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Joe L. Canada

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African American Public School Principals in East Tennessee:

Motivation for Leadership

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A dissertation

presented to

the faculty of the Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis

East Tennessee State University

In partial fulfillment

of the requirements for the degree

Doctor of Education

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by

Joe L. Canada

August 2006

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Dr. W. Hal Knight, Chair

Dr. Nancy Dishner

Dr. Kathryn Franklin

Dr. Elizabeth Ralston

Keywords: African American, External Factors, Internal Factors, Leadership, Motivation

## ABSTRACT

African American Public School Principals in East Tennessee:

Motivation for Leadership

by

Joe L. Canada

The purpose of this study was to explore and document the factors that motivated African American public school administrators in a selected school system in East Tennessee to become school leaders. The study highlighted barriers and challenges, support mechanisms, and perceptions of training. If minority educators are to be actively recruited and retained, there must be an understanding of the factors that motivate them to progressively seek administrative leadership positions.

The African American public school administrators' experiences were collected through 17 one-on-one personal interviews. The interviews were audio-taped, transcribed, coded, and used to answer the 4 research questions.

The primary factors that motivate African American public school administrators to become school leaders are a desire to help the students and to make a broader impact on education. These public school administrators had to overcome the barriers and challenges of racial and/or gender discrimination while working in a system that was not supportive of these endeavors. As a result of this study, recommendations were made for the school system, the African American public school administrators, and for further research.

## DEDICATION

### *The Daffodils*

*I wandered lonely as a cloud  
that floats on high o'er vales and hills,  
when all at once I saw a crowd,  
a host of golden daffodils;  
beside the lake, beneath the trees,  
fluttering and dancing in the breeze...*

*William Wordsworth (1770-1850)*

This study is lovingly dedicated to the memory of those wonderful and beautiful flowers who touched my life in a very special way. Although they have been plucked from this world, they have been planted once again in the Garden of Eden. Their spirit shall live on forever in my heart. So it is with rejoicing that I celebrate the memory of my mother, Mrs. Clemmie T. Canada; my friend and brother, Mark Carpenter; my grade school pal, Ray; and especially for Joseph. They blossomed only for a little while; then, they were plucked from this world way too soon.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I first want to acknowledge and give praise to almighty God for allowing me to make it to this point in my life. I realize there is no way I could have made it this far without the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

I especially want to thank my doctoral committee chairperson, Dr. Hal Knight, for his expertise, encouragement, and continued support in bringing this work to fruition. I also want to give a special thanks to my committee members: Dr. Nancy Dishner, Dr. Kathryn Franklin, and Dr. Elizabeth Ralston for all their assistance during this most important period in my academic career and in my life. I also want to acknowledge the contributions of the faculty and staff of the Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis for their assistance and encouragement during this entire educational process.

To the 17 African American public school administrators who took time to assist in this research project, I am eternally grateful for your support and assistance.

I want to acknowledge the prayers of the members of the St. Paul Baptist Church of Knoxville who have graciously and unselfishly allowed me to take time from my pastoral duties to attain this achievement.

A special acknowledgement goes to my foster mother, Mrs. Edna Carpenter, CC, and my classmates of Rosa Fort High School Class of 1973 who always believed and trusted in my abilities.

Lastly, I acknowledge the ever-present support of my wife, Rev. Dr. Barbara J. Canada; my children, Maurice, Brian, Keshia, Barbara Michelle, and Joe Lee; my grandchildren, Christopher, Gabriana, Joshua Noah, Kyneshia, Kyonna, and Keiundrae; and my family, friends, and colleagues who have encouraged me along the way. To God Be the Glory!

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

In 2000, the U. S. Census Bureau reported that the population of the United States had increased to over 281 million (U. S. Census Bureau, 2000a). African Americans and Hispanics have achieved the greatest increase in percentage of this population. Although the population growth has occurred in all age levels, the African American school-age population is of particular note. Although African Americans comprise only 12.3% of the total population, the African American school-age population is 15% of the number of school-age students (U. S. Census Bureau, 2000b). This school-age population growth comes at a time when the percentage of African American teachers, counselors, and administrators is steadily declining (National Center for Education Statistics, 2002).

This decline in the number of minority teachers exists for a variety of reasons. Budd-Jackson (1995) conducted an analysis of recruitment and retention of African American teachers in an urban school system. His findings revealed several reasons for this decline: (a) increased number of career options outside the field of education, (b) increased entrance requirements for the teaching field, (c) low salary, and (d) social reasons. Meekins (1994) studied the perceptions of personnel directors in several South Carolina school districts focusing on the difficulty and methodology of recruiting African American teachers. His findings revealed patterns similar to those found by Budd-Jackson. They included (a) expanding career opportunities, (b) better paying jobs, and (c) required competency testing for certification as reasons for the decline in the number of minority teachers.

The Center for Educator Recruitment, Retention, and Advancement (CERRA, 2000) identified similar reasons for the decline in the number of African American teachers. CERRA cited the following reasons: (a) perceived discipline problems in schools, (b) required entrance

and certification exams, and (c) teaching being identified as a stereotypical profession for African Americans.

Findings from the Minority Teacher Recruitment Project (MTRP) also revealed a significant shortage of African American teachers (Murray, Husk, & Simms, 1993). As a consequence, “This significant shortage of African American teachers will limit the number of potential African American administrators” (Murray et al., p. 14).

Richard (2000) reported that Hornsby, the superintendent for the 26,000-student Yonkers, New York school district, just outside New York City, said that many well-qualified minority candidates hold jobs as assistant superintendents or principals and often are not considered for the top positions although they would make fine superintendents. Cooper, Fusarelli, and Carella (2000) acknowledged that they did find the universal sense of a crisis. These researchers went on to suggest, “An insufficiently tapped supply of superintendent candidates may be found among educators who are women and members of minority groups” ( p. 3). Although the Richard study and the Cooper et al. study differed as to whether a crisis existed in the decreasing number of school superintendents, all researchers concluded that the demand would be substantial for superintendents in the next few years as the wave of top administrators retired, thereby opening career doors for women and minorities to make gains in a profession in which they are extremely underrepresented (Cooper et al.; Richard).

In a report to the governor and other state officials, in Illinois, Gidwitz and Wish (2001) found what they called “a troubling picture for Illinois schools that mirrors a national trend” (p. v). The authors added that this picture revealed demand that “outpaces the available supply due to early-career teacher flight, retirement, increasing competition from other states and the private sector, and decreasing interest in education careers among young people” (p. v). Based on their findings, the researchers pointed out that racial and ethnic minorities were underrepresented among teachers and administrators, saying, “Minority educators comprise 15% of the teaching force while the minority student population statewide accounted for 40% of the population” (p.

5). In addition, minority principals and superintendents accounted for 19% and 4% respectively. Women teachers outnumbered men teachers by three to one although men outnumbered women in the positions of principal (52%) and superintendent (86%) (Gidwitz & Wish). Gidwitz and Wish maintained that their report clearly showed a need for increased diversity in the educator workforce in Illinois and pointed out that these statistics were true for other states as well.

Even in the community college arena, statistics support a decrease in the number of minority administrators as compared to an increase in minority students' enrollment numbers. Weisman and Vaughan (2001) found that of the 936 public community college presidents, 86% were White, 6.4% were African American, 5.5% were Hispanics, .08% were Native American, and 1.8% belonged to other minority groups including Asian Americans. Dawson (2004) found that African American college presidents were predominately (78.5%) found in urban community colleges.

NCES (1998) predicted that the number of minority teachers would decline from 10% in 1987 to 5% by the turn of the century. Unfortunately, the NCES prediction of a decrease in minority educators and administrators is now a reality. Several researchers (Barnett, 2004; Gidwitz & Wish, 2001) suggested that district superintendents and directors of schools must be increasingly innovative in the recruitment and retention of highly qualified and motivated minority teachers and administrators.

### *Background of the Problem*

A review of national trends showed that American schools would face serious teacher shortages beginning in the late 1980s that would extend through the turn of the century (Leonard, 1987). This shortage exacerbates conflict and creates tension between the increasing number of African American students and the flat to decreasing number of minority administrators in public schools. The problem addressed in this study was to determine the factors that have motivated

African American principals to seek principalship positions in order to better understand how to recruit minority administrators.

### *Purpose of the Study*

The purpose of this study was to explore and document the factors that motivated African American public school administrators in a selected school district in East Tennessee to become school leaders. The study highlighted barriers and challenges, support mechanisms, and perceptions of training. There must be an understanding of the factors that motivate minority educators to aggressively seek administrative leadership positions. Findings from this study might be beneficial in actively recruiting and retaining African American school administrators.

### *Research Questions*

Based on the purpose of the study, the following research questions were formulated:

1. What are the internal and external factors that motivate African Americans to become public school administrators?
2. What are the barriers and challenges African American educators face when entering administration?
3. What are the formal and informal support mechanisms for African American administrators in predominately Caucasian school districts?
4. Do African Americans perceive their training, formal and informal, as being different from that of their Caucasian colleagues?

### *Significance of the Study*

The findings of the study should prove to be useful in helping to understand the current trend of the decreasing number of African American public school administrators by identifying the determinants that motivate African American educators to seek appointments as school

administrators. Once these motives have been determined, consolidated efforts and efficient and effective recruitment strategies can be developed and employed. Understanding the root cause of a problem is often the key ingredient to solving the problem or rectifying the situation. Without a clear understanding of the motivation factors, it is difficult to recruit and to retain qualified African American school administrators.

Because of the limited amount of research on the career development of minority principals and the increasing numbers of minority students, school districts could use research findings of this type to recruit and retain minorities in the field of education (Hobson-Horton, 2000). Careful consideration of all options must be diligently explored and documented to assist in the development of models of excellence for recruitment and retention of qualified African American educators and administrators.

#### *Assumption*

This study was based on the assumption that the participants responded with accurate information that was a reflection of their experiences and motivation for entering the field of educational administration.

#### *Limitations and Delimitations of the Study*

The following were limitations and delimitations of the study:

1. The participants in this study were delimited to the individual experiences of African-Americans principals and assistant principals in building level administrative positions in a selected school district East Tennessee.
2. The sample was drawn from secondary (high school and middle school) public school administrators in a school district in Southern Appalachia.
3. The participants' reflections and experiences are not generalized to African Americans or other public school administrators outside of this geographical area.

### *Definitions of Terms*

The specific terms used in this study are defined as follows:

1. *External Factors* are those barriers and challenges that hinder achievement of a goal and originate from outside the individual.
2. *Internal factors* are the motivation and drive that compels one to action.
3. *Motivations* are those factors that support individuals' decisions to seek leadership roles.
4. The *principal* is the head of a school who is appointed by the superintendent of the school district.

### *Overview of the Study*

This study is presented in five chapters. Chapter 1 contains an introduction, the background of the problem, the purpose of the study, research questions, significance of the study, assumptions, limitations and delimitations of the study, definitions of terms, and an overview of the study. Chapter 2 provides a review of related literature. Chapter 3 contains the methodology focusing on the research design, sample, data collection, data analysis, trustworthiness, ethical considerations, and a summary. Chapter 4 provides the presentation of data and analysis of data. It presents the participants' perceptions in their own words. Chapter 5 contains a summary of findings and recommendations.

## CHAPTER 2

### REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

#### *Introduction*

This chapter presents a review of current and salient professional literature related to general population demographics, recruitment and retention of minority administrators, administrator training programs, African American women administrators, leadership styles, barriers to advancement, job isolation, shortage of African American teachers, and minority teacher recruitment and retention.

#### *General Population Demographics*

The population in the United States increased from 248 million in 1990 to over 281 million in 2000; this was an increase of 13.2% (U. S. Census Bureau, 2000a). Although the general overall population increased for each racial/ethnic group, the percentage of the population for the represented groups changed. During this period, the Caucasian percentage of population decreased from 80% to 75% whereas the African American and Hispanic percentage of population increased to 12.3% and 12.5% respectively. According to the U. S. Census Bureau (2000a), the African American population is 34.6 million. This increase in population has resulted in an increase across all age levels, but especially school-age children.

Although African Americans comprise 12.3% of the general population, their school age percentage is greater. According to the National Center for Education Statistics (2002), there are approximately 47 million school age children in the United States. African American students now make up over 16% of the school-age population.

### *Minority Students, Faculty, and Administrators*

Although the African American overall population and school age population is increasing, the number of African American teachers, counselors, and administrators is decreasing. In 1996, there were over 2.1 million teachers nationally (National Educational Association, 1997). Only 7% of these educators were African Americans. A report by the Frederick D. Patterson Research Institute (1998) indicated the number of African American educators receiving a bachelor's degree in education had increased but those recent additions were not nearly enough to narrow the gap between the number of teachers and the increasing African American school age student population. It is possible that many African American students could complete a kindergarten- through 12th-grade academic program and never encounter an African American teacher (Buxton, 2000).

