything else (District Principal B, personal communication, February 27, 2019).

The other three principals in the same district shared that the assigned mentor for first-year principals was a new practice in their district and something they did not receive as a new principal. One principal reported, "Your support is new because I know when I first became a principal, I didn't have that, so what they're receiving is new" (District Principal B, personal communication, February 27, 2019).

Mentoring and county office preparation programs were reported as forms of novice principal support, but not commonly reported across districts. Ongoing meetings and coaching with district administrators specific to school site goals and needs were reported as forms of support provided to principals beyond the first principal year,

> The district is always available to do that [PD]. So, whether it's HR, whether it's some type of curriculum, we know where to go and ask that type of question. And so, it is a continuum, like you said, in that regard (District Principal I, personal communication, March 1, 2019).

A principal from another district provided an example of their district's continuum of PD, "It's like a gradual release of responsibility from your area superintendent or your assistant superintendent. And they see that you can run your school site without their constant mentoring, then they back off" (District Principal A, personal communication, March 4, 2019).

Each principal group also reported utilizing colleagues as a form of support throughout their leadership, "Our district administrative principals get together and go visit other school sites so that we can see...things being implemented at different sites, and then we pick each other's brains that way" (District Principal E, personal communication, March 8, 2019). A principal from district A reflected on colleagues as a continuum of support, "I think it's more of that whole area of principal collaborative helping one another. You know you can depend on other principals" (District Principal A, personal communication, March 4, 2019).

Summary

All principal groups reported various methods of differentiated PD and support provided by their school districts. The PD activities offered were also reported as specifically for principals and distinct from those provided to teachers. The principal groups also commonly reported access to varied PD tools and resources to support their individual growth and development.

District systems to determine individual principal PD needs were not as consistent across principal groups, however, they centered on the principal evaluation process and goal setting with district administrators. Two principal groups reported the principal evaluation process in their district recently began focusing on individual principal needs. The principal groups also reported that the evaluation process and goal setting with district administrators were used to

identify school site and district needs, and self and district administrator identified principal needs.

A systematic approach to support and provide principals with PD throughout a continuum of leadership, novice to veteran principals, was inconsistent and lacking across principal groups. The principal groups identified varied PD practices across districts. However, the principal groups did not identify a systematic support system that is provided to all principals as they move through the beginning and advanced levels of principal leadership.

Research Question 3

What professional development strategies and practices used in school districts are aligned with the California Professional Standards for Educational Leaders (CPSEL) and effective professional development constructs?

The principal groups were asked what their experience has been with the CPSEL in relation to their professional development. They were also asked how and how often the CPSEL are used by district administrators, including their direct supervisor, to support their growth and development. In response to those questions, all five principal groups reported the CPSEL was used by their district administrators to support their growth and development via the principal evaluation process. All principal groups reported that the principal evaluation process was also utilized to establish goals with their district administrator that are reviewed with them more than once a year,

> I mean, so we had a pre-conference with her [superintendent]. Then we had our mid-year review. Then we'll have our end of the year evaluation...So at the mid-year, that's when you have the discussion, "Okay, what are you going to work on?" So, looking at the standards as a principal, you'd say, "This is what I need to work on as a school" (District Principal I, personal communication, March 1, 2019).

Two principal groups reported that the CPSEL are embedded in other PD strategies and practices provided to principals in context, versus verbatim. One principal explained, “And I don't think it's handed to us like here's the standard. But in all the work that we do it definitely is integrated” (District Principal A, personal communication, March 4, 2019). A principal from district E shared similar experiences reported by district A, and district I, related to CPSEL alignment to the evaluation process and other principal PD,

> Well, we do have a beginning of the year goal settings that are based around these standards. We do a mid-year check in around that and then we do a final meeting at the end of the year all around the standards. It's kind of explicitly that we do that. And our evaluation is also based on those standards. But I think that maybe not saying at the training, "Okay guys, we're going to talk about instructional leadership." I think that this [CPSEL] is what drives a lot of the PD that's embedded in our monthly PLCs (District Principal E, personal communication, March 8, 2019).

Principal Professional Development Alignment to CPSEL

Utilizing a pre-determined codebook that included the six CPSEL (Development and Implementation of a Shared Vision, Instructional Leadership, Management and Learning Environment, Family and Community Engagement, Ethics and Integrity, and External Context and Policy), the principal PD topics were aligned to the CPSEL as illustrated in Table 13. The principal PD topics mostly aligned with the instructional leadership standard with the management and learning environment standard following closely behind. The PD alignment with the following three CPSEL were not as robust, Development and Implementation of a Shared Vision, Family and Community Engagement, and Ethics and Integrity.

Table 13

Principal PD Alignment to CPSEL

CPSEL	Principal PD Topics
Development and Implementation of a Shared Vision.	Multiple Tiered Systems of Support Improvement Science Professional Learning Communities Positive Behavior Interventions & Supports (PBIS) Action Plan Development
Instructional Leadership	Multiple Tiered Systems of Support Visible Learning Special Education Effective Feedback English Language Development Math English Language Arts Professional Learning Communities Technology Integration Improvement Science Mapping California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress (CAASPP) Testing Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID)
Management and Learning Environment	Cultural Competency Action Plan Development Multiple Tiered Systems of Support Positive Behavior Interventions & Supports (PBIS) Social Emotional Learning (SEL) Classroom Observation Local Control and Accountability Plan (LCAP)
Family and Community Engagement	Local Control and Accountability Plan (LCAP)
Ethics and Integrity	California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress (CAASPP) FRISK™ - Documentation Model Special Education
External Context and Policy	Special Education CAASPP Testing FRISK™ - Documentation Model LCAP

The principal groups reported that principal PD was primarily delivered face-to-face, and delivered both internally and externally, and on and off campus. The duration of the principal PD provided varied across principal groups. One principal reported that the PD they attend includes "continuous discussion and reiteration in ATM meetings" (District Principal I, personal communication, March 1, 2019). A principal from another district shared a similar experience in their district related to their training on action plan development,

> They're [district] bringing that back up so we don't just do it once and leave it, so we have to review it back at certain meetings, talk about where we are at that process, what have we implemented, what do we need to do, and share those with other principals (District Principal B, personal communication, February 27, 2019).

A principal from district A reported their recent AVID training for principals included both internal and external, ongoing PD,

> Honestly, it's ongoing because they have conferences down South, but then our district also provides in-house. We have an avid district coordinator who provides training. So, there's another one coming up in March 15th and that specifically to train site leaders to be trainers on campus too. That's I think a little bit more organized (District Principal A, personal communication, March 4, 2019).

Another district principal shared the PLC training provided to principals in their district,

> We've gone to the conferences or gone to the training. But the PLCs, we all went there. Nobody came here. So now, we went there, and we were expected to come back and implement. We were told this is the way, the direction, that the district was going to enhance our PLC process, so you're going (District Principal H, personal communication, February 28, 2019.

Professional Development Alignment to

Professional Development Constructs

Utilizing a pre-determined codebook that included seven effective professional development constructs (Sustained, Interactive, Collegial, Job-

Embedded, Integrated, Focused on Student Learning, and Continuum of PD throughout Career), the delivery of principal PD reported by principal groups were aligned to the PD constructs as illustrated in Table 14. The delivery of principal PD varied in each district. Not all principal groups reported the duration and delivery of their principal PD and not all seven effective PD constructs were reported to be provided by any of the principal groups. The PD reported aligned to all effective PD constructs except two: Interactive and Continuum of PD Throughout Career.

Table 14

Principal PD Alignment to Effective PD Constructs

Effective PD Constructs	Codes in Context
Sustained	PD reviewed and revisited throughout the year Continuous discussion of PD Reiteration of PD in principal meetings PD provided throughout the year
Interactive	
Collegial	Principal attends PD w/teachers Principal attends PD w/academic coach
Job-Embedded	PD reviewed and revisited throughout the year
Integrated	Various formats Book Studies Webinars
Focused on Student Learning	Special Education & RSP focused PD PLC Consultant PD Visible Learning PD
Continuum of PD throughout Career	

Summary

The principal evaluation process was reported across all five principal groups as a common practice aligned to the CPSEL in their perspective school districts. The principal evaluation process was also reported as a method utilized to determine principal goals in discussion with their district administrator. When examining the topics of PD provided to principals and their alignment to the CPSEL, the principal PD topics aligned most with the following standards 1) instructional leadership 2) management and learning environment, and 3) external context and policy. Three of the six CPSEL, Development and Implementation of a Shared Vision, Family and Community Engagement, and Ethics and Integrity, aligned with minimal principal PD topics reported.

In review of the PD provided to principals and their alignment to the seven effective PD constructs, it was difficult to determine alignment for two reasons 1) not all principal groups reported the duration and delivery of their principal PD, and 2) not all seven effective PD constructs were reported to be provided by any of the principal groups. Therefore, the alignments are only based on what was reported by each principal group and does not represent alignment across principal groups.

Research Question 4

What are K-12 principal perceptions of the alignment of professional development they have received to effective professional development constructs, the CPSEL, and their professional development needs?

Effective Professional Development Constructs Alignment

During each focus group, each principal was provided with a list of effective PD constructs (see Appendix E). The principals were then asked, "How well aligned do you think the professional development you received during the past 2017-2018 school year was with effective professional development constructs?" To determine and measure how well the PD they have received was aligned to the effective PD constructs, the principals were asked to consider utilizing a 1-5 Likert scale, with one ranking as "not aligned" and a five ranking as, "very aligned." However, not all principals utilized the suggested 1-5 scale to report their perceptions and not all principals reported their perceptions specific to each construct. In retrospect, this interview question could have been better structured to capture the data necessary to answer the research question.

However, in review of their responses as reported, all five principal groups perceived the PD they received to be mostly aligned with the effective PD constructs. Table 15 provides direct responses from each principal group that reflect their perceptions of the alignment of the PD received to effective PD constructs. The principal perception of the alignment of the PD they received to effective PD constructs varied across districts. The varied responses across and within principal groups demonstrated that some effective PD constructs were perceived as more aligned than others. The variance also reflects an inconsistent perception of alignment of principal PD received to effective PD constructs across principal groups.

