

Public Abstract

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Title:A STUDY OF EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP PREPARATION CONCERNING THE ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL: PERSPECTIVES OF MISSOURI PRINCIPALS AND ASSISTANT PRINCIPALS

School administrators are under increasing pressure to improve student performance expectations. This ever-accumulating demand from government initiatives, state requirements, and building programs influences the responsibilities and duties of educational administrators, and assistant principals (APs), in particular. With pressures on educational administrators broadening at a rapid pace, the responsibilities of APs have changed. It is unclear if the initial preparation of educational leaders, in relation to the role of APs, has kept pace with growing demands associated with the position. The problem is that little research exists specifically addressing the initial developmental preparation of APs while there is a declared need for further improvement concerning the initial preparation and continual training of building principals and APs. Elements of a needs assessment and program evaluation combine to build infrastructure for a conceptual framework to guide this study. Similar to program evaluation, this study works to connect its research questions to "determining program effectiveness" (McDavid, Huse, & Hawthorn, p. 133, 2013). The overall program in a state of evaluation is concerned with the initial development of educational leaders. APs represent one component of the overall educational leadership that aids in developing, guiding, and forwarding academic performance.

This study collects data in order to define a possible problem or concern through the assimilation of collected information.

A mixed method design for this study was determined to be the best method in which to provide answers concerning the proposed research questions. Participants consisted of lead and assistant principals from school districts across Missouri. Quantitative and qualitative data was analyzed for trends. Quantitative and qualitative data was compared to one another in order to attain a thorough and comprehensive examination of collected data.

Administrators do not feel they have received specific preparation for supervising APs nor do they show strong support in their initial classwork's ability to help them prepare their APs. APs feel they received little or no training directly related to the position of AP. Coursework related to school law and evaluations were determined to be most helpful in preparing APs for their duties. APs and lead principals feel that there is little to no AP specific preparation during initial administrative coursework and AP specific training would be beneficial to administrators.

Three recommendations are given. First, research directed at developing coursework specifically related to the position of AP will aid in the overall development of administrators. Second, research directed at developing coursework specifically related to aiding lead principals in the utilization and training of assistant principals will benefit all. Finally, guiding institutions should give further thought as to the development or evaluation of mentoring and internship programs for APs.