According to Cornett and Wilson (2003), in a study conducted in 2003 of teacher supply and demand in Tennessee, the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB) reported that Tennessee, like other SREB states, has had difficulty recruiting and retaining black teachers and although percentages of minority students continued to grow, there had been no similar increases in teacher diversity in SREB states. The National Center for Education Statistics (1996) reported that the race/ethnicity percentage distribution for enrollment in public schools was 61.2% White, 17.2% Black, 16.3% Hispanic, 4.1% Asian, and 1.2% Native American. Although diversity is present among the student population in schools, it is almost absent among the ranks of educators and administrators from the 1990s until now (Cornett & Wilson). The race/ethnicity percentages reported for teachers was 84% White, 8% Black, 6% Hispanic, 2% Asian, and 1% Native American. The percentages of principals were 84% White, 10% Black, 4% Hispanic, 1% Asian, and 1% Native American. The data showed that the African American student body population had increased to 16.1% while the African American teachers percentage had decreased to 8% and the African American percentage of principals was 6.2% (National Center for Education Statistics, 2002).

Data collected from research studies conducted by Hintz (2002); Glass, Bjork, and Brunner, (2000); and Cooper et al. (2000) reported that demand for superintendents will be substantial in the next few years as a wave of top administrators retire, thereby improving opportunities for women and minorities to make strides in a professional arena in which they are still very much underrepresented. Minority administrators are critically needed in public school systems, especially in areas and pockets where there are concentrations of minority students because “Students with different cultural norms are at risk if teachers have little knowledge, sensitivity, or appreciation of the diversity in communication styles and needed role models” (National Center for Education Statistics, 1996, n. p.).

### *The Minority Administrator*

There are about 12,600 minority principals in the nearly 105,000 schools in the United States. Proportionally, minority principals in public schools are over-represented at the elementary school level (De Angelis & Ross, 1997). According to Brown (1999), there is a realistic and urgent need to increase the overall representation of African American administrators in middle schools as well as in high schools. African American minority administrators are critically needed as role models for African American students, especially for the male students.

African American principals, assistant principals, and teachers reportedly are more effective than Caucasians are in providing leadership to predominantly minority schools (Ward, 1998). Because of leadership style differences between African American and Caucasian public school administrators, there is an increased demand for minority administrators to be assigned to schools with large minority populations. Lomotey (1987) pointed out that the African American community is the focus of African American leaders, and African American principals will place a higher priority on community involvement than will Caucasians. In minority communities,

community involvement is a key ingredient to the successful improvement of academic performance (Bryant, 1998; Edwards, 1999).

Berry (1998) reported some alarming findings in his dissertation on African American high school students' perceptions of African American vice principals as role models. He found that African American male students generally did not perceive or respect male African American vice principals in schools. Although the respondents recognized that African American assistants and vice principals epitomized the hard work ethic, the primary reason given for not accepting them as role models was that African American males were most often cast in disciplinary roles and, according to the respondents, only “do the White man’s dirty work.” Other African American male students said that the African American assistant principals were only there to keep them in line (Berry). Despite their beliefs, African American male students said that there should be more African American male vice principals in their schools. African American students have expressed a strong desire to have more African American male assistant administrators in roles other than as disciplinarians.

The career path and upward mobility process for educators was found to be similar to those of leaders in other organizations (Yeaman, 1994). For most African American administrators, this means an assignment as a building-level assistant principal. Because the assistant principal's position originated as an administrative function, the primary duties and responsibilities have always centered on routine administrative tasks (Glanz, 1994).

Many superintendents were concerned about some assistant principals' lack of readiness to become principals (Daresh, Dunlap, & Gantner, 1998; Richardson & Flanigan, 1991). Mentoring and professional networks were crucial factors that have been identified in the professional development of African American administrators (Kinsler, 1994). Although the assistant principal's role is often limited to discipline, bus duty, custodial, and other similar administrative tasks, his or her role should be expanded to encompass much more (Scoggins &

Bishop, 1993). Assistant principals should be included in the instructional leadership and business operation and have a set of respectable responsibilities (Berry, 1998).

### *Shortage of African American Teachers*

The shortage of minority teachers in public schools has reached a critical level (Leonard, 1987). A shortage of African American teachers comes at a time when the United States population is becoming increasingly diverse (Johnson, 1998a; Pearsley, 1998; Schaerer, 1996). Buxton (2000) stated that because of the increase in the diversity of students, there should also be a corresponding increase in the diversity of teachers who are representative of the student body. Students of the future should be able to see the diversity of society mirrored in the public school systems. However, the opposite has emerged as a trend that is forecasted to continue into the distant future. The concentration of African American student population is highest in school districts that are located in the southern states region. Because of the large concentration of African American students, the significant shortage of African American teachers is especially noted in this region (Hilliard, 1980).

The decreasing numbers of African American teachers could not have come at a more crucial time for the academic achievement and educational advancement of African American students. Low-achieving African American students have been found to benefit most from relationships with African American teachers (Foster, 1990). For many African American children, African American teachers represent surrogate parent figures, acting as the ultimate role models. These teachers play a vital part in other areas of the students' lives by acting as disciplinarians, counselors, and student advocates (King, 1993; McCray, 1997).

The inability to actively recruit and retain qualified minority teachers contributes to the problem of the growing number of undereducated African American students (Denn, 2002). Those few teachers who were recruited did not remain in rural schools and left for various

reasons that included geographical isolation, weather, distance from larger communities, family, and inadequate shopping (Murphy & Angelski, 1996/1997).

### *Recruitment and Retention of Minority Administrators*

The principal plays a crucial role in determining the overall effectiveness of the school. The building-level administrator sets the tone for all aspects of the educational process that happens or does not happen in the school building. Because of the importance of the principal's position, attention must be focused not only on principal preparation but also on the principal recruitment and selection process (Bagwell, 2002). There must be changes made to the way African American administrators are recruited (Massey, 2003). New, innovative, and effective approaches to recruitment and retention must be developed to ensure a constant flow of qualified minority administrators in order to fill the void that might result as present administrators retire within the next few years (Stoll, 2004).

The significant shortage of African American teachers would limit the number of potential African American administrators (American Association of School Administrators, 1999; Hall, 1998; Hilliard, 1980; Hunter-Boykin, 1992; Murray et al., 1993). This shortage is the result of continued rise in enrollment of school-age children and the retirement of teachers coupled with the growth in disparity between White and minority teachers (Chaika, 2001). This disparity was attributed to several factors including:

1. substandard kindergarten- through 12th-grade academic preparation and educational experiences,
2. family background and social issues,
3. disincentives of low salaries, and
4. lack of respect and prestige associated with teaching as well as discrimination in the profession (National Center for Education Statistics, 2002, n. p.).

Failure to recognize and encourage such teachers to consider school administration could have serious implications for school districts across the country as they experience cultural, ethnic, and racial student population shifts with African Americans, Hispanics, Latinos, and Asian-Americans becoming the majority and Caucasians becoming the minority (Stein, 2004). As this population shift occurs, there must be school administrators in top positions who look like the students in the majority in an effort to bring about cultural awareness and identification (Chaika, 2001). Brown (1999) identified the “need for the expansion of the pool of African American teachers so as to include more voices into shaping the curriculum and incorporating holistic teaching styles for a racially-diverse student population” (p. 1).

### *Administrator Training Programs*

As more administrators retire, it is becoming increasingly necessary to train competent individuals to fill the vacant educational leadership positions (Richard, 2000). The need for competent and highly motivated administrative leaders has led to several public school districts establishing administrator development programs to assist in the training of future educational leaders. More than half of all minority principals have taken part in such training programs (De Angelis & Ross, 1997). Administrators have cited the necessary interpersonal and communication skills that educational leader candidates should possess (Lester, 1993; Thompson & Bjork, 1989). Recognizing this need, the Chattanooga Public Schools, for example, established a training program to develop capable new educational leaders (Getty, 1994). These programs were very effective in training and developing new school administrators.

One of the most successful and noted educational leadership training programs was South Carolina’s Minority Administrator Program (MAP) (Sanga, 1993; Thompson, 1992). The program was designed and developed by the University of South Carolina Department of Educational Leadership and Policy in collaboration with several school districts and the state department of education. Its purpose has been to help minority educators develop to their fullest

potential. MAP provided districts with a pool of minority educators prepared to assume administrative positions through recruitment, selection, and professional staff development and referral activities. The African American principals who participated in MAP were provided the opportunity to have hands-on experience that helped them create a network of peers (Sanga). The MAP was instrumental in providing mentors and coaches for African American principals (Thompson; Thompson & Bjork, 1989).

### *African American Women Administrators*

Women traditionally have been excluded from the ranks of principals and district-level administrators in public school systems throughout the country (Allen, 1992; Byrd, 1999; Campbell, 1994; Henderson, 1997; Hobson-Horton, 2000; Thomas, 1997; Webb, 1996) although they make up the majority of persons in the teaching profession. Even though women comprise 66% of the teaching force, they have remained vastly underrepresented in the area of educational administration (NCES, 2002). The causes for this under-representation were varied. Research on women in the field of education left little doubt about the difficulties that they faced when seeking administrative careers (Nicholson, 1999). Some of these difficulties included lack of mentoring opportunities (Crawford, 1998); attitudinal or organizational bias (Clay, 1998); and being paid less than men (Campbell). African American women were markedly underrepresented in all areas of school administration (Allen 1992). Administrative positions in educational leadership were elusive for many would be African American women administrators (Byrd). Byrd further stated that women have been traditionally excluded from the ranks of principal and district administrators throughout the country.

The National Center for Education Statistics (2002) reported that males made up 56% of the public school administrative positions. Despite the emerging amount of literature on women in school administration, there is a disproportionately small amount on the experience of African American women (Allen, 1992; Ramey, 1995; Shakeshaft, 1987; Webb, 1996).

The motivation of young African American women to enter the education profession and their subsequent recruitment as leaders has become the focus for many studies (Bell, 1999). African American women face the difficulty of overcoming dual burdens of racism and sexism (Singh, Robinson, & Williams-Green, 1995).

### *Internal and External Factors*

Internal and external factors are relevant when examining the motivation of African American educators to become public school administrators. Internal motivational factors include those factors that support an individual's decision to seek a leadership position. These motivational factors include a strong commitment to African American students' education and a deep understanding of, and compassion for, those students (Lomotey, 1987). The external factors that affect the lives of African American educators that are motivated to become administrators includes racism, sexism and marginalization (Coker, 2003).

### *Barriers to Advancement*

Research on women in the field of educational administration leaves little doubt about the difficulties women face when seeking administrative careers (Nicholson, 1999). Many of the experiences women encounter in leading their school are specifically linked to race or gender and in some instances both (Boothe, 1995; Hobson-Horton, 2000; Pollard, 1997; Ramey, 1995). Some of these experiences include lack of mentoring, unequal compensation, and organizational bias (Nicholson, 1999). Many well-qualified women are denied career advancement opportunities solely because of their gender or because of their ethnic background (Byrd, 1999). According to Hudson (1994), African American and other minority administrators who were advanced to principalships and further in their careers often faced prejudices and discrimination. The informal job contacts continued to be a barrier to progression for women and people of color (Hudson).

Henderson (1997) found that female principals were well aware of the challenges in leadership, yet they still fostered the desire for promotion/ advancement to other administrative positions in educational leadership. In so doing, they must overcome the stereotypical boundaries and barriers that have disillusioned many and prevented them from attaining the role of principal or other administrative positions (Henderson; Wilkinson, 1991). According to Henderson, these females have grown from their experiences by making personal strides forward, breaking the glass ceiling, and dumping the “stereotypical baggage” of the past. They possessed a high level of energy and enthusiasm for getting the job done. As viable qualified candidates for advancement, and by conquering the challenges to their legitimacy and successfully overcoming those obstacles and barriers that had been placed in their paths, they became more determined in their efforts to be successful school administrators. These obstacles and challenges, once barriers, become catapults to hurl them forward in the advancement of their career aspirations.

Clay (1998), in his study on the African American female and the glass ceiling, reported that African American women were severely underrepresented in top-level jobs. These top-level management positions were reserved almost exclusively for Caucasian males. Despite the presence of these barriers and the existence of the glass ceiling, and in some instances, concrete ceilings, African American women still pursue positions in public schools in increasing numbers and are resolved in their determination that they will succeed against the odds in spite of the stumbling blocks that thwart their progression (Nicholson, 1999).

### *Job Isolation, Expectations, and Perceptions*

Campbell (1994) concluded that for many women, the rise to the top was often long and tedious. African American female administrators often have seen themselves as being alone, unappreciated, and without support from top-level managers and supervisors (Bush, 2000). Campbell concluded that many of these feelings stemmed from the realistic possibility that once

a woman gets the job, she often will be paid less than the man who preceded her in the organization. Hodo-Haley (1998) stated that African American females often must make tremendous sacrifices to achieve success. After years of sacrifice, academic preparation, and a slow ascent to the top, many African American women administrators were perceived as not qualified for the position to which they had been advanced (Branner, 2003). Preconceived notions of prejudice and inferiority attitudes toward these women administrators often distorted their ability to be properly received and respected as legitimate educational leaders. Hodo-Haley found that the expectation for success of African American and other minority administrators were enormous and sometimes unrealistic and unobtainable. These unrealistic expectations were often driven by the environmental climate of the job assignment.

Sometimes the community's perception of the success of the African American female school administrator did not reflect an appreciation of her job performance and job assignments. Those who achieved social class success were often seen as projecting the attitude of "acting White" and out of touch with the "grass roots" concerns and problems of inner city minority communities (Fordham & Ogbu, 1986). This negative perception of African American administrators by other African American community members clearly shows that prejudicial attitudes are not limited to the majority culture (Harpalani, 2002).

#### *Experiences of African American Men As They Relate to African American Women*

The majority of the research about African American administrators has focused on female administrators. This has resulted in a limited amount of data about African American male administrators. As an African American male administrator, it has been my experience that African American male administrators have had similar experiences as African American female administrators.