Table 15

Principal Perceived Alignment of PD Received and PD Constructs

Principal Group	Perceived Alignment
A	"I'd say they're pretty aligned" "Sustained so-- everything about charge, that wasn't a one-day. Interactive...we did a lot of interacting, talking to one another, our collegial conversations. Job-embedded. Integrated" "Mostly aligned"
B	"Yeah. I think that kind of all the tasks or all of the PDs kind of has some components of this, but not all of them" "So, one thing that just comes to mind is that-- so I see sustained-- is something sustainable versus a standalone? And then job-embedded, where it says continues at the work site. Sometimes I feel like we cover so much or do we do so much, it ends up being a standalone because there's not much follow up at the school site and, not that nobody wants to, but I feel like we do so much, it ends up being a one and done and we go on with our business, versus intentionally following up, visiting school sites and talking about how that specific PD is going at the school site."
E	"Five" "Kind of well-integrated?" "Yup"
H	"I think, again, we're like a four or five"
I	"...and of course, focus on learning, so I would say that's five. Continued PD throughout career-- yeah, we always have something new every year that we are hitting on. "So, the first one says it's sustained standalone, one day or short term. I mean we have some of those...so it might be in the middle. Maybe it's not 100% aligned there--"

California Professional Standards for Educational Leaders Alignment

During each focus group, each principal was provided with a list of the CPSEL (see Appendix B). The principals were then asked, "How well aligned do you think the professional development you received during the past 2017-2018 school year was to the standards in the CPSEL?" To determine and measure how well the PD they have received was aligned to the CPSEL, the principals were asked to consider utilizing a 1-5 Likert scale, with one ranking as "not aligned" and a five ranking as, "very aligned." However, not all principals utilized the suggested 1-5 scale to report their perceptions and not all principals reported their perceptions specific to each construct. In retrospect, this interview question could also have been better structured to capture the data necessary to answer the research question.

All five principal groups perceived the PD they received to be aligned with most of the CPSEL. Table 16 provides direct responses from each principal group that reflect their perceptions of the alignment of the PD received to the CPSEL.

The principal perception of alignment of the PD they received to the CPSEL varied across districts. The varied responses across and within principal groups demonstrated that some CPSEL were perceived as more aligned than others. The variance also reflects an inconsistent perception of alignment of principal PD received to the CPSEL across principal groups.

Professional Development Needs Alignment

In order to examine the principal perception of the alignment of PD received to their PD needs, all principals were asked three distinct questions. The questions allowed principals to share 1) their challenges and demands of being a principal 2) the PD they feel they need to meet their identified challenge and

demands, and 3) how well the PD they received during the last school year met their needs as a principal.

Table 16

Principal Perceived Alignment of PD Received and CPSEL

Principal Group	Perceived Alignment
A	"I'm trying to think of some of the things...it's pretty aligned" "I don't think there's a lot of direct PD in ethics and integrity. I think it's assumed with a lot of the leaders in our district, but I don't necessarily think that we should shy away from direct professional development in that" "There has been some management stuff" "I think number six comes through a lot"
B	"So, I'd say it's five. We certainly align PD. There's always things we could improve on, with follow up and support, but the PD itself I'd say definitely aligns" "And I feel real strongly about standard one, as far as the vision piece. The instructional leadership is ongoing...as far as community engagement and family. I don't know that we've really had any kind of structured PD on that, but I know that we're provided resources to be able to implement those types of things"
E	"I think very strongly" "Yeah. Definitely strongly" "...more recently with all that LCAP stuff"
H	"I would say between four and five" "Yeah, because the only one is maybe the family and community engagement. That would probably be the least. But the others, yeah."
I	"Even things like external context and policies. Again, that's like really embedded through the year, talking to us about what does it look like" "So, looking at that I would say four and two, and then one and five"

Principal challenges and demands. The principals in each focus group reported challenges and demands of being a principal and leading their school. Their responses are indicated in Table 17. All principal groups reported myriad of challenges that primarily centered on four key themes: personnel, organizational management, instructional leadership, and culture and climate.

Table 17

Challenges and Demands Identified by Principals

Themes	Personnel	Organizational Management	Instructional Leadership	Culture & Climate
Principal Challenges & Demands	-Hiring -Personnel "Personalities" -Teacher Supervision (when moving from teacher to admin)	-Deadlines -Reports -Time -Multiple initiatives -Juggling day to day "stuff" -Scheduling time to process -Being pulled from one thing to the next -Delegating work -On the spot decision making -Balance -Balancing motherhood & principalship	-Teacher development -Teacher support -Staying ahead of instruction -Addressing school-specific needs	-School safety -Creating a "nice" culture -Trying to understand school culture, political climate and traditions (as a new site principal) - No one to talk to

Personnel. Personnel challenges were identified in three out of the five principal groups. Some of the personnel issues that were reported as challenging for principals included staff personalities. A principal from principal group B reported the challenge as, "Personalities...always an issue" (District Principal B, personal communication, February 27, 2019). Teacher supervision issues

encountered when moving from the classroom to an administrator position were also shared, “My struggle is more with teachers that I taught with and now I'm their supervisor… So that's a big challenge for me, more than the kids or anything else. And so, I work on that all the time” (District Principal H, personal communication, February 28, 2019). A principal from a large district reported the personnel challenges of meeting the hiring needs at their school site,

> ...hire for diversity on my campus. I've got diversity and I need our staff to reflect our students and bring different perspectives to our campus. Not just to hire for diversity sake, but just to have different perspectives on campus (District Principal A, personal communication, March 4, 2019).

Organizational Management. Principal challenges specific to organizational management were identified across all principal groups and were the predominant theme across all principal groups. The challenges ranged from on the spot decision making to time management, and many of the organization challenges centered on balancing time and initiatives. One principal explained,

> And then for me, I'll say the old kind of flying the plane while it's being built. So, with new accountability and trying to understand how that works, while implementing things to support teachers, and some of those accountability measures is challenging on its own (District Principal B, personal communication, February 27, 2019).

A principal from the same group added to the challenge,

> ...creating the systems so that I feel like I'm like, "If there's something great here and then something else is kind of falling, how do I keep it all kind of flying kind of plane? How do I keep it all going without kind of teetering?" That's difficult (District Principal B, personal communication, February 27, 2019).

Principals also shared their challenges with the multitude of daily demands, decisions and responsibilities,

> Yeah, and I think for me, my site is so small so a lot of it is I wear multiple hats. And I'm gone a lot and pulled from my site quite often. The site I took over was kind of unorganized and I had to essentially rebuild it from the ground up of starting with policies and procedures, even fire drill

> procedures, bell schedules….and then it was also trying to change the culture of the school...so it's been kind of challenging…(District Principal H, personal communication, February 28, 2019).

Principals from different principal groups shared similar challenges, “It is just the daily challenges that's happening during the day. I think that's a time when you're pulled from one thing to the next (District Principal I, personal communication, March 1, 2019), while another reported, “There's just a lot that you're-- just juggling the various things” (District Principal E, personal communication, March 8, 2019).

Two first-year principals from one principal group shared their unique challenges as first-year principals,

> We work in a district where we have a lot of district-level administrators who are very hard workers and they will put a lot of time in. And we almost feel obligated because we are such a close-knit team. We have to be at so many events. So, having to balance between motherhood and principalship (District Principal I, personal communication, March 1, 2019).

The other first-year principal shared their challenges with delegating in their new administrative role,

> And I think for me, coming out of middle management and going into principalship...being able to delegate. I've been used to, and I still am putting all different hats and doing different things and I need to step back and realize, "Wait a minute. I have a team of people who are going to help me to be able to do all these different types of things." And I think that has been my number one challenge this year to be able to do that (District Principal I, personal communication, March 1, 2019).

Principals also reported the challenges of on the spot decision making and needing time to process and think,

> If I don't schedule and I block off the time to think and process and make a decision, you could literally go months and months and months and then you're looking at the next school year saying, why didn't I solve that last year? That's why. So that time, processing time and I think yeah. I think we take for granted a lot of the times. I think when you get to the DO it's very

> possible that you forget that too (District Principal E, personal communication, March 8, 2019).

A principal from another district shared a similar challenge,

> On the spot decision making...You don't have time to really process it and think it through. It has to be immediate and then you have to step back and think, "Is that the right decision? Should I have made that decision?" I think that that's also hard (District Principal I, personal communication, March 1, 2019).

Instructional Leadership. In comparison to organization challenges, instructional leadership challenges were least reported across all principal groups. Two out of the five principal groups shared their challenges specific to teacher support, development and student achievement. Two principals from the same principal group reported similar instructional leadership challenges, “Teacher development. That was my number one and culture and climate (District Principal B, personal communication, February 27, 2019), their principal colleague shared, “I'd say just a focus on instruction. Really maximizing our impact on kids. That's really big on my brain (District Principal B, personal communication, February 27, 2019). A principal from another district reported instructional leadership challenges in addition to other challenging areas,

> Well, I think that some of the challenges sometimes is to stay ahead of the teacher training. It's hard sometimes to engage in all of them. And some of the examples being with K-8 right now...so you're trying to stay ahead of your single subject trainings, your multiple subject trainings. And sometimes to be ahead of all of those trainings as well as just daily operations of your school, and all of the nuances that go with that, it's that demand on your time and to really do a good job, and to really go to those trainings and engage in it when there's-- I mean, the text messages from the office (District Principal E, personal communication, March 8, 2019).

Culture and Climate. Principals from two principal groups identified culture and climate as challenges. The challenges reported included ensuring school safety, understanding school culture, creating a positive culture and having

collegial support. Specific to school safety, a principal from principal group A reported, “I think the safety things. Making sure all the kids are safe, emotionally, socially, all that. That's the challenge I think … every single day-- making sure all the kids are safe (District Principal A, personal communication, March 4, 2019). A principal from the same group added, “It just runs the whole gamut of being a principal.... creating that nice culture.”

A principal from another district shared their challenge as a new principal at a new school site and district,

> Coming into a district I was new to, and then coming to a campus that I was new to, and then starting to understand the culture and trying to prepare for that... for me, it was trying to come in and figure that out, so that was a big hurdle (District Principal H, personal communication, February 28, 2019).

A principal colleague from the same principal group shared their challenge of working as the only site administrator at a small school site, “It's lonely at the top...my particular struggle is I don't have anybody to really, in the office, bounce ideas off of ... that specific special challenge, is that it is just me” (District Principal H, personal communication, February 28, 2019).

Professional Development Needed to Meet

Principal Challenges and Demands

After principals were asked to report the challenges and demands of being a principal and leading their school, all principals were asked what PD they felt they needed to meet the challenges and demands they identified. The principal responses centered on four PD themes: organizational management, instructional leadership, professional learning community, and individual support. The PD identified as needed by principals to meet their challenges and demands are indicated in Table 18.

Table 18

Professional Development Needs Identified by Principals

PD Need Themes	Organizational Management	Instructional Leadership	Professional Learning Community	Individual Support
PD Needed to Support Principal Challenges & Demands	-Budgets -Communication -Time Management -Leveraging Time & Resources	-Coaching Teachers -ELA Standards -PLC Process	-PD with Principal Colleagues -Bonding & Collaboration w/Principal Colleagues -Debriefing w/Principal Colleagues -Sharing of Ideas with Principal Colleagues	-Assigned Mentor -Assigned Coach

Organization. Principals reported PD specific to organizational management is needed to meet their challenges and demands as leaders. At least one principal from each principal group identified an area of organizational management as a PD need. One principal reported the need for principal PD on time management,

> So, here's what I would say. Just being really, really practical and kind of just elementary. There is no PD for time management organization. It's assumed and it's expected but I don't think that's 100% accurate across the people in general. (District Principal E, personal communication, March 8, 2019).