African American males and females are underrepresented in all areas of school administration (Allen, 1992). Both have found positions to be elusive (Byrd, 1999). African

American male and female administrators have faced similar barriers to advancement. The experiences of both African American males and females are significantly linked to race and/or gender (Boothe, 1995; Hobson-Horton, 2000; Pollard, 1997).

### *Formal and Informal Support Mechanisms*

While researching the motivation of African Americans in educational leadership, it is important to consider formal and informal support mechanisms. These can be very instrumental in the success or failure of leaders. The formal support mechanisms include professional development programs (Murray et al., 1993); Minority administration Programs (Thompson & Bjork, 1989); and collaboration between school districts and the universities (Bozeman & Rothberg, 1989). The informal support mechanisms include families and friends (Hodo-Haley, 1998) and collegial networking and mentoring groups (Enser, 1997). Spence (1990) described the importance of strong family support and high expectations from family, teachers, and friends.

### *Mentoring Programs*

The mentoring process is an excellent way for men and women to be exposed to the necessary training and support that is required for upper-level management positions. There is an increasing need for African Americans to participate in mentoring programs because they provide excellent opportunities for networking and support (Byrd, 1999; Jones, 1983; Wesley, 1997). There must be an asserted effort from top level supervisors and superintendents to establish and participate in effective mentoring programs. The need for such programs stems from the fact that legislation requiring education and experience has not been enough to advance women and ethnic minorities to the highest levels of management (Wesley, 1997). New and innovative programs and procedures must be developed that will ensure that qualified minorities are advanced to the forefront and to the top-level positions in public education.

Mentoring has been identified as being a significant factor leading to upward mobility in employment, success in education, and personal development (Crawford, 1998). The literature revealed that employees who were paired with mentors experienced more career benefits including higher pay, more frequent promotions, and increased job satisfaction than did organizational members without mentors. Administrators and managers who received mentoring were much more likely to provide mentoring for others (Moore, 1995) because they knew the value and advantage of such a relationship. They gladly passed on valuable knowledge and experience to further advance the careers of those with whom they had entered a mentoring relationship. Researchers suggested that mentors and sponsors, although very important, were hard for women and minorities to find (Allen, Jacobson, & Lomotey, 1995). Those who have attained the upper levels of public school administration must take the lead in training, developing, and mentoring others as they strive for upward mobility.

There was a scarcity of professional African American women who were mentoring other professional African American women in their career development (Moore, 1995). This is largely because of the under representation of African American women and other ethnic minorities in top-level educational leadership positions. African American women administrators can be effective mentors because they bring to their jobs a unique and diverse perspective both as women and minorities (Johnson, 1998b). Because of dual membership in two minority groups, they are able to provide valuable insight from a diverse perspective that only a select few can provide. The nature of mentoring for these educators includes relationships of family support, collegial support, and supervisory support as well as the mentoring benefits from these relationships (Moore, 1999). Both mentees and mentors who had participated in the mentoring process described it as highly interactive with a high degree of interdependence and closeness (Shumate, 1995).

For the mentoring relationship to be positive and successful, there must be mutual respect and admiration from both the mentor and the mentee. A high degree of participation and

interaction are essential components of a successful relationship. It could be concluded that mentoring is especially important for career advancement for minorities and particularly essential for African American females striving for administrative careers in public education (Moore, 1999).

The Chicago, Illinois, public school district conducted an extensive comparative study with elementary school principals focusing on school reform. Mentoring and the mentoring relationship were revealed as one of the major themes that emerged as affecting the success of African American female elementary school principals (Tweedle, 1996). School districts across the United States should incorporate an effective mentoring program as a viable part of the normal career progression of minority administrators. Top-level supervisors and superintendents should make a diligent effort to identify mentors who are willing to dedicate the necessary time, effort, and energy to enter into such a relationship with a minority person who desires to advance in the ever-changing field of education.

### *The Effects of Desegregation and Integration*

The National Education Association (1997) reported that integration of the American public school systems has had an adverse effect on the number of African American public school teachers. With integration came massive layoffs: 38,000 African Americans in 17 states lost their positions as teachers or administrators between 1954 and 1965 and things have not been the same since. After those massive lay-offs during the early years of court-ordered segregation, the number of African American public school teachers and administrators has remained at a reduced quantity throughout most school districts. The public school principal plays a vital role in both school integration and school-community relations (National Center for Research and Information on Equal Educational Opportunity, 1972).

The need to retain African American school principals, other administrators, and teachers was clearly demonstrated by their unique ability to deal with both African Americans and the

African American community during this difficult period of adjustment. Yet as school integration progressed, the number of African American principals sharply decreased (National Education Association, 1997). Minority principals suffered disproportionate displacement and job loss as compared to Caucasian principals (Abney, 1980). The displacement was more widespread in small towns and rural areas than in large metropolitan centers (Hooker, 1970).

As recently as the 1995-96 school year, African American teachers comprised only 7.3% of the teaching force in public schools (National Education Association, 1997). The quasi-elimination of the African American minority administrator from public school systems has been, and still is, a major concern for African American educators throughout southern school districts (Moore, 1977). Where there are African American students, there needs to be African American teachers and African American principals and other administrators.

#### *Minority Teacher Recruitment and Retention*

One of the biggest influences on the recruitment of African American teachers is the presence of African American building-level principals. The number of African American teachers increases when there are African American administrators (Zacher, 2002). African Americans are more likely to seek employment opportunities in education where there are other African Americans, especially school principals (Hall, 1998). The African American principal is likely to be sensitive to the need to have an increased number of African American teachers where there is a large segment of like students (Brown-Cox, 1997). In most school districts, racial disproportion and a shortage of qualified African Americans characterize the pattern of minority representation from school boards to classroom (Hall). This disproportionate shortage of African Americans at all levels negatively impacts the educational opportunities and placement of African American students through the school district. Communities that have a substantial number of African Americans need to have African American teachers, counselors, and administrators in their schools (Wehrman, 2002). Wehrman further stated, "When the

proportion of African American teachers is appropriate, the punishment of African Americans along with the identification and placement of African American students in special education programs decreases” (p. 1).

Most school district's activities for recruitment of minority teachers have not been effective (National Governors' Association, 1998). The American Association of School Administrators (1999) has observed that the main problem for many school districts is attracting and keeping quality teachers. School districts must be innovative in breaking down the barriers and formulating workable methods for the recruitment and retention of African Americans to elementary and secondary teaching positions (Hawkins, 1992). School districts that are not able to actively and efficiently recruit and retain African American and other minority teachers must rethink their recruitment strategies (Brown-Cox, 1997; Middleton, 1993). Although many school districts have an active recruitment program in place, very few districts have shown an increase in the percentage of African American teachers employed in their districts over the last 10 years. In fact, the opposite has occurred; in many districts there has been a decrease in the number of African American teachers employed by the schools (Meekins, 1994). If there is no improvement in the number of African American teachers, most of the school districts in the United States will find themselves in the unusual position of having to meet the challenge of educating a very diverse student population with nearly an entire Caucasian teaching force (Rosborough, 1990).

To help relieve the shortage, several school systems have initiated teacher education magnet programs for high school students (Hunter-Boykin, 1992). Calvin Coolidge High school in Washington, DC has pioneered such a program. The “We grow our own” concept is an effective way of increasing the number and quality of African American teachers. The early identification of African American and other minority public school students who could serve as future teachers is vital (Anderson, 1990). Once these students are identified, they can be mentored toward a rewarding career as a lifelong educator (O'Bryant, 1996).

The colleges of education at schools that prepare educators can be influential in the recruitment of minority teachers. Joint efforts between local school districts and the colleges of education have established programs that actively seek to organize task forces that focus on minority teacher recruitment (Alston, 1998; Bozeman & Rothburg, 1989; Case, 1998; Golias, 1990; McFrazier, 1998; Nicklas & Contreras, 1991; Piercynski, 1997; South Carolina Center for Teacher Recruitment, 1994; Thomas, 1995; Worner, 1991). Strategies must be developed that would expand the minority target group from which teachers can be recruited because minorities who have been educated in urban schools usually do not elect to go into teacher training programs (Haberman, 1989). The Orleans Parish Public Schools and Louisiana Universities in cooperation with the Urban League developed the Educator 2000 Project to focus on the recruitment of minority students into education careers (Leonard, 1987). One of the primary concerns of the alliance was targeting inner-city youngsters who had an interest in teaching or other educational career fields. California established the Future Teacher Institute, a minority recruitment model developed at California State University Dominguez Hills (Warshaw, 1992). The project had a twofold objective: (a) to involve promising high school minority student in a direct teaching and learning experience and (b) to familiarize elementary grade students and their parents with a college environment so that higher education might be view as possible and desirable. Making teaching an attractive and viable career option was the major concern of Education 2000.

Page and Page (1991) listed the consistent assignment of African American minority teachers to low-level classes and/or with behavior problem classes as a reason many have left the profession. This also appeared to be a general problem for many new teachers. Many veteran teachers regard it as their right to have the usually problem free high-level classes because they have “paid their dues.” African American educators cite lack of respect for teachers, low salaries, and lack of support as major reasons for the low recruitment and retention process (Nandi, 1997). Meaningful communication between the central office personnel and the

minority classroom teachers must take place to determine the most effective ways to hire and retain minority teachers. The job advertisements and announcements must be crafted in such a way as to attract minority candidates (Winter & Dunnaway, 1997).

### *Summary*

It is critical that minority students have those in leadership who look like them; however, the disparity between African American and Caucasian public school administrators hinders this process. It is important that with the increase in the number of minority students enrolling in public schools, we also must see an increase in African American leadership to ensure diversity and an enhanced educational experience through the sharing of differences. This chapter presented a review of literature on the African American public school principals and their motivations for leadership.

## CHAPTER 3

### METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this chapter was to cover the following topics pertaining to methodology: research design, sampling frame, data collection, data analysis, trustworthiness, ethical considerations, and a summary of the chapter.

The researcher sought to explore the factors that motivated selected African American public school educators to enter the field of school administration. The challenges faced, obstacles that were overcome, as well as the mentoring experiences (or lack thereof) were examined.

#### *Research Design*

This study focused on the motivations of selected African American public school educators who entered the field of school administration. The decision to use a qualitative approach or quantitative research method was determined by the research questions, purposes of the study, and the interest of the researcher (Guba, 1990). In quantitative research, the researcher undertakes to report "what is" (McMillan & Schumacher, 1993). During qualitative research, the investigator attempts to answer the question--"What is happening here?" (LeCompte & Priessle, 1994).

Because the research design for this study was qualitative, the findings are descriptive rather than statistical. Qualitative researchers do not convert pages descriptions and other data collected to numerical or statistical symbols but instead endeavor to analyze data with all their richness as precisely as possible to the form in which they were recorded and transcribed (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992). The presentation of the written results contain quotations from the collected data to illustrate and authenticate the study.

Qualitative research is multi-method in its focus, involving an interpretive, true-to-nature approach to the research topic (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994). According to King (1994), qualitative research analyzes events, people, and concepts rather than reporting what is observed.

Qualitative researchers seek to understand circumstances from the participants' perspectives (Gall, Borg, & Gall 1996). According to Creswell (1998), the most apparent way to glean this experience is to ask those individuals participating in it to recount, describe, and explain it. Interviewing is a meaning-making process in which the informant makes meaning as he or she recalls an experience, reflects on the details, and puts them in order to talk about them (Seidman, 1998). It is this "subjective understanding" of the experience that the investigator was trying to extract in an attempt to understand the informant's behavior in context.

The qualitative tradition of inquiry used for this research project is a phenomenological study. A phenomenological study describes the meaning of lived experiences for several individuals about a concept or "the phenomenon" (Creswell, 1998). The researcher explores the structures of consciousness in human experiences (Polkinghorne, 1998).

Moustakas (1994) and Natanson (1973) stated that when conducting phenomenological studies, the researcher searches for the essence of the central underlying meaning of the experience. This is where the experiences contain both the outward appearance and inward consciousness that is based on memory, meaning, and image.

Stewart and Mickunas (1990) outlined discernible themes from philosophical precepts for phenomenological studies. The outline called for traditional philosophical tasks without presuppositions and the direction of consciousness toward the reality of an object that is perceived in the experience of an individual.

Creswell (1998) held that a phenomenological study might be challenging to use for the following reasons:

1. the researcher requires a solid foundation in the philosophical precepts of phenomenology;

2. the participants in the study need to be carefully selected to be individuals who have experienced the phenomenon;
3. bracketing personal experiences may be difficult; and
4. the researcher needs to decide how and in what way his or her personal experiences will be introduced into the study. (p. 55)

I sought to capture the experiences of the African American secondary school administrators. I was aware that my knowledge of the phenomenology along with my personal biases and experiences could have interfered with the accurate capturing of these experiences. By conscientiously addressing these four areas, I greatly reduced the difficulty of conducting a phenomenological study. I addressed these four areas by:

1. becoming familiar with the aspect of the phenomenological study.
2. selecting current African American secondary public school administrators.
3. setting aside personal prejudgments and relying on the responses of the study participants to obtain a picture of his/her experience.
4. using my personal experiences as an African American public school administrator to supplement my research for this study.

### *Sampling Frame*

Qualitative research is more flexible with respect to sampling techniques than quantitative research (Gall et al., 1996). This flexibility allowed for the emergent design of the qualitative research study. This freedom in qualitative research afforded the researcher the opportunity to develop and adopt methodologies in order to gain new insights into the phenomenon being studied. The purposeful selection of participants represented a pivotal decision point in a qualitative study (Creswell, 1998). Researchers designing qualitative studies need clear criteria in mind. The clear criteria for this study were the shared experiences that motivated African American principals and assistant principals to go into school leadership.

Patton (1990) used the term "purposeful sampling" to refer to the practice of selecting cases that are likely to be information-rich with respect to the purpose of a qualitative study. Patton further identified 15 purposeful sampling strategies (pp. 169-183) that serve a particular purpose in a qualitative study. Homogeneous sampling was used for this study. Homogeneous sampling allowed the researcher to select a population of similar cases so that information collected from the participants could be studied in depth.

For a phenomenological study, the information collection process requires indepth interviews with as many as 10 individual participants (Creswell, 1998; Dukes, 1984). The important point is to describe the meaning of a small number of individuals who have experienced the phenomenon. The population for this study consisted of 17 African American principals and assistant principals at the middle and high school level in an urban school district in Southern Appalachia. This school system was selected because it had a reasonable number of African American school administrators at the middle and high school level.

A cover letter was sent to the superintendent/director of schools in the school system identified in the study. After permission to conduct the study was given by the superintendent, a list of African American Administrators at the middle and high school level was obtained. Each of the secondary school administrators was individually contacted and invited to participate in the study. I explained the parameters of the study and related to the interviewees how they were selected as potential participants for the study. After each minority administrator agreed to be a participant in the study, I scheduled a date and time for the interview. In order to participate in the study, the selected individuals were currently serving as a building level principal or assistant principal at the high school or middle school level. All participants selected from the school district were assigned pseudonyms to maintain anonymity and confidentiality.

### *Data Collection*

When the researcher functions as the primary data collector for the study, a statement is required about the researcher's values, assumptions, and biases at the onset of the study. (Creswell, 1994). My perceptions of being an African American administrator at a public school in East Tennessee were molded by my personal experiences as a member of this minority group. I maintain that my experiences augmented my role as the primary researcher for this study. My knowledge, awareness, and sensitivity concerning the experiences of the African American school administrators were valuable in the collection, analysis, and presentation of the perceptions of the participants in this study.

As a member of the minority group, I brought certain predispositions to this research project. Although every effort was diligently made to remain objective, these biases defined the way I collected, understood, and analyzed data. To limit the effect of any preconceived impressions and to protect the vested interest of those who have a stake in this study, I solicited the assistance of a Caucasian auditor to ensure and maintain objectivity. Lincoln and Guba (1985) stated the auditor examines whether or not the findings, interpretations, and conclusions are supported by the data. The auditor was Dr. Michael Winstead. Dr. Winstead is director of testing and research for Knox County Schools. Dr. Winstead is very familiar with the role of a building level principal. He has been a classroom teacher and works closely with school administrators on testing and statistical data analysis. Dr. Winstead is also familiar with statistical techniques, both quantitative and qualitative. The researcher must set aside all prejudgments, his or her experiences, and rely on intuition, imagination, and universal structures to obtain a picture of the experience. Steward and Mickunas (1990) described this process as bracketing.

For a phenomenological study, the process of collecting information involves primarily indepth interviews. The method of data collection for this qualitative study was the interview guide and standardized questions (Patton, 1990). The interview guide allowed the interviewer to

strive for more indepth discussion of a topic or subject. The interview required an on-site, verbal, and first-hand interaction between subject and researcher.

A long interview was used to explore the experiences and perceptions of this group of selected African American public school administrators. McCracken (1988) proposed that the long interview was a "sharply focused, rapid, highly intensive process" (p. 9), as a reasonable means of allowing the investigator to reach this understanding both efficiently and effectively. The long interview presented the opportunity to step into the mind of another person. It allowed others to see and understand the world as they do themselves. The long interview purposed to give the investigator a highly efficient, productive, and streamlined instrument of inquiry. The long interview cannot begin to involve the investigator in the participant's world on a day-to-day basis as with ethnographic studies. The long interview, however, allowed for a qualitative investigation of the individual's world without loss of privacy and time of both the subject and the investigator. When using the long interview, the investigator endeavors to find what Patton (1990) has referred to as "depth, detail, and meaning at a very personal level of experience" (p. 18).

What actually distinguishes the long interview (McCracken, 1988) is its four-step method of inquiry that includes the following steps:

1. a review of analytical categories and interview design,
2. a review of cultural categories and interview design,
3. interview procedures and the discovery of cultural categories, and
4. interview analysis and the discovery of analytical categories. (p. 29)

The first step of McCracken's (1988) four-step method requires a literature review that allows the researcher to assess the data, develop expectations, and begin to develop the categories of the interview questionnaire. The second step (review of cultural categories) allows the researcher to use himself or herself as an instrument of inquiry. McCracken stated that the individual researcher's personal experience provides "a fineness of touch and delicacy of insight"

(p. 32). The third step allows for the actual development of the interview guide. The interview questionnaire includes biographical and nondirective questions that allow the participants to tell their stories in their own words. The fourth step (the discovery of analytical categories) is done with the transcripts of the interviews. The object of analysis is to determine the categories, relationships, and assumptions that relate the participants' view of the world in general and to the topic in particular (McCracken). In designing this study, I was guided by this description of the long interview technique.

Polkinghorne (1989) proposed that the indepth long interview should last no longer than 2 hours. This allotted time maximized the informant's relating their experiences and perspectives during the interview process. The interview process contained two parts. Part I included written demographic information obtained from the participants. Part II contained a series of open-ended questions designed to elicit information from the participants. Prior to the interviews, the researcher developed a consent form for participation for each candidate. I interviewed 17 participants for this study. I continued to select and interview participants until the data analysis indicated that no new significant information was being offered (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

I explored the subject of motivation by asking the participants to describe their understandings of the experiences that motivated them to choose this particular career field. Each participant was asked the same questions during a semistructured oral interview. As the interview progressed, the interviewer pursued questions/subjects that were not specifically on the standardized question guide. I took notes in addition to the audio tapes during the interview process (Marshall & Rossman, 1995). I made limited notes to record expressions, impressions, and gestures that were not captured on the audio tape. As is the make-up of a qualitative study, questions were added as the study progressed to facilitate the emerging themes and subthemes the study's participants might have expressed. At the end of each interview, I reviewed my notes with the interviewee or asked for clarification of responses to ensure I correctly understood the respondent's ideas and thoughts.

I debriefed each interview with Dr. Jean Morgan-Harper in order to ensure accurate recording of the interview process (see Appendix A). As assistant principal at South Doyle High School in Knoxville, Tennessee, Dr. Harper is very familiar with the role of a secondary building level administrator. She agreed to meet with me as necessary to discuss my impressions, questions, concerns, and thoughts as I progressed through the interviews. Each interview was taped and transcribed for the purpose of presenting the data. I then audited the tapes and transcripts of the interview for accuracy.

### *Data Analysis*

McMillan and Schumacher (1993) defined data analysis as the systematic process of selecting, categorizing, comparing, synthesizing, and interpreting to provide explanations of the phenomena of interest. In the analysis process, patterns are generally reported as themes. These themes, in turn, provide an explanation of the situation and contribute to knowledge by providing information on the phenomena under study.

Moustakas (1994) proposed a specific approach for phenomenological studies analysis. Those steps were as follows:

1. The researcher begins with a full description of his or her own experience of the phenomenon. I described my experience as a high school assistant principal as it related to the research questions.
2. The researcher then finds statements (in the interviews) about how individuals are experiencing the topic; listing out these specific statements treats each statement as having equal worth and works to develop a list of nonrepretitive, nonoverlapping statements. I transcribed and then analyzed the interviews of the study's participants and listed different themes that were found from their responses.
3. These statements are then grouped into meaningful units. The researcher lists these units and he or she writes a description of the texture of the experiences--what happened--

including verbatim examples. I recorded descriptions of the experiences of the study's participants (including verbatim quotes) after they were grouped into units. These were used to answer the research questions.

4. The researcher next reflects on his or her own descriptions and uses imaginative variations or structured descriptions seeking all possible meanings and divergent perspectives, varying the frames of references about the phenomenon, and constructing a description of how the phenomenon was experienced. I constructed descriptions of how I experienced the phenomenon using different frames of references.
5. The researcher then constructs an overall description of the meaning and the essence of the experience. I recorded a detailed description of my experiences as an African-American public school administrator.
6. This process is followed first for the researcher's account of the experience and then for that of each of the participants. After this, a composite description is written. I followed the above procedure for each participant in the study. I used the above described process to facilitate analysis of the data.

The formidable task of analysis is to make sense of massive amounts of data, reduce the volume of information, identify significant patterns, and construct a framework for communicating the essence of what the data reveal (Patton, 1990). Each interview was recorded and transcribed for the purpose of compiling and recording the data. The researcher then audited the tapes and transcriptions of the interviews for accuracy.

### *Trustworthiness*

All reliable research studies must meet a certain criteria of rigor. In the qualitative research model, the criteria are credibility, transferability, dependability, and conformability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). These four criteria can be applied to test the trustworthiness of both the

data and the conclusion drawn from them. Lincoln and Guba thoroughly reviewed this issue. The following is a summary of their findings.

Credibility refers to the truth-value of the research. The credibility of sources and the information provided could be enhanced by several measures including selection of informants who are likely to give useful information, ensuring the trustworthiness of the interviewer, and careful recording of the data. I have already discussed population selection, establishing trustworthiness, and the recording of data. According to Gall et al., (1996), triangulation of sources refers to the use of different sources to authenticate data. In this study, multiple informants were used to triangulate data. Gall et al. described triangulation as the process of using multiple data-collection methods, data sources, or analysis to check validity. Study participants filled out a demographics questionnaire. Their interviews were audio-taped and notes were taken during the interview process.

The long interview supported the use of cross-examination techniques such as establishing the informant's frame of reference, pointing out inconsistencies in the informant's response, clarifying opinions, and seeking justification for responses. Member checking was used to ensure that the participants' perspectives were correctly represented. Member checking is the process of having individuals review statements made in the researcher's report for accuracy and completeness (Gall et al., 1996). Informal member checking was conducted during the course of the interview when necessary. I conducted member checking (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Maxwell, 1996) through a debriefing at the end of each interview. At this time, I also reviewed my notes and verified my understanding of the interviewee's comments with the interviewee and sought clarification of comments.

Transferability refers to the applicability of the findings and conclusions to other cases or situations. The goal of a qualitative researcher is not to generalize to a wider population than those actually interviewed (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992; Leininger, 1994; Marshall & Rossman, 1995). Qualitative studies are designed for specific cases and their findings and conclusions are

transferable only to the extent that similar cases have similar contexts. The context of the participants will be provided through the detailed description of their experiences.

### *Ethical Considerations*

All research studies heighten ethical concerns about the right to privacy, informed consent, and protection from harm. I took precautions to ensure all participants were protected with regards to these concerns. This research proposal was reviewed and approved by the East Tennessee State University Institutional Review Board. I protected the privacy of the interviewees by concealing names and identifying characteristics of the interviewees and their professional settings. It was made explicitly clear to all participants that their participation in the interview was voluntary and that they could refuse to answer any question or stop the process at any time during the interview. Each participant signed a consent form that conformed to the requirement of the Institutional Review Board of East Tennessee State University (see Appendix C).

### *Summary*

Individual participants selected by a homogeneous purposeful sample model were interviewed. The researcher used the data collection technique that McCracken (1988) described as the long interview. At this point, the researcher sought to identify, code, and categorize the gathered data using Moustakas' (1994) approach to phenomenological data analysis. The analysis of data is presented as findings in Chapter 4 of this research study. In order to meet the standards of credibility and reliability, the researcher used an educational colleague to debrief each interview (see Appendix A). An auditor conducted a review of the process for accuracy (see Appendix B).

## CHAPTER 4

### PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

#### *Demographics*

The purpose of this chapter is to present a description of the study's population and detailed results of the responses to the interview questions. I collected information for this study through one-on-one individual interviews with 17 African American secondary public school administrators from 15 schools in an urban school district in Southern Appalachia. Eight of the study's participants were principals and nine were assistant principals. Eight participants were female and nine were male. The participants' experience as secondary public school administrators ranged from approximately 1 year to over 25 years. They ranged in age from 38 to 61 years. Seven of the study's participants were currently employed in high schools and 10 were currently employed in middle schools.

I recruited participants for the study through direct contact and electronic mail. I explained the nature of my study and the time needed to complete the interview and answered questions regarding confidentiality. I further explained that although the interview would be tape-recorded, pseudonyms would be used and schools would not be identified.

After each individual agreed to participate in the study, an appointment was scheduled. All interviews were conducted in the participants' offices. Before starting the interview, I asked each participant to fill out the informed consent document and I answered any questions about the form prior to obtaining the participant's signature. I explained that I had obtained permission to tape and then proceeded with the interview. The length of the interviews ranged from 45 minutes to 1 hour. The participants' pseudonyms and demographical information are shown in Table 1.