While a principal from another principal group shared a similar PD need related to time and "plate" management,

> Just really how to minimize the plate. The plate seems awfully full. How do I streamline that thing? How do I make it seem like it's not that much? There's ways to do that, and that's what I'm always trying to figure out (District Principal B, personal communication, February 27, 2019).

School site budgets and communication were also PD areas identified by principals as a PD need, "…I think one of the biggest [challenges], too, was the budget…struggling with the budget… I think a mentor would help (District Principal H, personal communication, February 28, 2019). A first-year principal from another district shared the need for PD on communication,

> I think, maybe, like communication. What to say and how to say it so it doesn't come off harsh but not too nice. I think I need...a balance. 'This is what the expectation is,' but being able to communicate that in a way to make them [staff] feel that she [principal] still does value me and what I believe (District Principal I, personal communication, March 1, 2019).

In addition to PD on time management, budgets and communication, one principal from district H reported the need to continue PD and support with principals on school site plans. The principal reported that their assistant superintendent recently reviewed the school site plan with all principals in their district, page-by-page. The principal reported the page-by-page process utilized to review and develop the school site plan was appreciated. Another principal from district A reported the need for continued PD in areas that "help us grow as a staff, whether its technology, whether it's safety practices whether it's any of that kind of thing" (District Principal A, personal communication, March 4, 2019).

Instructional leadership. Only one principal group identified instructional leadership areas of PD that is needed to meet their leadership needs. Three principals shared their PD needs that were categorized under instructional leadership. A first-year principal shared the PD they need to support teachers,

> I would say just how do I become a better coach for teachers. I feel like that's my biggest weakness right now because when you're working as a learning director, your time is devoted to discipline and all that as you're trying to develop to become a principal, but you're spending all your time in tasks…it doesn't provide a lot of time to…develop yourself as a coach, as an instructional leader. So, for me, it's just how do I become a better coach

> for the teachers (District Principal B, personal communication, February 27, 2019).

Another principal added their PD needs specific to content standards, "...more specifically for me would be more time and work with the ELA standards. It's not one of my strengths" (District Principal B, personal communication, February 27, 2019). While another principal colleague shared their need for more support and PD with teacher PLC work,

> The PLC process is what I needed to work on...I feel like we've been trying to implement for 10 years, and I never got-- I've never gone to a training on PLCs…it made more sense when I went to a full training. But still, it's not enough. It was a two-day training. I think I just need a lot more support (District Principal B, personal communication, February 27, 2019).

Professional learning community. Some principals reported the need for support from and with principal colleagues that did not necessarily fit under PD. One principal explained, "Yeah, I don't know. For myself, I don't know if there's a professional development that can provide for that. I think it's--Support. I think it's basically the support. Like that's what you need to have" (District Principal I, personal communication, March 1, 2019).

Two principals reported the need for continued PD provided by their school districts that allowed them to work and collaborate with their fellow principals. One principal shared,

> …[walkthrough] teams, when we have our debriefing you kind of get the opportunity to discuss some of those challenges with your colleagues and share ideas of how you're kind of handling or addressing some of those things and kind of sharing that. But I don't know that I would say it's professional development around it (District Principal E, personal communication, March 8, 2019).

A principal from another district made a similar comment,

> And I think for me, it's just continuing the PD... continuing to send us as a team [of principals] ...It's powerful because I can go to my training on my own with my team, whatever. I mean, because we all have side-based needs. But together, again, to continue the bonding and continue the

> collaboration…together as principals (District Principal H, personal communication, February 28, 2019).

Individual support. One principal group reported the need for individualized support from a mentor or coach. The three principals in this group discussed the need for individual principal mentorship and coaching at their school sites like the support provided by academic coaches to teachers in their district. Principal one reported,

> I feel like we all need, I don't know if it's a mentor or someone to talk to other than the assistant superintendent and superintendent who evaluate us. I wish that we had in our district…And that person could come to my site; we could walk around together. What do you see? What do you think? So, I really just wish that we all had a mentor that went around and helped us...To me, principals need someone to go to other than their supervisors (District Principal H, personal communication, February 28, 2019).

Principal two responded, “I think it's kind of like what we have, academic coaches” (District Principal H, personal communication, February 28, 2019). Principal three then added, “Yes. We have academic coaches for teachers” (District Principal H, personal communication, February 28, 2019). Principal one then elaborated,

> But then you also need that for administration…We have so many initiatives in place, it would be nice to kind of have that confidant where you're like…’What am I supposed to do?" Or…"Hey, I'm having a difficult time with this teacher. My academic coach has been in there. I need somebody else’…whatever the case is…it would be nice to have that additional support... (District Principal H, personal communication, February 28, 2019).

Perceived Alignment of Professional Development Received to Principal Needs

To examine the principal perception of the alignment of PD received to principal PD needs, each principal group was asked how well the PD they received during the past school year was in meeting their needs as principals. The

principals responded by sharing various PD topics they felt met their PD needs and made general comments about PD they perceived to have been helpful. The principals also varied in their responses across principal groups.

A first-year principal from one principal group reported PD provided during their back to school retreat that centered on developing a vision, mission and compelling message allowed them to gain a better understanding of those concepts, "Okay. Now I know what it [compelling message] looks like. This is what it really should look like." So that was really good for me to see that. I had never seen that before (District Principal B, personal communication, February 27, 2019). A principal from the same principal group added, “Agreed, that was very powerful” (District Principal B, personal communication, February 27, 2019). Two principals from the same principal group shared that the PD they received specific to special education was valuable, “And I think one of the valuable things in the special ed department world, they've been reviewing IEPs and RSP notes. I thought that was very valuable” (District Principal B, personal communication, February 27, 2019). Their principal colleague added, “...it's really made me reflect on writing IEP’s and how those go (District Principal B, personal communication, February 27, 2019).

PD that allowed principals to hear from other leaders and engage in discussion about real-life leadership scenarios was reported as meeting the needs of one principal, “I really enjoy the situational learning. I really enjoy scenarios, case studies-- all that kind of stuff. When we can take time to learn from each other-- I think more of those conversational-type professional growth—” (District Principal A, personal communication, March 4, 2019).

Two first-year principals from the same principal group spoke about the ACSA New and Aspiring Principal Colloquium they attended the summer before they started the school year. One principal reported,

> ...the week that we spent at UCLA this summer…being able to talk with other people who are feeling the same way… just the conversations we were able to have in our little group set over in UCLA, I think, really helped me to get me ready for this [principalship] (District Principal I, personal communication, March 1, 2019).

Some principals also reported the misalignment of principal PD to their individual needs. One principal reported they appreciated the PLC training provided by their district and their principal colleague added,

> That was all pretty new to me, and new to all of us, I think..And so, it just kind of depends. I think … sometimes it's hard to target what each principal needs without having a mentor who's talking to us, and because they're [district administration] busy with their jobs, and they don't see us every day and what's going on (District Principal H, personal communication, February 28, 2019).

Another principal from the same principal group then shared,

> ...and then I think that that's a good point because we don't ever get feedback, at least me, especially my second year. And I want that. You don't get that feedback. And I don't get it until my evaluation which--that's hard (District Principal H, personal communication, February 28, 2019).

In review of principal responses, the PD topics that were reported as meeting their needs focused on special education, professional learning communities, vision, mission, and compelling message. Principals also appreciated opportunities to review case studies and talk with other principal colleagues. Two principals also shared the need for principal mentorship and consistent feedback.

Summary

The principal perception of the alignment of the PD they received to effective PD constructs varied across districts. When principals evaluated the PD

they received and the list of effective PD constructs given to them, they reported that some of the effective PD constructs were more aligned to the PD they received than others. However, across principal groups, the principal perception of the alignment of PD they have received to effective PD constructs was reported as more aligned than not aligned.

The principal perceptions of the alignment of PD they have received to the CPSEL also varied across districts. When principals evaluated the PD they received and the list of CPSEL given to them, they reported that some of the CPSEL were more aligned to the PD they received than others. However, across principal groups, the principal perception of the alignment of PD they have received to effective PD constructs was reported as more aligned than not aligned.

The principals in each principal group reported a multitude of challenges and demands they face as leaders. The challenges they reported were categorized into four themes: personnel, organizational management, instructional leadership, and culture and climate. The principal groups also reported specific PD they felt they needed to meet the challenges and demands they identified. Their PD needs mirrored two themes that emerged in identified principal challenges, organizational management and instructional leadership. The principals also reported the need to be provided with opportunities to obtain collegial support and learning with principal colleagues, and the need for individualized principal mentoring and coaching.

A focus group question was asked to elicit principal perception of the alignment of PD principals have received to their PD needs. However, principal responses only elicited specific PD topics principals perceived to have met their needs as principals. Therefore, the data collected was not able to answer principal perception of the alignment of PD they have received to their PD needs directly.

However, the data collected did identify the specific PD principals have received that they perceived to be most valuable. Principals identified PD topics that related to instructional leadership and organizational management. Some principals also called for the need to engage with their principal colleagues in PD and case study discussions as well as a need for individualized principal mentoring and coaching.

Conclusion

This chapter presented thick, descriptive data that was collected and analyzed through this case study. The chapter began with a description of district administrators interviewed for this research, and their school district data. The chapter then provided a detailed description of district administrator responses specific to each research question.

District Administrator Interviews

For RQ1, the district administrator data indicated that principal supervisors vary across districts and are primarily identified as district administrators. The data also indicated that several school district systems of support are provided to principals across districts. Key themes that emerged from analysis of that data included (a) individual principal support; (b) principal group support; (c) professional development; (d) school year leadership preparation; (e) mentoring/coaching; and (f) school accountability support. One other significant finding included a lack of district support and PD provided to principal supervisors across all nine districts.

For RQ2, the district administrator data indicated a multitude of strategies and practices that are provided to support principal growth and development across districts. Key themes that emerged from analysis of that data included (a)

mentoring/coaching; (b) individual principal support; (c) principal preparation; (d) collective principal PD. Other significant findings included minimal differentiation of principal PD based on individual principal needs across districts, and a lack of a continuum of principal PD across districts, to support principals as they move from beginning to advanced stages of principal leadership.