Table 1

*Pseudonyms and Demographic Information*

Name	Highest Degree Attained	Age	Years in Administration	Years in Education
Cathy	Masters	53	3	21
Charles	Educ. Specialist	44	8	21
Etna	Educ. Specialist	38	1	10
Elaine	Masters	57	4	30
Fred	Educ. Specialist	49	8	24
Harry	Masters	52	12	30
Helen	Educ. Specialist	51	5	25
James	Educ. Specialist	56	27	32
Jerry	Masters	56	4	30
Judy	Masters	60	26	37
Larry	Masters	40	1	26
Maggie	Educ. Specialist	50	5	28
Mary	Educ. Specialist	47	2	25
Richard	Masters	51	1	26
Robert	Masters	40	11	19
Roberta	Masters	49	14	27
Susie	Doctorate	60	4	7

Following each interview, I transcribed the tape. Upon completion of transcription of the tapes, I met with my debriefer, Dr. Jean Morgan-Harper, to discuss findings of the interviews. The debriefer's certification is shown in Appendix A. I also provided my auditor, Dr. Mike Winstead, a copy of each transcript as well as a copy of this chapter for his review and confirmation that what I reported in this chapter was evidenced in the interviews. The auditor's certification letter is shown in Appendix B.

The research questions for this study were:

1. What are the internal and external factors that motivate African Americans to become public school administrators?

2. What are the barriers and challenges African American educators face when entering administration?
3. What are the formal and informal support mechanisms for African American administrators in predominately Caucasian school districts?
4. Do African Americans perceive their training, formal and informal, as being different from that of their Caucasian colleagues?

The findings section of this chapter begins with how these 17 public school administrators became school leaders. The remainder of the chapter includes in the administrators' words their experiences as they related to external motivation factors, barriers and challenges, support mechanisms, and perceptions of training.

### *Findings*

The primary focus of this study was motivation for leadership. This motivational focus was explored by answering the four research questions. The research questions were answered by documenting the study participants' responses to the survey questions.

#### *Research Question #1*

What are the internal and external factors that motivate African Americans to become public school administrators?

#### *Becoming an Administrator*

The administrators interviewed for this study followed different paths in becoming public school administrators. Three themes emerged from the interviews: The desire to do something else, encouragement from others to go into administration, and better pay.

The first theme involved the “desire to do something else.” Four study participants cited this as a motivation for entering administration. Richard decided it was time for a career change. He explained:

I decided to become an administrator after many years of coaching. I wanted to do something else. I wanted to have some other options. I didn’t want the end of my teaching years to come and not really be happy in the classroom or be happy with coaching. Professionally, I wanted to set higher goals.

Elaine stated she “was feeling burned out after many years as a classroom teacher.” She continued:

Well for one thing, I had taught for a number of years and I had served as department chair. I had several people to say to me “You need to go into administration.” I really hadn’t seriously considered it, but one of my colleagues started into a program. He started to talk about it. He said to me “You really ought to pursue it.” I was at the point where I had been in a school for about 20 years and I had seen some changes that I didn’t like and I felt like the walls were closing in on me some. I began to feel somewhat burned out with what I was doing and I felt like I needed a change.

Harry simply stated it was time to move on:

With the constant support and pushing of my wife to get into it because I really still wanted to coach a few more years but at the time ... I guess the time was just right for me to move on and that is how I got into administration.

Edna decided to move into administration when an opportunity became available:

Well, for me, I knew that I didn’t want to be in the classroom for 30 years. So I decided to go back and get my administration degree. I got my education specialist degree at the University of Tennessee and said I’ll hold on for a little while. But opportunity knocked and shortly after, because I did not get my degree until 2004--shortly after that, I got an interview for this position and decided to go ahead and accept the position. And based on what I’d studied at UT for the Leadership 21 classes, I felt like this is the right thing to do. And, I went ahead and did it.

The second theme to emerge was encouragement from others to go into administration.

Ten participants entered into administration after being encouraged by others. Helen stated that she was encouraged to go into administration by a friend of the family. She said she also felt she was “ready for the next challenge.” She elaborated:

Yes, I did have encouragement to go into leadership. A spouse of a friend of mine was in educational leadership at the university. When I would speak with him, he said you

really ought to do this. This field needs people like you. I have had colleagues who were my principals who encouraged me to do that.

Cathy told a humorous story of how she was encouraged by her former principal to be an administrator:

I became an administrator by accident! My former principal, the entire time I was working at a former school, continually harassed me while I was working there to go back to school and get my masters degree. And one day she just decided it was time, she brought in the paperwork and told me to go. I follow directions well and so I completed the paperwork and went back to school.

Robert said he was satisfied with being a classroom teacher, but at the same time, he also wanted to see the big picture:

Well, actually I never really intended to become an administrator. I was satisfied in the classroom teaching, and just over a period of time I had a lot of people encourage me to go back and get my masters degree and so I went back and got that and after I got that masters, my supervisor came to me with an opportunity. I met a number of folks who encouraged me to go back and get my specialist degree in administration and that's how I got into the area of administration. I guess a desire to be able to see the other side of the coin. I had been in the education field as a teacher; yet, I wanted to gain a more global view of education and moving into administration was an opportunity to see that. It has really changed my overall outlook. I never saw it as being what it is and it gave me an opportunity to see it.

Susie reported that her supervisor encouraged her to go into administration because she had a desire for a quality education for all students:

I think that because I'm a people person and I care for teachers and students, I was encouraged by my supervisor to go into administration. Also, education to me is the most important aspect of one's life, getting a good education. And as an administrator, I feel that perhaps I can in some way ensure that all students learn and all teachers teach.

Mary said she was encouraged by co-workers and other administrators, adding:

They kept encouraging me to go forward. My colleagues and co-workers continued to encourage me to go into administration. My former principal felt that that I would make a great administrator, so she encouraged and guided me in that direction.

James acknowledged he was encouraged to go into administration by his principal, stating, "I was encouraged by the principal because I was always looking for ways to do things better. I believe it was my desire for improvement that led him to guide me toward an administrative assignment." Jerry said he was encouraged by friends and fellow staff members,

and explained further by saying, "Everyone kept telling me that I should go into administration. I thought about it and after much encouragement from friends and co-workers, I decided to go back to school to get certified. I'm glad that I did."

Roberta said she also was encouraged by her principal to go into administration:

I was encouraged by the principal to go into administration. I think that when I first looked at it that it was a vehicle to do some of the things that I wanted to do, to help other teachers, and to help kids. I didn't do it for money that was for sure. If I had, I would not have gone into education.

Judy said she entered administration after her major professor encouraged her to enter the field. She gave details:

I started taking graduate courses and my lead professor started talking to me and he said "You know the field of administration is open and there is a need for administrators." I became very interested and I decided to go into education leadership. Another one is that I felt like I could make a difference. I feel like I have excellent leadership skills. It was out of a desire of wanting a challenge and making a difference in how our schools are managed and how children learn.

Fred simply stated, "My academic advisor encouraged me to go into teaching and other people encouraged me to go into administration and I went from there."

The third theme to emerge for entering into administration was that of better pay. Three participants cited finances as their motivational factors for entering administration. Larry said, "I wanted to further my education. I actually wanted to do it just to get a bigger stipend as a teacher. I've always had a love for kids. That's why I got into education."

Maggie admitted, "There was always the money issue." She also reported, "I was encouraged by a principal to pursue this administrative avenue." Charles cited money as a motivational factor, explaining:

Well to be honest with you, money was one of those factors, because as a classroom teacher we always manage to make it. We were still able to buy a house. We were still able to buy a car, but it wasn't the house we wanted. It wasn't the car we wanted. But we did those things because we needed those things. But money motivated me to go to the next level. Because I figured that we have in administration, because that's where the money was at the time. I was told by a principal in education that's where the money is. I think the money factor and the desire to be an effective principal.

### *Internal Motivational Factors*

Following are the findings of the internal factors that motivated these educators to become public school administrators. Two themes emerged from the interviews with the study participants. They were: the desire to make a difference and that of a calling.

The first theme involved the desire “to make a difference.” Fifteen of the participants cited the desire to make a difference as their internal motivational factor for leadership. Larry expressed wanting more opportunity for students, saying, "I knew I could do better . . . give kids a better opportunity to go onto bigger and better things. I thought I could help the kids since I come from a similar background.”

Elaine said she considered she could have a greater impact on students as an administrator:

Well, I felt like I could have even a greater impact on students than I had had. I know you only get to serve so many students when you're in the classroom. And I thought, maybe, I could broaden my scope. Then, too, I like learning. I like to learn everyday.

Robert expressed a strong belief in public education and a desire to move it forward:

Well, I guess a desire to help people. I guess that is one of the things that motivated me to help people by making their lives easier and one way we can do that as educators is in the area of education. In our job as administrators, it is a very important job! In addition to that, I also have a desire to help move public education forward because I believe in it.

Fred stated he had “a desire to motivate kids to achieve greater academic success and prepare them for the future.” Cathy said she wanted to reach more students and elaborated:

Well, to be honest I was kind of reluctant to leave my classroom and come into administration. I am a student advocate and a teacher advocate. I love working with the students and the teachers. I felt like I could reach more students but I could help more teachers at the same time being in administration. So, that is where I am at.

Jerry acknowledged he wanted to supervise and develop the effectiveness of the building level staff:

I just felt that being a seasoned veteran teacher, I could go to the next level and start to supervise teachers as well as work with a broader range of building level staff. I felt that I could lend to the profession by effectively training teachers and increasing their overall classroom efficiency.

Susie pointed out that she wanted to help struggling students:

I have seen many young people who came out of high school not prepared. I wanted to make sure all students could read, all students could write, and think critically. My desire was to help those students who were struggling.

Helen described that she wanted to have a broader impact on students and staff:

The internal factor I would have to say had to do with wanting a broader impact on the outcomes of learning. And as an administrator not only am I impacting students, I'm impacting teachers and it's a broader impact.

Edna also expressed the desire to make a bigger impact on public education by stating:

I guess trying to make a difference still in a larger scope. You know as a teacher, you're just looking in your classroom, but I think that I was looking for something more. I think that I knew within my heart that I just didn't just want to be in the classroom, I wanted to do something more and make a bigger impact. And, I think that's what drove me to make that step into administration and to become an administrator.

Judy stated that her motivation was a passion for helping others:

Well, I've always had a passion for helping others and I've always had this desire to see if I could get into the schools to make a difference because I could see where there were some areas of need when I was teaching school.

Maggie stated that "becoming an administrator was the fulfillment of a lifelong dream of helping a larger number of students to be successful." Mary admitted that she wanted to be part of the decision making process. She shared:

Well I think that I had reached a point in my teaching career where I felt a strong need for change. And after reading *Who Moved my Cheese*, I felt like it was time for me to be in a position where I could make some major decisions. I felt that as a classroom teacher I could say something, but by being an administrator, I could be part of some major decisions.

James reported that the desire to "help improve the quality of life for others" was the internal factor that motivated him to become a public school administrator." He explained:

The factor that influenced my decision to enter the area of administration was the kids. It should always be about the kids. Our students come from a diverse background. Many have less than ideal situations at home. I wanted to show them that by getting an education they could improve their quality of life from their present situation. Education is the key.

Charles revealed that his motivation was the desire to be effective:

My motivation was the desire to be an effective principal. Because a lot of the principals that I saw as a classroom teacher, in my opinion, I didn't think they were effective. I said to myself, "Now if that's what it takes to be a principal, surely I can be effective." So that's what motivated me to go into administration.

Richard stated, "Personally, you always want to improve. I always strive to do a little bit better and in the classroom you are limited by how far you can go."

The second theme to emerge was that of a "calling." Two participants cited this as being their internal motivational factors for leadership. Harry acknowledged "a calling" as the motivation for his entering into administration and continued by illustrating:

I was asked "Why did you want to become a principal?" and my answer to them has always been "Because somebody did it for me." If feel like me being a principal, I am paying back the time and effort that people in my days when I was being brought up...I feel like I am paying back a debt that I owe the people who gave me a chance to get on the right track. You know, and I just feel like administration is a job that somebody has to do. It's not anything that you do because you want to do it. Its something like...I believe...like a calling. Either you got the ability or you don't.

Roberta's spoke of her path to administration and how it led her to follow her inward desire:

As a classroom teacher I was always trying to help others. I just had a spirit of having new ideas and wanting to try new things and taking on challenges and loving the kids that I taught. I always taught in the inner-city, quote, and areas of need. It was like an inward desire. It was like it was my calling.

### *Summary*

The African American participants revealed they became public school administrators because they had a desire to do something else, they were encouraged by others, or they had a desire for better pay. The internal factor that motivated these educators to become administrators was a desire to make a difference for the students and an opportunity to fulfill a calling.

## *Research Question #2*

What are the barriers and challenges African American educators face when entering administration?

### *External Barriers and Challenges*

Following are the findings regarding the external factors (barriers and challenges) that the study's participants faced when entering the area of administration. Three themes emerged from the interviews conducted: no barriers, discrimination, and coursework requirements.

The first theme was “no barriers.” Nine participants reported that they encountered no barriers when entering administration. Maggie, when asked about barriers and challenges to becoming an administrator, stated “No, I didn’t have any.” Elaine, when asked if she faced any barriers and challenges, stated, “I did not personally. And if I had paid attention to what had happened to other people, I may have been discouraged.” Helen acknowledged, “No I can’t say that I have had any barriers or obstacles to get into administration. It was rather smooth.” After stating that he did not face many barriers and challenges, Robert elaborated:

Well, actually I did not and have not encountered too many challenges as far as getting into administration or moving from job to job. I haven’t encountered that many barriers. The challenges as far as getting into administration or as operating as an administrator I guess having to communicate your vision or goal for your particular school or organization and having people buy into it is probably one of the biggest challenges that I currently face and have faced in the past. But just getting into administration, I have not encountered very many barriers but once I got into it just being able to achieve certain goals. You know, just being able to have people to buy into your vision; I think that is a huge challenge.

Edna asked for clarification, “Outside barriers to get into the actual position?” and then answered, “Personally, no as far as getting the actual position, I don’t think so.” Susie said, “Actually, I can’t think of any barriers because I was told what I needed to do.” Cathy also reported no barriers and credited the Leadership 21 program, saying, “No, I did not encounter any barriers in becoming an administrator--after I became an administrator. But, I went through

the Leadership 21 program and really there were no barriers. It was a good program." James simply stated, "The barriers and challenges are in the mind."

Charles related his response about barriers and challenges and further detailed his path, saying:

I really didn't encounter any barriers. My challenge and it really wasn't a challenge was the process that I had to go school to get my administration degree. So that was a decision that I just had to do. But once I obtained that degree, I knew in my mind it wasn't going to happen over night. I think I had the right mind set. I always believed through my life there is a season or a time for everything. And I always waited my time and I knew that if I worked hard enough and long enough and committed myself to the job that one day--and on top of that have everything ready and in place--that one day, I would be given my opportunity. And when that opportunity came, just be ready to accept it and move on. So I didn't have any barriers. I have no regrets right now in my life.

The second theme that emerged was "discrimination." Six participants cited they faced discrimination as a barrier to becoming an administrator. Mary said she felt she was the victim of racial discrimination, explaining:

I don't think there were any obstacles in me becoming an administrator. I felt that at times I was discriminated against. I felt that I was highly qualified and even more qualified than the individuals who were selected or already in the position. I felt that I was not selected because of my race.

Jerry said he felt discriminated against because of race and gender. He added:

I had the false illusion that probably I could go right into administration, but it didn't happen that way. Another thing was being given an opportunity. In fact, I had to leave the system because I felt I really wasn't being given a chance to show what I could do. So I met with the superintendent of the school system where I was at and asked the question, "Well, do I have to be a female and White in order to be an administrator?" I felt that race and gender were factors. I was being looked over.

Harry gave a lengthy response about racial discrimination:

Another thing that held me back was simply the fact that I am a Black man. You know, a lot of times as bad as it seems, society looks at you and says, "Because you are a Black man . . . you are really not capable of doing certain jobs." And I think that was a barrier for me because when I would go in the door for the interview, I think people had already drawn their opinion about me. They were looking at my outside appearance and not looking at the content of my character. They did not know what I was capable of doing.

Roberta reported feeling gender discrimination was a barrier, stating:

Yes, the process, not only the requirements of the degree at the university, but also being able to take the necessary classes in the necessary order and the school system changing and creating a method by which you become an administrator through the system. And, basically it was a lot of men in administration. The support system was not as strong at the time for women to get into administration.

Judy reported both racial and gender discrimination as being barriers to her entrance into administration:

Well, as an African-American woman I had some barriers, because I had been asked to go into administration, and of course I had an interest in going into administration. And after I had been a principal for 2 years, all of a sudden I was told that I would have to go back into the classroom. And I was in total disagreement with that. But at that time. African-Americans had been hired in this school system and there was not a strong push to get African-American women into the school system. I felt that during those years that they just wanted men.

Fred stated, "One thing is my skin color, being a Black male. It ain't that many Black males in education; now it looks like they're looking for female minority."

The third theme that emerged was "coursework requirements." Two participants cited the coursework requirements as being a barrier to becoming an administrator. Richard stated, "I guess the hardest thing for me was when I was working on my master's. It wasn't so difficult from the standpoint of the material--it was time management." Larry reported, "The barriers I encountered involved just some real challenging classes but nothing because of my gender or my race that I can recall."

### *Summary*

The majority of the African American participants (nine) reported they encountered no barriers or challenges when entering administration. The barriers and challenges that the other administrators faced when entering administration were gender and racial discrimination and the coursework requirements.

### *Research Question #3*

What are the formal and informal support mechanisms for African American administrators in predominately Caucasian school districts?

#### *Formal Support Mechanisms*

Following are the findings regarding the formal support mechanisms of African-American administrators. Four themes emerged from the interviews that were conducted. They were: professional organizations that provided support, formal support mechanisms that provided no support, the new administrator group/academy provided by the school district that provided support, and no formal support mechanisms.

The first theme involved professional organizations as formal support mechanisms that provided support. Eight participants cited this as a formal support mechanism. Robert said he belonged to several professional organizations that provided formal support. He elaborated:

Yes, if you are talking about professional organizations of which I am affiliated with the High School Principal's Association, along with the National Association of Secondary School Principals. I am still associated with the Tennessee Association of Middle School Principals and there are a number of those type organizations that I am affiliated with.

Harry stated, "Yes, I have the NASSP and I get newsletters from them all the time and the County Secondary Principal's Association." Maggie acknowledged belonging to the "County Education Association, Tennessee Education Association, and National Education Association" and then added, "It acts as a union for educators." Helen said her formal support mechanism was the Principals Association. She added details:

The Principals Association, that's the organization that I'm referring to, have monthly meetings and we come in and information is disseminated. Our coordinator meets with us. But we also work on things--we discuss, we support, we network with each other.

Edna said she was a member of several organizations that provided support:

I'm a member of County Education Association, Tennessee Education Association, and National Education Association I guess. I think my membership for National Association of Secondary School Principals (TASSP) is current; I had a membership with them. There is not a lot right now, but I'm thinking about this year looking into more

professional organizations. It's just nice to know that I have that organization as a support if I need it. Right now I haven't reached into their resources, I guess, to see what they can provide for me.

Judy said she strongly believed in membership in professional organizations:

Well in some ways they do. Because any time you go into administration, or a classroom teacher, or whatever job you hold, you do need to have adequate staff development activities and professional growth activities. I'm a strong advocate that you do have to be a member of professional organizations. You have to be an active participation member.

Fred responded, "I belong to the National Education Association, Phi Delta Kappa (PDK), and the National Association of Secondary School Principals." Richard related, "Professionally, you should belong to an organization that represents your particular line of work."

The second theme to emerge was a "formal support mechanism that provided no support." Four study participants reported that their formal support mechanism provided no support. James stated, "I belong to several groups; however, I do not find that to be as important as family. I read journals to find out what is happening."

Jerry stated he felt that the professional groups did not provide support:

They each have their own, but as far as being connected with them, I'm really not. I belong to the organization but as far as support, I can't say that there is a real association where if I'm having a problem, I can go to one of these groups. That's not the case.

Roberta admitted that she preferred the support of colleagues over professional organizations, saying:

Because of the dynamics of what is going on in our school system, the support is there with your colleagues; but, I think that the real one that has helped me so much is mentoring and having two or three people whom you can call on and depend on to help you or tell you, keep you up with things and share with you how they do things. That has helped a lot.

Cathy also said she had no confidence in the professional groups' ability to provide support. She acknowledged:

Personally, no I don't feel like they do. Pretty much it is about joining the National Association of Secondary School Principals. That's pretty much the only thing I have ever joined and then my name was spelled wrong on the certificate and I didn't get but

two of the magazines. There needs to be either a network or we need to have some training.

The third theme to emerge was the new administrator group/academy that provided support. Three study participants reported this as being a formal support mechanism. Elaine's formal support mechanism was the new administrator's group. She recalled, "Yes, I think for new administrators, you know the new administrator's group that you're in and now they do have with the state of Tennessee, you're working on your Tennessee Academy for School Leaders (TASL) training." Mary also said her formal support mechanism was the new principals' academy. She added:

I think that the new principal's academy, that is supposed to function like a support group. We meet once a month for a couple of hours and we ask questions and have discussions about administrative issues.

Charles said that the new formal support mechanism served as a mentor for him. He explained:

I think that that [the new administrators group] served as a mentoring group to me. At least, it's a design organization and it allows principals in that group to have shared discussions. And I think that only through those groups are you able to know there are other people who have problems just like you.

The fourth theme to emerge was "no formal support mechanisms." Two study participants reported that they had no formal support mechanism. Susie, when asked if she had a formal support mechanism, stated, "I don't think so. The district should provide as much support as needed." Larry answered the question with, "No, there is not a group that I belong to but I have people whom I trust to get advice and information from."

### *Informal Support Mechanisms*

Following are the findings regarding the informal support mechanisms of African American administrators. Three themes that emerged from the interviews that were conducted. They were: family, friends, and colleagues as informal support mechanisms.

The first theme involved the “family as the informal support mechanism.” Seven study participants reported that their family was an informal support mechanism. One of Richard’s informal support mechanisms was his wife. He explained, saying, “My family has been very supportive. My wife has supported me since day one. She pushed me before I pushed me.” Robert’s wife was also very supportive of his endeavors:

My wife is very, very supportive otherwise I would not have been able to make it as far as I have in this business because it is very, very difficult on the family. I am gone a lot and the school takes up a lot of my time and I invest a lot of time in my education; just preparation for the job and things like that. I am constantly at things like that. She has been very, very supportive and I have that as well.

James stated concisely, “The most important support is family.” Jerry agreed, saying, “My family is my informal support group. And that is, initially dealing with my immediate family, my wife and kids, and then extending that to my brothers and sisters.” Susie extended her informal support mechanism to include both faculty and her children. She added:

There are teachers that you kind of connect with. They will say “School is a lot better since you’ve been here” and to me that’s support. Family...they were encouraging...my kids...my daughters; they would always say “You can do it Mama.” That was always an incentive, even when I felt like I was so overwhelmed.

Charles concurred that his informal support mechanism was his family:

My family support has always been there. I told you that one of my motivations for coming into this business was for the money. So, I got to keep my wife happy. My wife has been a big cheerleader in that process. She supports my long hours that I spend on the job.

Judy said her biggest support came from her husband and children. She illustrated how her family helped, saying:

Sometimes it helps to have somebody you can share a thought with. My husband has been a strong support system for me. I mean I could not have accomplished a lot of these things without his help. A number of times my children and my husband have come over and helped me to set up my class room or to help me set up the school I’m in.

The second theme that emerged was “friends as the informal support mechanism.” Four participants cited friends as being their informal support group. Larry’s informal support mechanism included friends that he trusted. He expounded:

I have a lot of friends in education and a lot of them I went to school with. I have a lot of other friends that I trust and can confide in. Any time I have a situation, I can always call on my Mama and my sisters, and they've always been there. My wife and kids are always there. I feel as though I have a solid foundation.

Roberta stated, "I have friends who live in other cities and they seem to always be two or three steps ahead of us in everything. It's amazing." Fred also credited his friends as being his informal support group. He spoke of receiving encouragement and noted, "My friends give me encouragement you know, as far as staying in there. They encourage me not to give up, you know. They always ask me how I'm doing on my job, especially the minister."

Elaine acknowledged that her friends were her main support mechanism. She added, "A lot of times they will say, I don't know how you do that. How do you make it?"

Richard's other support mechanism were also friends. He admitted, "I have lots of friends in education. If I've a question to ask, I'll call someone on the phone." Robert said his friends were very supportive of his endeavors as well. He described his personal sounding board:

As far as an informal support mechanism, as I have said, there are folks that I consider friends that I can call on. I can call on an individual who I consider a mentor and a friend. I can call and run a situation by her at anytime and I feel like that information won't be revealed in any way and that has helped me in any number of situations just as a sounding board.

The third theme that emerged was "colleagues as the informal support mechanism." Six participants reported having colleagues as their informal support group. Mary said she relied upon former classmates as an informal support mechanism:

There are administrators that I went to school with that I can call. I feel comfortable calling any middle school and say how do you do this or why do I need to do this. Every body I have called, they have extended themselves and said "If you have a question, feel free to call me."

Cathy acknowledged that she relied on colleagues for informal support:

That would be my two retired principals. That would be other principals that I know that have been principals for a while. It's not necessarily Black principals--just principals I have known for a while and have worked with. You can't do formal mentoring. You have to have a relationship or a rapport and if it is not there, you can't force it.

Harry stated his informal support mechanism also involved his formal principals. He explained:

Yes, I did have formal principals and I still communicate with them. I still communicate with a formal principal who is now the superintendent of schools. I know that I can count on him to give me a straight answer.

Maggie acknowledged she had a strong informal support mechanism that included colleagues, saying, "I have a very strong support system through colleagues of the school system. We support each other mentally as well as advising each other on different issues and concerns."

Helen said her informal support mechanism was also built around current administrators. She added:

I am personal friends with current administrators and we have regular conversations about some of the challenges and what's going on in each of our schools and responses to it. Some of my friends are administrators in schools where we share children. The kids rotate. They got them this month and we got them next month. My support mechanism is built around administrators who are in schools just like mine. In our urban settings we share ideas, great things that are going on, things of course that are challenges, planning, and how to address it.

Edna admitted she relied on colleagues for informal support:

As far as friends, I would say more like colleagues, co-workers have been very supportive in me going back to school as far as me getting this educational specialist degree recently as well as just with this overall position. Because I think that it is somewhat of a new position and yes they have been supportive in many ways.