For RQ3, both inductive and deductive data analysis was conducted to answer both the CPSEL and effective PD constructs parts of this research question. For the CPSEL alignment, the inductive data analysis indicated that in most districts, the principal evaluation tool is the primary practice that is aligned to the CPSEL. However, not all district evaluation tools are aligned to the CPSEL. Utilizing a pre-determined codebook of the six CPSEL, the deductive data analysis indicated that the PD provided to principals aligned with all but one CPSEL. The PD provided to principals mostly aligned with the instructional leadership standard and the management and learning environment standard, and no principal PD was found to align with the family and community engagement standard. It is important to note that the CPSEL alignments are only based on what was reported by each district administrator and does not represent alignment across districts. One other significant finding in all but one school district is that the CPSEL are not intentionally utilized to determine principal PD.

For examination of the alignment of effective PD constructs, the inductive data analysis indicated some alignment of effective PD constructs to professional development strategies and practices used in some school districts. It is important to note that not all district administrators reported the duration and delivery of their principal PD, and not all seven effective PD constructs were reported to be provided by any of the nine district administrators. Utilizing a pre-determined codebook of the seven effective PD constructs, the deductive data analysis

indicated alignment with each effective PD construct as reported by at least one district administrator. Again, it is important to note that not all seven effective PD constructs were reported to be provided by any of the nine district administrators.

Principal Focus Groups

Next, the chapter provided a description of principal focus groups interviewed for this research. The description included principal demographic and school district data from five of the nine school districts in this study. The chapter then provided a detailed description of principal group responses specific to each research question.

For RQ1, the principal group data mirrored the district administrator data and indicated that principal supervisors vary across districts and are primarily identified as district administrators. Similar to district administrator data, the principal group data indicated that several school district systems of support are provided to principals across districts. Key themes that emerged from analysis of that data included (a) individual principal support; (b) principal group support; (c) professional development; (d) mentoring/coaching; and (e) school accountability support and feedback. All themes aligned to what was reported by district administrators with the exception of the theme, school year leadership preparation.

For RQ2, similar to district administrator data, the principal group data indicated an abundance of strategies and practices that are provided to principals to support their growth and development across districts. Key themes that emerged from analysis of that data included (a) individual principal support; (b) principal group support; (c) professional development; (d) school year leadership preparation; and (e) mentoring/coaching. Other significant findings included the same findings identified with district administrators (1) minimal practices in place to identify individual principal PD needs across districts, and (2) a lack of a

continuum of principal PD across districts, to support principals as they move from beginning to advanced stages of principal leadership.

For RQ3, both inductive and deductive data analysis was conducted to answer both the CPSEL and effective PD constructs parts of this research question. For the CPSEL alignment, the inductive data analysis indicated that in all five principal groups, the principal evaluation tool is the primary practice that is aligned to the CPSEL. The principals also reported that the principal evaluation tool is utilized to establish goals with their district administrator that are reviewed with them more than once a year. This data illustrate continuity of CPSEL alignment specific to the principal evaluation tool across the five districts the principal groups represent. However, when considering the district administrator responses, it does represent continuity of alignment across all nine districts in this case study.

Utilizing a pre-determined codebook of the six CPSEL, the deductive data analysis indicated that the PD provided to principals aligned with three of the six CPSEL: instructional leadership, management and learning environment, and external context and policy. Like district administrator data, the PD provided to principals primarily aligned with instructional leadership, and management and learning environment standards. The principal PD was not found to align with the following standards: development and implementation of a shared vision; family and community engagement; and ethics and integrity. The family and community engagement standard was a common mis-aligned standard identified in both district administrator and principal data. It is important to note that the CPSEL alignments are only based on what was reported by each principal group and does not represent alignment across districts. One other significant finding included

two principal groups who reported the CPSEL are embedded in other district PD strategies and practices provided to principals in context, versus verbatim.

The same approach taken with the district administrator data was the same approach utilized to examine the alignment of effective PD constructs. The inductive principal group data indicated some alignment of effective PD constructs to professional development strategies and practices used in some principal groups. Not all principal groups reported the duration and delivery of their principal PD, and not all seven effective PD constructs were reported to be provided by any of the five principal groups.

Utilizing a pre-determined codebook of the seven effective PD constructs, the deductive data analysis indicated alignment with all effective PD constructs except two: Interactive and Continuum of PD Throughout Career. The delivery of principal PD varied in each district. The data indicate inconsistent consideration of effective PD constructs when providing principal PD.

RQ4 was specifically developed to capture principal perception of the alignment of principal PD they have received to the following three areas: 1) effective PD constructs; 2) CPSEL; and 3) their PD needs. Specific to effective PD constructs, all five principal groups perceived the PD they received to be most aligned with the seven effective PD constructs. Some effective PD constructs were perceived as more aligned than others. The variance reflects an inconsistent perception of alignment of principal PD received to effective PD constructs across principal groups.

In relation to the CPSEL, all five principal groups perceived the PD they received to be aligned with most of the CPSEL. As with the effective PD constructs, some CPSEL were perceived as more aligned than others. The

variance in this area also reflects an inconsistent perception of alignment of principal PD received to the CPSEL across principal groups.

The data collected to obtain the principal perception of alignment of principal PD received to their PD needs, did not capture the data needed to directly answer that part of the research question. However, the data collected did identify the specific PD principals have received that they perceived to be most valuable in meeting their needs. The PD identified aligned to the themes of instructional leadership and organizational management. Other significant findings included ensuring principals receive opportunities to engage in principal professional learning communities and are provided with individualized principal mentoring and coaching.

Chapter 5 presents a summary of primary findings in accordance with the research questions. Limitations of the study are also discussed. The chapter then presents implications for state and local policy and practice, and recommendations for future research.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION/IMPLICATIONS/CONCLUSION

Introduction

Increasing accountability for student achievement makes 21st Century principal leadership complex and demanding (Fullan 2002; Hargreaves & Goodson, 2006; Manna, 2015). These demands require principals to be highly skilled in both instructional leadership and organizational management (Council of Chief State School Officers, 2015; Horng & Loeb, 2010). Effective instructional leadership requires a multitude of skills. These skills include the ability to, interpret and review schoolwide and student outcome data; ensure the educational program provided to students is equitable; develop a cohesive, student learning-centered school system; and build the capacity of self and staff (Council of Chief State School Officers, 2015). Principals must also possess skills in organizational management. Organizational management tasks support the school's daily operations and learning environment. These tasks include developing a positive school culture; ensuring school and facility safety; hiring; and budget management (Horng & Loeb, 2010). These responsibilities are unique to principals and are every day, essential tasks that require continuous principal PD (Honig & Rainey, 2012; Rowland, 2017; Zepeda et al., 2014). Therefore, principals need personalized PD that meets their individualized needs and responsibilities (Bottoms & Fry, 2009; Hoffman, 2004; Zellner et al., 2002).

The state of California realizes the need for principal PD; however, they are not as progressive in the development and implementation of support for principals compared to other states (Darling-Hammond et al., 2007; Kearney, 2010). Darling-Hammond et al. (2007) found that California principals were less likely to have access to mentoring, coaching, or a principal professional learning

community, compared to principals in other states. States and school districts must invest in the development of school principals. Investing in the development of principals provides principals with the continuous PD needed to support their retention, and build their leadership capacity beyond preparation (Day, 2000; Day et al., 2014; George W. Bush Institute, 2016; Metlife, 2013; School Leaders Network, 2014; University of Washington Center for Educational Leadership, 2016). This case study research and the data collected were a response to the literature.

Chapter 4 presented case study data and analysis of nine school districts, nine district administrators, and 17 principals in the Southern San Joaquin Valley of California. The data for this case study were obtained by conducting semi-structured interviews with the district administrators, and semi-structured focus group interviews with the school principals. The data collected identified the district systems and personnel that support the growth and development of principals in this region; the strategies and practices used in these school districts to provide differentiated PD and support to principals; the alignment of those strategies and practices to the CPSEL and effective PD constructs; and the principal perception of the alignment of the PD they have received to the CPSEL, effective PD constructs, and their principal needs. A hybrid thematic analysis was also conducted to determine the alignment of the district strategies and practices to the CPSEL and effective PD constructs.

Chapter 5 summarizes and provides a discussion of this study's findings specific to each research question. It also presents implications for policy and practice at the state and local level, including a model for a school administrator system of support. It then makes suggestions for future research and provides limitations of the study.

Discussion of Findings

Research Question 1

What school district systems of support and personnel are responsible for helping principals grow as leaders?

District Personnel

Both district administrators and principals reported the personnel identified as responsible for helping principals grow as leaders in their districts were district administrators. However, the personnel titles varied across districts for both district administrators and principals. Some districts identified superintendents, assistant superintendents, or area superintendents as primary principal supervisors. The identification of different principal supervisors aligned with the existing research of the Council of Chief State School Officers (2015) that asserted that principal supervisor positions across the nation are inconsistent and job descriptions and titles of principal supervisors equally vary. The variance demonstrates a non-systematized approach to principal supervision, which can lead to inequities in principal leadership development. The variance also supports the need to revise the structure of district office personnel to ensure adequate district supervision of principals.

Principal Supervisors

Although not directly aligned with the research question, the data for principal supervisors were quite significant and related to the literature. The data in this study revealed that all district administrators were not able to clearly articulate a system of support provided to principal supervisors that directly impacts their ability to support principals as leaders. Instead of PD that was tailored to meet the function of principal leader supervision like, mentoring and

coaching practices; principal supervisors were generally provided with the same PD and support that was provided to principals. This practice supports the Council of Chief State School Officers (2015) research that found that principal supervisors often lack the training and capacity to adequately support and develop principals. The lack of a system of support for principal supervisors was an unexpected finding that prompted equal consideration of the PD needs of both principals and principal supervisors, and the implications for both principals and principal supervisors.

District Systems

This research unexpectedly identified several district systems of support and activities that were provided to principals in the case study region. The data of both district administrators and principal groups revealed that principals received myriad district supports that emerged into the following common themes: individual principal support, principal group support, mentoring/coaching and school accountability support. Some of the themes aligned with research-based practices found in the literature.

For example, principal group support provided opportunities for principals to meet and share practices or receive PD together. Professional learning community research supports this practice in that it allows principals to interact and utilize the support of other principals (Bottoms & Fry, 2009; Kearney, 2010; Zepeda et al., 2014). Research by Bishop et al. (2015) identified collegial learning networks of principals for ongoing support and problem solving as an active principal PD practice. Specific to individual principal support and mentoring/coaching, these practices align with the research assertion that principal supervision should be ongoing and grounded in a coaching relationship (Council of Chief State School Officers, 2015). The systems of support for principals in

this case study region are robust and support principal leadership and growth. However, the districts in this study could benefit from establishing systems that include a purposeful ongoing PD plan to support individualized principal leadership (School Leaders Network, 2014).

Research Question 2

What strategies and practices are used in school districts to provide differentiated professional development and support to principals?

Strategies and Practices

When district administrators were asked this research question directly, they revealed a variety of practices that varied across districts. Key themes that emerged from analysis of that data included 1) individual principal support 2) principal group support 3) professional development 4) school year leadership preparation and 5) mentoring/coaching. Overall, the data reflected practices and strategies that were primarily determined by district and school site needs versus individualized principal needs, with a few exceptions. Two different district administrators reported that in their districts, individualized principal support was provided via individual action plans developed together, between principals and district administrators. Principal groups also reported staff surveys, principal evaluations, and goal development as methods taken by their districts to identify individual principal goals, but they too, were often based on school site-data and district needs.

One district administrator reported they had not even considered the idea of differentiated principal PD and shared that differentiated principal PD in their district was often based on school site data and school site needs and was more reactionary than purposeful. For example, if a principal's school site data

indicated low academic performance with English Language Learners (ELL) in ELA, the principal PD plan might include PD specific to ELL instructional strategies in ELA. If the district initiative for the school year was a focus on Social Emotional Learning (SEL) at the secondary level, the PD plan for all secondary principals might include SEL training. The principal PD was differentiated according to the needs as indicated by the school site data and district initiatives, not based on principal reported needs.

Although this practice focuses on school site needs and lacks an individualized focus on the principal, it is a practice that is supported by the research of Hourani and Stringer (2015). In their semi-structured interviews with principals with 5 or more years of experience as principals, Hourani and Stringer found that in addition to needing PD that was differentiated, hands-on and designed to meet the unique needs of each principal, principals also needed the PD to be designed to meet the unique needs of their school site. However, historically, principal PD has been reported by principals as futile and insufficient in meeting their individualized PD needs (Darling-Hammond et al., 2007). The data from this study and the literature support the need for a balanced approach to principal PD that is based on school site needs, district initiatives and principal identified needs.

Continuum of Professional Development

Another significant finding that emerged from analysis of both district administrator and principal group data, included a lack of a systematic district approach that provides principals with a continuum of principal PD. Although a prominent feature of effective principal learning and development includes providing principals with a continuum of professional development throughout their career that includes veteran principal mentorship (Bishop et al., 2015); an

intentional continuum of principal support from novice to veteran principal was void across the case study region. Most districts reported district practices that are provided to novice principals as they are onboarded in their positions and lacked a continuum of systematic practices that are provided to support from novice to veteran principals.

The absence of a structured continuum of principal PD and support reflects a need for districts to establish an intentional system of support for principals. The system of support for principals should include a well-developed strategic plan of identified principal supports and practices, throughout a continuum. The need for a system of support for principals throughout a continuum is supported by leadership development theory, which emphasizes that leaders have varying levels of experience and knowledge that need to be nurtured and developed throughout a continuum. Supporting research by Scott & Webber (2008) asserted that principals require a continuum of individualized professional development and support throughout their careers. Districts need a principal PD and support model they can use to intentionally plan for and provide the varying levels of principal support needed for each principal in their district.

Research Question 3

What professional development strategies and practices used in school districts are aligned to the California Professional Standards for Educational Leaders (CPSEL) and effective professional development constructs?

California Professional Standards for Educational Leaders Alignment

In analyzing both the district administrator and principal group interview data, the primary practice aligned to the CPSEL was the principal evaluation tool

and process. The principal data revealed that the principal evaluation tool was used to establish goals with their district administrators. This practice is supported by research that asserts that the CPSEL should be used to provide school districts with a framework from which to evaluate and develop school principals (Kearney, 2010). However, for district administrators, not all districts reported alignment of the CPSEL to any of their district PD strategies or practices. The misalignment of PD to the CPSEL in some districts supports the research assertion that numerous school districts fail to align the CPSEL to principal PD (Kearney, 2010; Manna, 2015; Sun, 2011). Districts also fail to utilize the CPSEL as a framework to identify areas of professional competency and to provide ongoing principal PD and support (Kearney, 2010; Manna, 2015; Sun, 2011). The misalignment reflects a need for more intentional district use of the CPSEL as a framework when identifying principal PD needs and providing a continuum of principal PD and support.

When examining the pre-determined CPSEL codes with the PD provided to principals, the one standard overwhelmingly represented by both district administrators and principal groups was the instructional leadership standard. The management and learning environment standard was a distant second. Minimal alignment was found in the following CPSEL: development and implementation of a shared vision, family and community engagement, ethics and integrity, and eternal context and policy. The data indicate the need for districts to be more intentional in their use of the CPSEL when developing and providing principal PD and support. It is critical that California stakeholders apply the CPSEL to the design, development, implementation, and evaluation of principal professional development (Kearney, 2010; Manna, 2015). This practice will ensure that

principals are developed in all areas of leadership that address all professional standards, not just instructional leadership.

Effective Professional Development Constructs

Alignment

In analyzing both the district administrator and principal group interview data, district practices were aligned to at least one effective PD construct. The data indicated that the practices of each district were not aligned to all seven constructs. For example, some districts took intentional steps to ensure that the PD provided to principals was sustained throughout the year and supported with individual, ongoing principal coaching at the school site, and other districts did not. Some districts require that principals attend PD side-by-side with their teachers, academic coaches or co-leaders, and some districts do not require this as a PD practice. Some districts provide a variety of PD delivery methods that include face-to-face and webinars, and some districts have provided only one form of interactive PD. The data reflect a need for intentional alignment and practice of effective PD constructs by districts when developing and providing principal PD and support.

When examining the pre-determined effective PD constructs with the PD provided to principals, the responses of district administrators aligned with at least one PD construct and the principal responses aligned with all but two constructs, interactive and continuum of PD throughout a career. Specific to the lack of alignment of PD to a continuum of PD throughout a principal's career, this data conflict with leadership development theory which asserts that individuals learn at different rates and in different ways, and require specific skill development as they move through that continuum (Day et al., 2014). The data reflect a need for districts to provide a purposeful and systematic process that ensures principal PD

throughout a continuum. The implementation of these practices will ensure that PD is effectively used to support and sustain principal learning, development, and longevity.

Research Question 4

What are K-12 principal perceptions of the alignment of professional development they have received to effective professional development constructs, the CPSEL, and their professional development needs?

Perception of Effective Professional Development Construct Alignment

This research question was intended to capture the principal perception of alignment of the PD principals have received to effective PD constructs, the CPSEL, and their perceived PD needs. Concerning effective PD constructs, the data analysis revealed that principals varied in their perception of the alignment of the PD they have received to effective PD constructs. Some principals perceived some of the constructs as more aligned to the PD they received than others. The overall perception of principals was that the PD they have received was mostly aligned to the effective PD constructs. The variance reflects a need for districts to purposely consider effective PD constructs when designing and planning principal PD as these constructs are what ESSA and the California Department of Education (2012) define as necessary components to ensure rigorous and effective professional development (Learning Forward, n.d.).

Perception of California Professional Standards for Educational Leaders Alignment

Similar to principal perception of effective PD constructs, the data analysis showed that principals varied in their perception of the alignment of the PD they

have received to the CPSEL. Some principals perceived some of the CPSEL as more aligned to the PD they received than others. The overall perception of principals was that the PD they have received was most aligned to the CPSEL.

The qualitative principal data also revealed that principals perceived the CPSEL as aligned to the PD they have received in context, versus verbatim. One principal explained that principals were not directly told that a particular PD was being provided to ensure support in direct relation to one of the CPSEL. Overall, principals perceived that the PD they have received generally aligned to the CPSEL; however, districts were not intentionally identifying and linking the CPSEL to the principal PD provided. The lack of intentional district alignment of PD with the CPSEL impacts the intent of the CPSEL, which was developed to provide statewide standardized leadership that systematically exemplifies and supports what principals should be able to know and do as principal leaders in California (Kearney, 2010). The data call for more intentional use by districts to align principal PD to the CPSEL.

Perception of Principal Professional Development Needs Alignment

The principal perceptions of the alignment of PD they have received to their PD needs varied but mostly centered on PD themes of instructional leadership and organizational management. The two themes were similar to the themes identified when examining the alignment of the pre-determined CPSEL codes with the PD provided to principals. Both data sets indicate instructional leadership and organizational management are the primary focus of principal PD, and principals perceive PD that focuses on instructional leadership and organizational management as most aligned to their needs as principals.

Other significant data included principals report of their need for opportunities to engage in principal professional learning communities, and individualized principal mentoring and coaching to support their needs as principals. The data support the research of Darling-Hammond et al. (2007) that asserted that California principals were less likely to have access to mentoring, coaching or a principal's network of ongoing, on the job support, compared to principals in other states. The perception of principals reflected that they could benefit from increased engagement in the areas identified by Darling-Hammond et al. (2007), noting that these opportunities were not robustly offered or provided to all principals in their districts.

Implications for Policy & Practice

The findings of this case study have several implications for policy and practice. The implications relate to school district principal supervision, principal PD and the alignment of that PD to the CPSEL, and effective PD constructs. The data also provides implications for a PD model, and practices districts can utilize to ensure intentional consideration and planning of principal PD throughout a continuum in their districts.

Principals require supervision from district administrators that are trained to support their growth and development. The research conducted for this study calls for the need for districts to provide structure for principal supervision, and support to principal supervisors, to ensure they have the skills necessary to support & develop principals. School districts should integrate the Council of Chief State School Officers (2015) established Model Principal Supervisor Professional Standards into their principal supervision practices. The principal supervisor standards would provide districts and principal supervisors with a framework for

principal supervision as well as a framework for principal supervisor support and training.

Districts could also benefit from implementing the three critical actions established by the University of Washington Center for Educational Leadership (2016) that effectively support principals: 1) a shared vision of principals as instructional leaders 2) a system of support for developing principals as instructional leaders and 3) a strategic partnership between principals and the district office. Principals need to be intentionally included in their growth and development alongside their principal supervisors. The support provided to principals must also be a strategic process that is a common systemic practice across the district and utilized with all principals.

With that being said, the findings of this study also point to the need for districts to engage in purposeful PD planning with their principals that is aligned to individual principal needs and the CPSEL, not just school site and broad stroke district needs and initiatives. The data from research questions 3 and 4 could be utilized to support this area. The data from research question 3 suggest the need for districts to not only utilize the CPSEL aligned principal evaluation tool to identify and develop principal goals, but also use it to determine principal PD needs. The data from research question 4 suggest that principal PD needs to be more aligned with principal needs. Districts need to align the principal evaluation tool with the CPSEL and use it to 1) develop principal goals 2) identify principal PD needs, and 3) provide support and PD to principals. These practices can support principal retention, impact student achievement, and support a continuum of principal PD that is individualized and aligned with professional standards. District implementation of these practices can also deliver a supportive message to principals and sustain the principal pipeline. The message can also inform leaders

that district administration values principal growth and development, and the investment in principal growth and development is a priority in their district.