### *Formal Support From the School System*

Following are the findings regarding the support from the school system for new African American administrators. Two themes emerged from the interviews that were conducted. They were: a school system that could have been more supportive and a school system that was supportive.

The first theme involved "a school system that could have been more supportive." Of the participants, 10 reported that the school system could have been more supportive. Mary said she believed there should have been opportunities for her to perform administrative tasks in the

building prior to being selected as an administrator. She elaborated by saying, "Yes, I think that they could. First of all for those wanting to be administrators, there should be opportunities in their school for them to perform administrative tasks to see if this is what they want to do." James stated, "In the new class they just gave information. The system has to do more to be supportive of the new administrator." Charles answered by acknowledging, "Yes, there is always room for improvement. I guess the system could have done more, but I guess at that time that wasn't one of those things that was high on the list." Harry cited the need for a formal mentoring program:

In hindsight, I moved here from another school system and they could have paid for my transfer to this area. We have a formal mentoring program for new teachers and we also need to have a formal mentoring program for new administrators. It needs to be formal. I do it now and how I would do it as a building level administrator but we need a formal mentoring program.

Maggie said she thought "There should be more "situational" training" and Roberta stressed the need to give administrators tools to do the job, saying:

If you want someone to do a job well, then you need to tell them. And you need to give them tools to help them, whether it's mentoring or like now--we have the new principal's academy. It would have been fantastic to have that a long time ago, because then you're not just out there.

Helen expressed she was glad there were new training programs in place. She explained:

I would say yes. They have something in place now, the administrative internship. I think that would have been more of a shadowing kind of experience. I felt like I was, kind of like when you first go into teaching. My first year in teaching, I didn't feel like my undergrad prepared me for what it really was like. I went into an urban setting and it was just like you were put in the fire. And it was the same kind of experience. You rely on other people to learn and grow until you arrive.

Judy stated, "I think that they were supported; but the first two years, I needed more support. I had some support, but I needed more."

Fred admitted he felt that he could have been supported by being selected for administration earlier than he was. He shared:

One of the downfalls is that I had to wait 4 or 5 years before I got an administrator's job and now people are just going over me. Because of the lack of Black male

administrators, they should have picked them out. I think that the principal could have done more as far as setting down with me and telling me this is this and going step by step by step.

Cathy suggested, "I think I should have had more help filling out the forms and telling me things I really shouldn't do and some of this stuff has been a total waste of time."

The second theme to emerge was "a school system that was supportive." Seven study participants reported being in a supportive school system. Robert said he felt he had good support from the school system:

I feel like for the most part I have been supported as an administrator. I don't know that I would be where I am today if I had not had a good support system because I have occupied quite a few jobs and they have been pretty high profile jobs. I think there has been a certain level of support there.

Richard noted, "I think county makes special effort for new administrators with the new administrator's academy that I am going to take part in." Larry added, "The school system's new administrator's academy is a very good program...it's been good. You learn a lot." Elaine acknowledged, "I received a great deal of support and I think it was almost like a honeymoon period. I think they did a pretty good job of support."

Jerry said he also believed the school system was supportive and it provided all the essential administrative training. He shared some special circumstances:

I think my transition coming into this school, I think they did all that they could, and I'm going to tell you why. I came in late, school had already started. So basically, I ended up getting a lot of one-on-one training. For the most part they made sure I got some essential training that I needed.

Susie stated, "We went through the new administrators training, which was very beneficial. Sometimes it's sort of like on-the-job training; you learn as you go." Edna answered, "I think they did a good job. And, it might be because there was so many of us last year. They offered the support and they knew that we needed it."

## *Summary*

The formal support mechanisms for African American administrators in predominately Caucasian school district were professional organizations and the new administrator's group/academy. The informal support mechanisms were family, colleagues, and friends.

### *Research Question #4*

Do African Americans perceive their training, formal and informal, as being different from that of their Caucasian colleagues?

### *Perceived Differences in Training*

Following are the findings regarding perceived differences in training. Two themes emerged from the interviews that were conducted. They were: no difference in training and no difference in training but differences in networking and placement.

The first theme involved "no difference in training." Of the participants, 11 reported perceiving no difference in training. Charles related his experience with training by pointing out:

I think education is now, doesn't have any color. Because I think that the problems that we are experiencing are pervasive. A long time ago when you had segregation, you--man, have had problems that were designated only to those poor schools. But now, and I want to say even before this *No Child Left Behind* business came on board, but due to integration itself, the spotlight has been shined on those school that have a minority population of students

Richard simply stated, "I haven't so far, but I'm new in administration" when asked if he noticed a difference in training. Larry admitted, "I really don't know. The only thing I can think of is that I received the same information that they received." Robert noted that the difference for him was in the amount of effort that he gave, explaining:

No, I guess the answer is no. The reason I say no...is well, I guess I say yes and no. In some ways it is the same and in other ways it is different. I say that because I have always tried to just not go 100% but to give 200% and if the system requires me to take one course in--say for instance, special education for one workshop, I won't stop there, but I will go on and take numerous others in order to make sure my skills are not just equal but superior to someone else's. So, the answer is yes and no.

James acknowledged, “There were some differences in the past; however, that is not so now.” Jerry stated, “Not really; because when you start to look at that, it’s going to be individualized. I don’t think it will be individualized by race, but more so by your surroundings.” Harry said he believed that everyone got the same training. He shared:

No, I think maybe, depending on the instructor, some of them might make a little more effort to give our White counterpart a little better, but I think on the whole, there is no difference. In an interview, there might be a little difference. When we go to the trainings, we get the same training. We all went to the same school, got the same in-services, and got the same course work--so I feel it is the same.

When asked if she thought there was a difference in training, Helen basically stated, “No I don’t.” Edna explained, “No--because for me, I went to predominantly White schools, so I don’t see a difference because we went through the same thing. And, not for the training, I don’t.” Judy stated simply, “No I don’t think so.” Cathy observed, “No, I really personally feel like mine was more intense because of who I had as mentors. There was pretty much nothing that she did not allow me to do.”

The second theme to emerge from was that of “no difference in training but difference in networking and placement.” Four study participants brought up the importance of networking. Elaine detailed her perceptions of training, saying:

I really don’t think so. I just see myself as having as much of an opportunity. Maybe because of that networking that some people are able to do. More administrators are Caucasian. Maybe it’s because they have a larger network to pull from.

Susie related that she, too, thought the difference in training was in the sharing of information. She added:

Yes, you know that decisions are made a lot of times with our White counterparts behind closed doors and as African Americans, we’re not privy to that information. We all got the same training but there was also additional information passed around in these places and since we were not there, we had no way of knowing.

Fred stated “I’ve had to work and work and work and it seems like our colleagues just boom, boom, boom, that’s it, 1 or 2 years. As soon as they got their degree, they were in there.”

Mary detailed her perceived placement differences by saying:

I think that the training has been the same; but, I feel that a lot of issues in the training have not been addressed. For example, where do we put our African American administrators? I'm discovering that most of our African American administrators are placed in places with a large African American population. A lot of African American administrators are not placed in our affluent schools. So, I feel like the issues of race and qualifications are not thoroughly addressed.

Two responses from the participants did not fit into a theme. Roberta stated, "In some respect, it depends upon the time that you come through, with whatever professor was there, and kind of what their mindset was. Sometimes you are limited by that." Maggie deemed, "It was different in that I feel I had more nurturing. I was taught how to be a professional. My instructors took a personal interest in me."

### *Summary*

The majority of the study's participants did not perceive a difference in training. The differences that were reported were not differences in training but a difference in networking opportunities and/or job placement. The African American administrators said they felt they were left out of the networking loop and the sharing of information.

### *Ancillary Information*

This section consists of material that was not given directly as answers to the research questions but, nevertheless, contains information that is important in understanding the African American administrators' points of view.

### *What Do You Like About Your Job?*

The following are findings regarding what the study's participants liked about their jobs. Two themes emerged from the interviews. They were: helping students by making a big impact and having no typical day.

The first theme involved helping kids and making a big impact. Of the participants, 13 cited this as what they liked about their job. Larry explained, "I like the fact that I can help kids who want to do better with their lives. I like the fact that I can assist a lot of good kids."

Mary's response was, "I tell you what I really like--I love the kids. I absolutely love seeing the children and listening to them. I love trying to help them change and shape their behavior."

James stated, "I like to see the children grow and I also like to teach them how to think." Susie responded by saying, "I like students. I really like students. I really truly care about the students." Charles cited relationship building as being an important aspect of his job. He added:

I've always liked what I do. I love my job through and through. I like building relationships. I want to build relationship among students and with faculty through expectation and through celebrations.

Harry enthusiastically stated, "Relationships! Relationships are important to me and I cannot stress that enough." Cathy said she also enjoyed establishing relationships, adding:

I like being able to be with the kids. To talk to the kids and go to the classroom is my favorite thing. New friendships you form...I like that. Even old friendships that you already knew. Just being able to calm an irate parent down or just trying to get a breakthrough to working with a child.

Roberta ardently spoke, saying:

I love my kids. I love the kids. It was a real challenge for me on this level. I love kids, I love people, and I know this is really something that I am called to do. I just love it.

Maggie stated, "I feel like I can make a difference in the lives of young people." Edna said she liked the challenge that the kids offered:

I like the kids, I really do. I think that they bring you challenges every day. I think that I try to be an advocate for them as far as being supportive of getting them through these middle school years. Why come to school if you don't like the kids? Every day it's something new.

Judy said she liked "working with children and parents, I just love it. Any time I can get into a school and get everybody working together and get everybody involved, it's good." Fred first reported that he liked "the students" and then added, "I like cooperating with the students

and getting to know the students and encouraging them to press on to better academic standards and don't give up on their goals." Helen said she felt that she was really making a difference.

She elaborated:

First to speak from a broad aspect, I would have to say that I really feel like I make a difference here. I really feel like I'm having a positive impact on what's going on here at my school. Also, I like being able to impact learning through working with teachers.

The second theme that emerged from the study was that there was "no typical day." Two of the study's participants reported that this was what they like about their job. It seemed, at first, that Robert gave a confusing answer by stating, "The thing I like about the job is also what I dislike about the job." However, he went on to explain:

This particular aspect about the job...I like it and I dislike it. I love not having a typical day. That is one of the things about administration...you go in each day and each day is different. You never know what is going to happen and so that represents a challenge for me and that makes it exciting.

Jerry said he also liked the fact that "Every day brought about a different challenge." He described:

The one thing I like about it is that every day is different. And it brings about different challenges. I like the fact of working with this age group as opposed to the elementary level because the potential is greater for these kids to have an impact now.

Two individual responses from the study's participants did not fit into a theme. Richard stated what he liked about his job was, "I get to see the whole picture." Elaine confessed, "I do like the fact that I have freedom that I didn't have in the classroom. I'm in charge of my time. I have the freedom of setting my own schedule."

### *What Do You Dislike About Your Job?*

Following are the findings regarding what the study's participants reported pertaining to job dissatisfaction. Four themes emerged from the responses received from the participants. They were: discipline and control issues, the large volume of paperwork, bureaucracy and red tape, and parental issues.

The first theme involved discipline and control issues. Five of the study's participants cited this as what they disliked about their job. Richard said he did not like the large volume of discipline referrals:

I think the thing that's created the most problem for me...it's not a major problem...is discipline issues. It's the referrals, and it's not always suspension, you have so many in a row. It's like once you get caught up, then it starts all over again.

Larry admitted, "I dislike cafeteria duty...definitely cafeteria duty. I don't like to always deal with the negative when it comes to discipline." Susie said, "All those discipline referrals on my desk...I hate it! I'm a very firm disciplinarian but sitting down and putting discipline into the computer is very time consuming." Helen agreed, saying, "What I dislike about it is the amount of time spent on discipline. I'd rather be in the classroom observing." Fred acknowledged, "What I dislike is monitoring bus duty and dealing with the large number of discipline referrals."

The second theme that emerged from the interviews involved "the large volume of paperwork." Four of the study's participants reported this as causing job dissatisfaction. Elaine spoke of her need to clear her desk at the end of the day. She reported:

It's difficult for me not to be able to bring things to closure. And that's something that I really had to learn. Sometimes you just have to walk away from your desk and leave it. It will just wait until the next day.

Mary cited, "The unpleasant task is that there is so much paperwork. The paperwork is phenomenal, especially the paperwork on special education." Maggie wholeheartedly agreed, stating, "The paperwork!!! Having to deal with so many discipline problems and not being able to get to know the "good" students." Cathy, too, cited paperwork and meetings as things she disliked, saying:

Paperwork and all these meetings. It is absolutely ridiculous. I am not in my building. Two weeks ago I was gone for 2 and 1/2 days and then the following Monday. It is ridiculous. And you are getting the same information from the same people. They fax it to you, they email it to you, and they mail it to you so I am getting it from every direction.

The third theme involved “bureaucracy and red tape.” Two participants cited this as what they disliked about their job. Robert summed it up, saying, “If, I had to pick out something I did not like about the job, it would be the bureaucracy and the red tape of getting things done.”

Roberta agreed, noting that “Bureaucracy, all the channels and all the hoops that you have to jump through, it’s amazing. That is the part that I do not like and that’s the truth.”

The fourth theme that emerged involved “parental issues.” Two participants reported this as a job dislike. Charles concern was about unrealistic parents:

The part I don’t like about my job is that now we have so many kids with so many needs that I think the parents become unrealistic. Those kinds of things, when we get into legal issues, those kinds of things I don’t like about the job.