As indicated in the findings, an intentional continuum of principal support from novice to veteran principals was absent across the case study region. The data reflect a need for districts to establish a deliberate system of support for principals that includes a well-developed strategic framework of identified principal supports and practices, throughout a continuum. A school administrator system of support (SASS) model was created by this researcher to support districts in their efforts to develop a continuum of principal support and development throughout their leadership (see Appendix F).

The SASS model resembles a response to intervention (RTI) model that is used by teachers, schools, and districts to support student academic and behavioral needs. Schools use the RTI model as a framework to provide wide-ranged and varied levels of support to meet the needs of students (National Center on Response to Intervention, 2010). The varied levels of the RTI framework include three levels of support intensity beginning with primary (low intensity), secondary (medium intensity), and tertiary (high intensity) levels, that represent a continuum of student support (National Center on Response to Intervention, 2010). A goal of the RTI model is to identify documented student learning and behavioral needs and intervene quickly by providing appropriate supports and interventions to minimize the risk of long-term learning and behavioral issues (The National Center on Response to Intervention, 2010).

The SASS model is similar to the RTI framework in that it contains three levels of support for principals, base support, strategic support, and intensive support. The *base support* tier indicates the PD and support that the district determines all principals receive. This tier could include district-wide initiatives,

district vision and mission, core values and district budgeting and hiring practices. The base tier provides all principals in the district with common PD and support that is determined by the district as necessary for all principal leaders in their district. The PD and support provided to principals at this level is supported by the data in this study that demonstrated that most districts engage principals in district wide initiatives and review of their core values, and district wide policies with all principals, every school year. This level of support also provides a professional learning community of principals that when provided by districts, can result in increased principal retention and principal job satisfaction (Metlife, 2013).

The *strategic support* tier indicates additional PD and support specific to individualized principal goals and school site needs. The principal goals are intended to be developed jointly between principals and principal supervisors and aligned to the CPSEL, and the principal evaluation tool (Kearney, 2010; Manna, 2015). The principal support in this tier is strategic in that the support aligns with specific principal and school site needs. This tier could include support based on state and school site data, ELA or math scores, and student attendance rates. The support provided could also be based on specific areas for growth identified in the principal evaluation related to one or more of the CPSEL (family engagement, management and learning environment, etc.), or as determined by the principal and principal supervisor during bi-weekly scheduled conversation, observation, and school site visits. The focus in this tier is supported by the Council of Chief State School Officers (2015) that asserted that "principal supervision should be informed by multiple data sources…and should be consistent with adult learning and PD best practices, including collaboration and a sense of shared ownership" (p.5).

The *intensive support* tier provides PD and support specifically for first-year principals or struggling principals. This tier is intended to be intensive in that it provides principals with weekly principal supervision and 1-1 mentorship or coaching, addressing the areas of focus as determined by the principal, principal supervisor and the district. The focus of this tier aligns with one of the Council of Chief State School Officers (2015) principal supervision theoretical considerations that suggested that "Principal supervision should be ongoing, connected to the principal's growth from year to year, and grounded in a coaching relationship" (p.5).

This intensive support tier is designated for districts to provide first-year principals with support in areas such as communication, school culture, political climate, relationship building, vision development, and reiteration of district core values, as indicated by the data collected from principals in this study. First-year principals in this study also reported challenges with transitioning from co-administrators to principals, finding a life/work balance, and needing more support with coaching teachers. This tier would provide more intensive support to first-year principal to address their unique challenges. This tier could also provide intensive support to post first-year and veteran principals that might be struggling in a specific area like technology, data analysis, budget management, or communication, for example. Like the RTI model, support provided to novice and veteran principals throughout a continuum, allow principal supervisors to document principal needs, and provide the supports needed to ensure long-term principal productivity and their potential to affect student achievement (Leithwood et al., 2008).

As illustrated in Figure 3, the three tiers of support in the SASS model provide ongoing support to principals in all areas with a specific focus on

instructional leadership and organizational management. These two areas of focus were what principals in this research study perceived as the PD areas most aligned to their needs as principals. When districts utilize this system of support model for principals, it will ensure that principal PD and support provided is strategic. It will also address research concerns that principal leaders are often left with impromptu and unplanned PD and on the job training (Scott & Webber, 2008). Instead, districts will be providing intentional principal PD and support throughout a continuum as supported by leadership development theory and human capital theory. Thus, investing in principals throughout their leadership development, elevating their human capital, and benefiting from their return on investment via student achievement outcomes (Aliaga, 2001; Mumford, et al., 2000; Nafukho et al., 2004; Schultz, 1961).

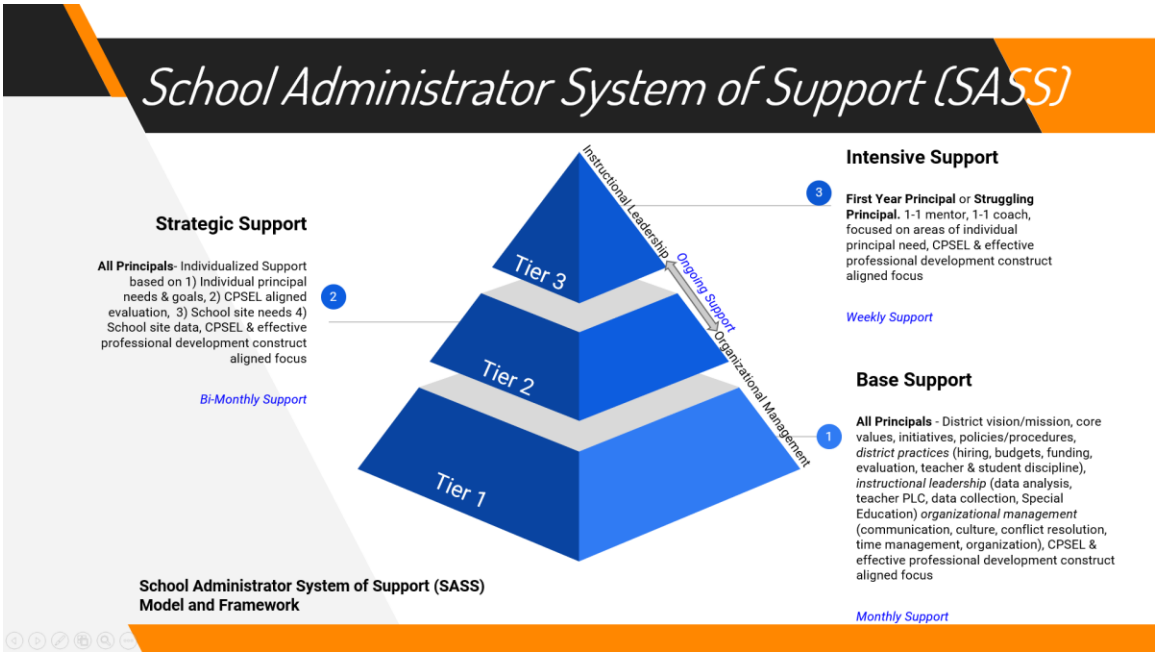

Figure 3. School administrator system of support.

Lastly, specific to implications for policy, it is imperative that the California Department of Education ensure that the allocation of Title II funding for principal PD is mandated and appropriately spent on principal PD. Districts that receive this allocation should be required to include individual principal PD plans that are both aligned to Title II funding and the CPSEL when submitting action plans to the state and local county offices of education. Principal PD should also be made a priority in state policy agendas with the knowledge and understanding that principals have the second highest impact on student achievement and require support and development throughout their leadership (Leithwood et al., 2008; Manna, 2015).

Future Research Recommendations

The literature review in this case study called for a need for more rigorous studies that examine school district and principal supervisor practices for principal supervision and development (Kearney, 2010; Riley & Meredith 2017; Rowland, 2017; Scott & Webber, 2008). Further research on principal supervisors much like this case study, with a focus on principal supervisor growth and development is recommended. Equal examination of district systems, practices and strategies that provide support and development to principal supervisors needs to be conducted to strengthen the support provided to principals in California.

This case study was also supported by research implications that indicated the need for more research on state and local coordination efforts to development a system of PD for principals throughout their administrative careers (George W. Bush Institute, 2016; Kearney, 2010). Continued research in this area needs to be conducted to continue to examine district systems of support for principals throughout a continuum and with a broader segment of the population.

Because the principal evaluation tool and process surfaced in this research specific to the CPSEL, it is also recommended that further research be conducted to examine how principals are evaluated across districts. It would be worthwhile to conduct an examination of the evaluation tools and processes districts use with the CPSEL, and examine how the evaluation is used to determine and provide principal PD. The research would provide significant insight into what practices districts utilize to evaluate principals, and how the evaluation is aligned to the CPSEL, and used to determine principal PD and CPSEL alignment.

Limitations

The limitations of this study included the methods of data collection. When conducting the interviews, the presence of the researcher, the pre-arranged setting of the interview location, and pre-established interview questions could have prevented full disclosure of the participants (Creswell, 2009). The limitations of focus groups can also include the tendency for certain types of socially acceptable opinion to emerge, such as groupthink (Smithson, 2000). There is also an inclination for some participants to dominate the group or not be forthright in their responses (Smithson, 2000). Another limitation is that the researcher of this study is currently an active secondary principal. While the researcher's extensive background and experience in school administration assisted in understanding the participants, setting and the research topic; it could potentially shape interpretations of the data (Creswell, 2009).

The limitations of the hybrid thematic analysis approach taken for this study also does not have a long-standing history of literature supporting it, compared to other qualitative analysis (Nowell et al., 2017). However, specific steps and actions were taken to ensure the credibility and transferability of the research. The researcher made certain that they were immersed in the data and

data collection process. The researcher provided thick descriptions of the data, closely reread the raw descriptive data, and documented thoughts, insights and personal reflection about the data throughout via reflexive journaling (Bailey, 2007; Nowell et al., 2017). The researcher also followed the steps as outlined in the methodology section to ensure proper coding and theming of data and moved back and forth between the steps throughout the data collection to ensure a reflective and rigorous process (Nowell et al., 2017; Yukhymenko et al., 2014). The researcher also had two principals from two different districts review their focus group transcripts and the researchers notes, coding and themes. The two principals noted any misconceptions or biases displayed by the researcher. All research methods and actions were purposefully taken to ensure that qualitative research was conducted in a rigorous and methodical manner to yield meaningful and useful results (Nowell et al., 2017).

Conclusion

Intentional district focus and effort on the growth and development of principals can impact principal retention and student achievement outcomes. If districts want to see increased achievement outcomes and principal retention, they must invest in building the capacity of their principals (Fullan, 2007; George W. Bush Institute, 2016; Kearney, 2010; Manna, 2015). The districts in this case study region utilized and provided myriad of PD strategies and practices to principals that supported their growth and development. These district efforts reflect human capital theory in action. These districts demonstrated an underlying belief in principal learning capacity, and invested in training, education and development of their principals. When these capacity building efforts are taken, they can result in profit for the district, the individual and their communities (Aliaga, 2001; Nafukho et al., 2004; Schultz, 1961). The five principal groups

interviewed also perceived their districts to be supportive and willing to invest in and support their PD needs.

However, the findings also identified areas where districts could benefit from increased examination and development. These areas included a system of support and framework for principal supervisors; principal PD that is inclusive of individual principal needs (in addition to site and district needs); purposeful alignment of principal PD with the CPSEL and effective PD constructs; and the development and use of a system of support, like SASS, that ensures principals are provided with PD and support throughout a continuum of leadership. Consistent with leadership development theory, a systematic and intentional approach to principal PD and support across districts in the state of California, will ensure educational equity of students, and equity in the growth and development of all leaders in the state.

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APPENDIX A: CALIFORNIA ADMINISTRATOR PERFORMANCE EXPECTATIONS (CAPE)

California Administrator Performance Expectations (CAPEs)

~The Tier I Preliminary Administrative Credential Foundation~

*Category A: Visionary Leadership (CACEs A1–A20)**

CAPE 1: Developing and Articulating a Vision of Teaching and Learning for the School Consistent with the Local Education Agency's Overall Vision and Goals

CAPE 2: Developing a Shared Commitment to the Vision Among All Members of the School Community

CAPE 3: Leading by Example to Promote Implementation of the Vision

CAPE 4: Sharing Leadership with Others in the School Community

Category B: Instructional Leadership (CACEs B1–B32)

CAPE 5: Promoting Implementation of K-12 Standards, Pedagogical Skills, Effective Instructional Practices and Student Assessments for Content Instruction

CAPE 6: Evaluating, Analyzing, and Providing Feedback on the Effectiveness of Classroom Instruction to Promote Student Learning and Teacher Professional Growth

CAPE 7: Demonstrating Understanding of the School and Community Context, Including the

Instructional Implications of Cultural/Linguistic, Socio Economic, and Political Factors

CAPE 8: Communicating With the School Community about School Wide Outcomes Data and Improvement Goals

Category C: School Improvement Leadership (CACEs C1–C9)

CAPE 9: Working with Others to Identify Student and School Needs and Developing a Data-Based School Growth Plan

CAPE 10: Implementing Change Strategies Based on Current, Relevant Theories and Best Practices in School Improvement

CAPE 11: Identifying and Using Available Human, Fiscal, and Material Resources to Implement the School Growth Plan

CAPE 12: Instituting a Collaborative, Ongoing Process of Monitoring and Revising the Growth Plan Based on Student Outcomes

Category D: Professional Learning and Growth Leadership (CACEs D1–D11)

CAPE 13: Modeling Life-Long Learning and Job-Related Professional Growth

CAPE 14: Helping Teachers Improve Their Individual Professional Practice Through Professional Growth Activities

CAPE 15: Identifying and Facilitating a Variety of Professional and Personal Growth Opportunities for Faculty, Staff, Parents, and Other Members of the School Community in Support of the Educational Program

Category E: Organizational and Systems Leadership (CACEs E1–E27)

CAPE 16: Understanding and Managing the Complex Interaction of All of the School's Systems to Promote Teaching and Learning

CAPE 17: Developing, Implementing, and Monitoring and Monitoring the School's Budget **CAPE 18**: Implementing California School Laws, Guidelines, and Other Relevant Federal, State, and Local Requirements and Regulations

Category F: Community Leadership (CACEs F1–F10)

CAPE 19: Representing and Promoting the School's Accomplishments and Needs to the LEA and the Public

CAPE 20: Involving the Community in Helping Achieve the School's Vision and Goals

* The "California Administrator Content Expectations" (CACEs) are 109 identified content knowledge expectations for a Tier I program.

APPENDIX B: CALIFORNIA PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS FOR EDUCATIONAL LEADERS (CPSEL)

California Professional Standards for Education Leaders (CPSEL) Standards, Elements, and Example Indicators

STANDARD 1: DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION OF A SHARED VISION

Education leaders facilitate the development and implementation of a shared vision of learning and growth of all students.

Element 1A: Student–Centered Vision

Leaders shape a collective vision that uses multiple measures of data and focuses on equitable access, opportunities, and outcomes for all students.

Element 1B: Developing Shared Vision

Leaders engage others in a collaborative process to develop a vision of teaching and learning that is shared and supported by all stakeholders.

Element 1C: Vision Planning and Implementation

Leaders guide and monitor decisions, actions, and outcomes using the shared vision and goals.

STANDARD 2: INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP

Education leaders shape a collaborative culture of teaching and learning informed by professional standards and focused on student and professional growth.

Element 2A: Professional Learning Culture

Leaders promote a culture in which staff engages in individual and collective professional learning that results in their continuous improvement and high performance.

Element 2B: Curriculum and Instruction

Leaders guide and support the implementation of standards-based curriculum, instruction, and assessments that address student expectations and outcomes.

Element 2C: Assessment and Accountability

Leaders develop and use assessment and accountability systems to monitor, improve, and extend educator practice, program outcomes and student learning.

STANDARD 3: MANAGEMENT AND LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

Education leaders manage the organization to cultivate a safe and productive learning and working environment.

Element 3A: Operations and Facilities

Leaders provide and oversee a functional, safe, and clean learning environment.

Element 3B: Plans and Procedures

Leaders establish structures and employ policies and processes that support students to graduate ready for college and career.

Element 3C: Climate

Leaders facilitate safe, fair, and respectful environments that meet the intellectual, linguistic, cultural, social-emotional, and physical needs of each learner.

Element 3D: Fiscal and Human Resources

Leaders align fiscal and human resources and manage policies and contractual agreements that build a productive learning environment.

STANDARD 4: FAMILY AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Education leaders collaborate with families and other stakeholders to address diverse student and community interests and mobilize community resources.

Element 4A: Parent and Family Engagement

Leaders meaningfully involve all parents and families, including underrepresented communities, in student learning and support programs.

Element 4B: Community Partnerships

Leaders establish community partnerships that promote and support students to meet performance and content expectations and graduate ready for college and career.

Element 4C: Community Resources and Services

Leaders leverage and integrate community resources and services to meet the varied needs of all students.

STANDARD 5: ETHICS AND INTEGRITY

Education leaders make decisions, model, and behave in ways that demonstrate professionalism, ethics, integrity, justice, and equity and hold staff to the same standard.

Element 5A: Reflective Practice

Leaders act upon a personal code of ethics that requires continuous reflection and learning.

Element 5B: Ethical Decision-Making

Leaders guide and support personal and collective actions that use relevant evidence and available research to make fair and ethical decisions.

Element 5C: Ethical Action

Leaders recognize and use their professional influence with staff and the community to develop a climate of trust, mutual respect, and honest communication necessary to consistently make fair and equitable decisions on behalf of all students.

STANDARD 6: EXTERNAL CONTEXT AND POLICY

Education leaders influence political, social, economic, legal and cultural contexts affecting education to improve education policies and practices.

Element 6A: Understanding and Communicating Policy

Leaders actively structure and participate in opportunities that develop greater public understanding of the education policy environment.

Element 6B: Professional Influence

Leaders use their understanding of social, cultural, economic, legal and political contexts to shape policies that lead to all students to graduate ready for college and career.

Element 6C: Policy Engagement

Leaders engage with policymakers and stakeholders to collaborate on education policies focused on improving education for all students.

APPENDIX C: LEAGUE OF CALIFORNIA CITIES

South San Joaquin Valley Division

The South San Joaquin Valley Division includes 37 cities in Madera, Fresno, Tulare, Kings and Kern counties, and provides members with the opportunity to exchange ideas and information and share the advantages of cooperative advocacy.

Arvin	Hanford	Porterville
Avenal	Huron	Reedley
Bakersfield	Kerman	San Joaquin
Clovis	Kingsburg	Sanger
Coalinga	Lemoore	Selma
Corcoran	Lindsay	Shafter
Delano	Madera	Taft
Dinuba	Maricopa	Tehachapi
Exeter	McFarland	Tulare
Farmersville	Mendota	Visalia
Firebaugh	Orange Cove	Wasco
Fowler	Parlier	Woodlake
Fresno		

APPENDIX D: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS AND PROTOCOLS

DISTRICT LEADER INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

SCHOOL DISTRICT: _____ Date: _____

POSITION/TITLE: _____

How Many Years in This District: _____ How Many Years in This Position: _____

Interviewer: **SUZANNE RODRIGUEZ**_____

Start Time: _____ End Time: _____ Total Time: _____

My name is **SUZANNE RODRIGUEZ**, doctoral candidate in the Doctoral Program for Educational Leadership at Fresno State. I am conducting research for my dissertation and am looking to obtain data and learn more about how school districts provide professional development and supervision to support the growth and development of their principals. I hope to use the data collected to inform state and local policy and practices and improve the systems of principal support and professional development. You have been selected as a possible participant in this important study because you are a district administrator serving in a capacity directly related to school principals.

I would like to thank you for your willingness to participate in this individual interview. The focus of the interview will be on school system and personnel supervision of principals, principal professional development strategies and practices, and the alignment of those practices to the California Professional Standards for Education Leaders (CPSEL) and effective professional development constructs. Very simply, I

want to capture the importance of principal professional development and your perspective on how your school system does that.

It is extremely important that I capture accurate data, not an interpretation or opinion of what I think I heard, but what you actually said, therefore, it is important that your responses are digitally recorded. Your responses will not be identifiable to any person – data will be anonymous. You may decline to answer any question and may discontinue the interview at any time. We have **13** questions and **30** minutes to conduct this interview/data collection process.

By consenting to this interview, you are confirming that you are over 18, currently serving as a school administrator (principal or district administrator) in a public K-12 school and are willing to share your insights regarding principal professional development in your district. You have the right to withdraw from participating in this interview at any time for any reason without prejudice. Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can be identified with you will remain confidential and will not be disclosed. If you have any questions, you can contact Jennifer Moradian-Watson at (559) ***278-0354*** or at jmoradianwatson@mail.fresnostate.edu.

Do you consent to this interview?

Do I have your permission to record this interview?

1.	**RQ.1 What school district systems of support and personnel are responsible for helping principals grow as leaders?**
1a.	How is the supervision of principals provided by the district? If a specific person, please provide that person's title.)

1b.	How does the school system ensure that principals are provided with supervision that support principals' development and growth as leaders? What specific supervisor actions and behaviors and/or school systems demonstrate and support this?
1c.	To what extent are principal supervisors able to prioritize working with principals as the day-to-day focus of their work?
1d.	To what extent do principal supervisors receive the resources, support and professional development they need to successfully support principals as leaders?
2.	**RQ.2 What strategies and practices are used in school districts to provide differentiated professional development and support to principals?**
2a.	To what extent do principals receive differentiated professional development focused on their development as leaders?
2b.	During the past school year (17-18) what and how did your district provide professional development activities specifically for principals and distinct from those provided for teachers?
2c.	In what ways do principals have access to quality professional development tools and resources to support their individual growth and development?
2d.	How does the school system and principal supervisors determine the individual professional development needs of principals?
2e.	How and what does your school system have in place to support and provide principals with PD throughout a continuum? Novice to veteran principals?
3.	**RQ.3 What professional development strategies and practices used in school districts are aligned to the California Professional Standards for Educational Leaders (CPSEL) and effective professional development constructs?**
3a.	How does the school system and principal supervisor use the CPSEL to a) provide principal professional development b) identify principal professional development needs?
3b.	What were the topics of professional development provided to principals during

	the last school year, a) how was that PD delivered to principals, (face to face, webinar, on the job) and b) what was the duration of that PD?
3c	How does the school system purposely provide principal engagement in collaboration with other principals to develop their practice and rely on each other as support and resources?
3d.	What else should I know about the district and its efforts to offer professional development to its' principals?

I want to thank you for your time and important perspectives and insights. This information will be invaluable to the field of education and for policy makers, funders, and other educators who are looking for promising processes to transform education. This concludes the interview, and I am are turning off the recording device. [Turn off recording device].

PRINCIPAL FOCUS GROUP PROTOCOL

SCHOOL DISTRICT: _____ Date: _____

Number of Principals in Focus Group: _____

Grade Levels: K-6_____K-8_____9-12_____ Other_____

Interviewer: **SUZANNE RODRIGUEZ**_____

Start Time: _____ End Time: _____ Total Time: _____

My name is **SUZANNE RODRIGUEZ**, doctoral candidate in the Doctoral Program for Educational Leadership at Fresno State. I am conducting research for my dissertation and am looking to obtain data and learn more about how school districts provide professional development and supervision to support the growth and development of their principals. I hope to use the data collected to inform state and local

policy and practices and improve the systems of principal support and professional development. You have been selected as a possible participant in this important study because you are a K-12 principal in a California school.

I would like to thank you for your willingness to participate in this focus group. The focus of the questions will be on your experience and perception of your district's supervision of principals, professional development strategies and practices provided to principals, and the alignment of those practices to the California Professional Standards for Education Leaders (CPSEL) and effective professional development constructs. Very simply, I want to capture the importance of principal professional development and your experience and perspective on how your school system does that.

It is extremely important that I capture accurate data, not an interpretation or opinion of what I think I heard, but what you actually said, therefore, it is important that your responses are digitally recorded. Your responses will not be identifiable to any person – data will be anonymous. You may decline to answer any question and may discontinue the interview at any time. We have **17** questions and **45** minutes to conduct this interview/data collection process.

By consenting to this interview, you are confirming that you are over 18, currently serving as a school administrator (principal or district administrator) in a public K-12 school and are willing to share your insights regarding principal professional development in your district. You have the right to withdraw from participating in this interview at any time for any reason without prejudice. Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can be identified with you will remain confidential and will not be disclosed. If you have any questions, you can contact Jennifer Moradian-

Watson at (559) ***278-0354*** or at jmoradianwatson@mail.fresnostate.edu.

Do you consent to this interview?

Do I have your permission to record this interview?

Before we get started, I'd like to gather some demographic information. Can you please tell me:

- *What grade levels do you lead at your school site?* K-6, K-8, 9-12?
- *How many years have you been a principal at your school site?*
- *How many years have you been a principal overall?*

1.	**RQ.1 What school district systems of support and personnel are responsible for helping principals grow as leaders?**
1a.	How is the supervision of principals provided by the district? If a specific person, please provide that person's title.)
2a.	How does the school system ensure that principals are provided with supervision that support your development and growth as leaders? What specific supervisor actions and behaviors and/or school systems demonstrate and support this?
2.	**RQ.2 What strategies and practices are used in school districts to provide differentiated professional development and support to principals?**
2a.	During the past school year (17-18) what and how did your district provide professional development activities specifically for principals and distinct from those provided for teachers or other principals?
2b.	In what ways do you, as principals, have access to quality professional development tools and resources to support your individual growth and development?
2c.	How does the school system and your supervisor determine your individual professional development needs as a principal?
2d.	How and what does your school system have in place to support and provide

	principals with PD throughout a continuum? Novice to veteran principals?
3.	**RQ.3 What professional development strategies and practices used in school districts are aligned to the California Professional Standards for Educational Leaders (CPSEL) and effective professional development constructs?**
3a.	What has been your experience with the CPSEL in relation to your professional development? How and how often are the CPSEL used by district administrators, including your direct supervisor, to support your growth and development?
3b.	What were the topics of professional development provided to you during the last school year, a) how was that PD delivered to you, (face to face, webinar, on the job) and b) what was the duration of that PD?
3c.	What did you appreciate most about the PD topic & delivery method? a) What did you appreciate least about the PD topic and delivery method? b) What are your preferred topics and methods of PD delivery?
3d.	How does the school system purposely provide you with opportunities to engage in collaboration with other principals to develop your practice and rely on each other as support and resources?

4.	**RQ.4 What are K-12 principal perceptions of the alignment of professional development they have received to effective professional development constructs, the CPSEL and their professional development needs?**
4a.	What are the special challenges/demands of being a principal and leading your school?
4b.	What professional development do you feel you need to meet the challenges/demands of being a principal and leading your school?
4c.	What sort of district professional development do you receive to effectively meet the challenges/demands of leading your school?
4d.	How well was the professional development you received during the past school year (2017-2018) to your needs as a principal?

4e.	I am going to provide you with a list of the CPSEL. Please take a look at the list and then answer this question: How well aligned do you think the professional development you received during the past 2017-2018 school year was to the standards in the CPSEL?
4f.	I am going to provide you with a list of effective professional development constructs and their definitions. Please take a look at the list and then answer this question: How well aligned do you think the professional development you received during the past 2017-2018 school year was to effective professional development constructs?
4g.	What else should I know about the support and professional development your district provides you as a principal?

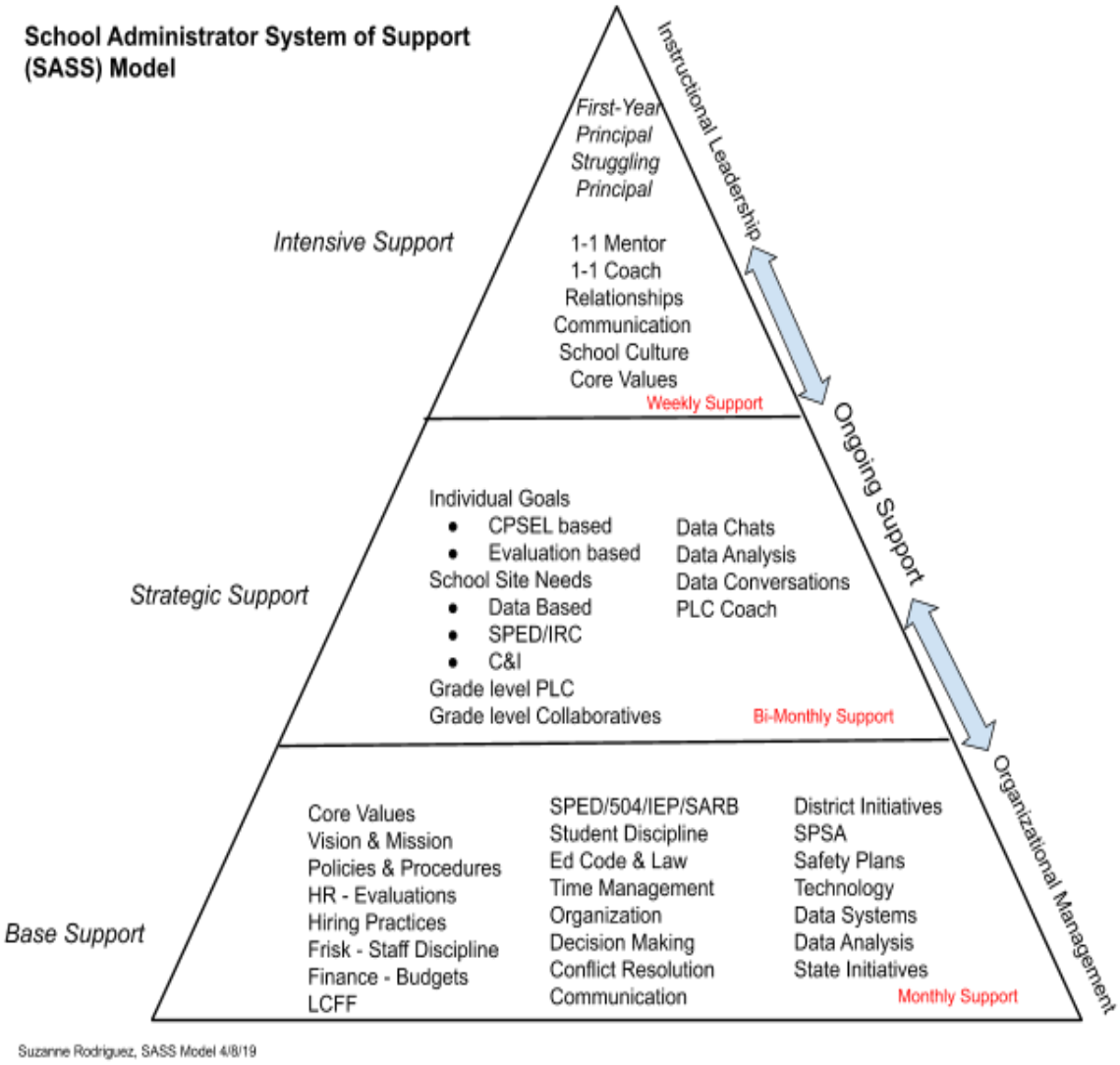
I want to thank you for your time and important perspectives and insights. This information will be invaluable to the field of education and for policy makers, funders, and other educators who are looking for promising processes to transform education. This concludes the interview, and I am are turning off the recording device. [Turn off recording device].

APPENDIX E: EFFECTIVE PD CONSTRUCTS

Effective Professional Development Constructs

- **Sustained** (Not stand-alone, 1-day, or short-term workshops)
- **Interactive** (Invites, involves and engages participants)
- **Collegial** (Builds and supports a community of learners)
- **Job-Embedded** (Occurs and/or continues at the work site)
- **Integrated** (Web-based, online, text, face to face)
- **Focused on Student Learning**
- **Continuum of PD Throughout Career**

APPENDIX F: SCHOOL ADMINISTRATOR SYSTEM OF SUPPORT (SASS) MODEL



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Suzanne Rodriguez

Type full name as it appears on submission

6/17/19

Date