Edna confessed that she found she disliked dealing with unsupportive parents. She explained further:

It’s not a dislike, but I think the dealings with the public. A lot of time with parents that are not supportive of what you’re trying to do. It’s not that I dislike them or that I dislike that part of my job, it’s just that I would think on the other side of not being in this position, that things would be a little bit different. But, what I’m seeing is just, I don’t know, a little bit unexpected in some aspects because, I guess that when I was growing up, you know, parents listened to what the teacher had to say, listened to what the principal had to say. Now it’s not that way. It’s not that I don’t like dealing with the public, but it’s just a difference so to speak.

Four individual responses by the participants did not fit into a theme. James stated, “The thing that I dislike the most about my job is dealing with experienced teachers who think that they know everything.” Harry said he did not like the amount of time spent in meetings, noting, “I just don’t like meetings. I would rather be at school with the teachers and students than sitting in a meeting.” Jerry confessed he did not like the time requirements of the job. He described:

The thing that I don’t like, if I had to name one in particular, is that it’s time consuming. And when I say that, it robs me of some of my personal time. It takes away from my family time because of the late hours.

Judy responded by saying, “I know you got to have people who have conflict, but I don’t like conflict. I hate conflict.”

## *Serving as Mentors*

Following are the findings regarding serving as formal or informal mentors to another administrator. Three themes emerged from the interviews. They were: availability, shared experiences, and administrators who had not served as mentors.

The first theme involved “availability.” Three study participants cited the time needed to be available as an essential aspect for mentoring. Elaine detailed her mentoring experience:

I haven’t been doing it for long but I do have other administrators to call and ask me about different things. Thought it would have to be set up where there are regular meetings with that person, but almost like having a hot line. Sometimes I feel like I didn’t have enough time to really talk to them because I’m in a position whereas I’m so busy and there is so much they need to know, I feel like they need somebody retired and no longer active in the position.

Charles stated “I served as a mentor, informal mentor. I make myself available to people who won’t mind me making myself available and it’s theirs to accept.” Jerry gave the following thoughts on his mentoring experience:

Yes I have, I glad that you mentioned that. About 5 years ago, I was instrumental in helping start a private school. The person who was hired came in and he was not an administrator. I was assigned as his mentor. I think it’s something we need to fine tune. Not only in terms of mentoring other administrators, but mentoring teachers as well. We need to really look at what’s effective and what not effective and package it so that we could start and not hit and miss with it. I felt that it was a rewarding experience, for him in particular because he was able to see the broader picture. When you’re working in an isolated situation where you are dealing with a small group, it doesn’t give you the same perspective.

The second theme to emerge was “shared experience.” Eight study participants cited this as a function of mentoring. Cathy said she was glad for the opportunity to mentor her assistant and gave details:

Yes, I have [mentored] to my assistant principal because he is new this year. I am able to share experiences with him that I did not know and it helps to make his job and my job a lot easier. He and I worked at together at another school and I am able to tell him how to do some things correctly that I had made a mistake on.

Harry said he served as a mentor so that he could give back to others. He expounded:

I have been a mentor all my life. I was a mentor for other administrators for about the last 10 years. I think I said this earlier. I feel like, again, it is my responsibility to give

back to new administrators like somebody gave back to me and what I think I should have been given as a new administrator.

Roberta declared that she believed in sharing her administrative experiences:

I don't have a problem doing it at all. I always try to remember that I'm not there, but there are questions that I can answer and I can share. I can share things that I come up with to facilitate the job better.

Fred recalled that he had helped new administrators in the building. Robert said he was assigned mentoring responsibility by the school district and added, "For the past several years or so, I have served as a mentor for incoming groups. I have also been formally assigned by the school system as a mentor for one of the Leadership 21 classes."

Helen reported her experience with mentoring by sharing a story about a novice administrator:

I had a teacher, here in the building who became an administrator last year and the transition was particular rough for her. What I would do is just model. Sometimes I would take care of a discipline problem and have her watch. Or a phone call, or a particular parent that was giving her a hard time, and the parent knew me from the previous year. She turned it over to me and I had her come in and watch how I approached that parent. It was the hands-on kinds of things that I tried to do, the how-to. I thought it was very valuable to her and I felt that it was very helpful to her. We had frequent conversations about every aspect of administration.

Susie also recalled her own mentoring assignment:

Yes, there was a young lady who was assigned as an assistant principal in an elementary school and she was having some difficulties. So she would call me frequently and I would talk to her. I think it's important that administrators have mentors because you can feel that you're on an island all alone and don't know who to talk to or who to call. I think it's very important that we mentor our new administrators.

The third theme that emerged was "administrators who had not served as mentors." Six participants said they had not served in a mentorship position.

Larry stated, "No, as a matter of fact, I haven't" when asked if he had served as a mentor. Mary stated, "No, I haven't had the chance to mentor anybody." Likewise, Richard stated, "No, not yet" and Richard echoed the same thing. James responded with "No I haven't" and

Maggie's response to having served as a mentor was “no.” Edna reported that although she had no direct mentoring experience, she did have discussions with her peers. She explained:

Not really, however I do speak to people who were in my cohort and went through the Leadership 21 program with me at The University of Tennessee. We speak every now and then about things that are going on; we may give advice or talk to each other about certain things. But no direct mentoring.

### *Summary of Findings*

This chapter began with the different stories of how these 17 public school building level principals were motivated to enter into the field of administration. How they became administrators was, in their own words, the description of how they experienced different barriers and challenges to becoming administrators and their formal and informal support mechanisms. This chapter concluded with descriptions of their perceptions of training and differences, if any, from that of their Caucasian colleagues. Chapter 5 presents findings, conclusions, and recommendations drawn from interviewing the 17 public school administrators.

CHAPTER 5  
FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

*Introduction*

The number of African American public school students has increased. This student body increase calls for a corresponding increase in public school teachers and administrators. School districts across the country should undertake to determine what factors motivate individuals to become school leaders. To gather information on what motivated African American public school principals to become leaders in educational administration and supervision, I interviewed 17 school administrators in an urban school district in Southern Appalachia.

The purpose of this study was to explore and document the factors that motivated African American public school administrators in an urban school district in Southern Appalachia to become school leaders. This study should be useful in helping to understand the current trend of the decreasing number of African American public school administrators by identifying the determinants that motivated these educators to seek appointments as school administrators. This study gives African American public school administrators a voice to describe their experiences in their own words.

When I began this endeavor, I had concerns that my own experiences as an African American public school administrator would create some biases and possibly compromise the interview process and gathering of information. Because of my experiences and biases, I was concerned that I would guide the interviews inappropriately. Because of these concerns and the potential for skewed interviews, I made an assertive effort and concentrated on remaining objective and allowing the study's participants to relate their stories in their own words with a minimum amount of interference from me.

## *Findings*

The findings of this study have been presented earlier and are summarized here and used to answer to the four research questions that were presented in Chapter 1.

Research Question #1: What are the internal and external factors that motivate African Americans to become public school administrators?

The primary pattern that emerged as to what motivated African American to become public school administrators was to make a difference for the students. Fifteen of the study's participants cited this as the internal motivational factor that influenced their decision to go into administration. The remaining two participants cited their motivation to enter administration as a calling. A strong commitment to African American students' education has been cited as an internal motivational factor for African Americans to enter into administration (Lomotey, 1987).

When asked how they became an administrator, three patterns emerged. Ten of the 17 reported being encouraged by others as the main reason they went into administration. Four of the study's participants said they felt that it was time for a career change or that they wanted to do something different. Three of the study's participants cited better pay as a motivational factor for entering administration.

Research Question #2: What are the barriers and challenges African American educators face when entering administration?

The primary theme that emerged was that there were “no barriers.” Nine of the participants reported that they did not encounter any barriers when entering administration. The second pattern that emerged was discrimination. Six participants cited discrimination (racial and gender) as being barriers or challenges when they entered administration. All but one of the study's participants who reported discrimination as a barrier had been an administrator for approximately 10 years or more. Two participants cited the coursework requirements as a barrier when entering administration. The difference between those study participants who cited “no barriers” and those who cited “discrimination” was the number of years as an administrator

and the number of years in education. All had been in education approximately 25 years or more. From the literature review, the external factors that were barriers and challenges for African American administrators were racism and sexism (Coker, 2003).

Research Question #3: What are the formal and informal support mechanisms for African Americans administrators in predominately Caucasian school districts?

When asked about formal support mechanisms, four patterns emerged. Eight of the participants responded that they had a professional organization as a formal support mechanism. Four of the participants reported that they had a professional organization as a formal support mechanism that provided no support. Three of the study's participants reported that the new administrator group/academy was their formal support mechanism. Two of the participants said they did not have a formal support mechanism.

When asked about informal support mechanisms, three patterns emerged. Seven of the study's participants reported that their family was their informal support mechanism. Six participants responded that colleagues were their informal support mechanism. Four participants cited friends as their informal support mechanism. The informal support mechanism for African American administrators includes families and friends (Hodo-Haley, 1998) and collegial network groups (Ensher, 1997).

Two patterns emerged as to whether the school system could have been more supportive. Ten participants responded that the school system could have more supportive of them as administrators. The remaining seven participants responded that the system was supportive to them as administrators. Because it is becoming increasingly necessary to train competent individuals to fill vacant educational leadership positions (Richard, 2000), the school district must develop training programs to develop these educational leaders (Getty, 1994).

Research Question #4: Do African Americans perceive their training, formal and informal, as being different from that of their Caucasian colleagues?

Two themes emerged as to the participant's responses to perceived difference in training. Eleven of the study's participants reported there were no perceived differences in training. Four participants reported there was no difference in training, but there was a difference in networking and access to information or placement. Two participants' responses did not fit into a theme. Researchers found that the experiences of both African American male and female administrators were significantly linked to race and/or gender (Boothe, 1995; Hobson-Horton, 2000; Pollard, 1997).

### *Ancillary Information*

#### *What Do You Like About Your Job?*

Helping students and making a bigger impact emerged as the primary reason administrators liked their jobs. Thirteen participants cited this as what they liked about their job. Two participants said they liked the fact that there were no typical days. Two other participants' responses did not fit into a theme.

#### *What Do You Dislike About Your Job?*

The participants in the study had dissatisfactions about their jobs. The theme that emerged as the primary dislike of the job was the large volume of discipline referrals. Five of the participants cited this as a dislike. Four participants cited the large volume of paperwork as their job dislike. Two participants said they disliked bureaucracy and red tape and two others disliked parental issues. Responses from four participants did not fit into a theme.

### *Serving as Mentors*

The primary theme that emerged while serving as a mentor was “shared experience.” Eight study participants mentioned this as a function of mentoring. Three participants cited availability as a function of mentoring. Six of the participants in the study had not served as a mentor.

### *Conclusions*

The African American public school administrators reported that the primary motivations for entering into administration were their love of the kids and their desire to make a difference. Only three of the participants cited money as being a motivational factor. Encouragement by others was what propelled most of the participants to move forward with their desire to seek an administrative assignment. Many participants said they faced discrimination and other barriers and challenges when trying to obtain an administrative position. Most of these obstacles have been hurdled and will continue to be overcome because African American public school students need African American public school administrators.

### *Recommendations for the School District*

As a result of this study, I recommend that the school district strive to remove any racial or gender discrimination barriers that were reported in this study and actively recruit and encourage African American educators to enter administration. It is recommended that the school system continue to provide these new administrators with the necessary training through the new principal academy. This group would provide formal district sponsored support by providing the new administrator the necessary tools to perform their duties. The academy would provide needed information, provide situational training, and provide a question and answer forum for new administrators. This group, along with other professional organizations, can be used to provide a school system sponsored formal support mechanism. It is also recommended

that the school system develop an effective mentoring program for new administrators. It is recommended that the mentors be available and willing to develop a relationship based on shared experiences. The study participants reported these as being important to the mentoring program.

By eliminating racial and gender discrimination, continuing the new principals' academy, providing opportunities for membership in professional organizations, and developing a strong effective mentoring program, the school district will ensure that it provides the necessary support to African American Administrators.

The school system can greatly increase the chances of success for African American administrators by examining the administrator selection process. Part of the recruitment/selection process should be the consideration of potential administrators who are motivated to make a difference for the students. Selected administrators should already possess the desired leadership traits

#### *Recommendations for African American Administrators*

It is recommended that African American administrators be thoroughly prepared to face any barriers or challenges they might face when attempting to become public school administrators. It is recommended that African American administrator take full advantage of the formal support mechanisms, principals' academies, and training opportunities that are provided by the school system to increase their potential for success. It is recommended that new administrators work to develop an informal support mechanism of family, colleagues, and friends that can provide encouragement and support as these were cited by interviewees as important to their success. It is recommended that African American administrators seek trusted and respected mentors who are available to facilitate their transition into administration.

#### *Recommendations for Further Research*

As a result of this study, the following recommendations for further research were made:

1. This study should be replicated with a larger number of African American public school administrators from a wider geographic area to explore the possibility that the minority administrators represented in this study experiences are congruent with those of other African American administrators. A quantitative section could be added for analysis of responses by various demographics, such as age, gender, education level and work setting.
2. Because of the small amount of literature on African American women (Allen, 1992; Ramey, 1996; Shakeshaft, 1987; Webb, 1996), it is recommended that more research be conducted in this area to add to the body of knowledge. This study could document the experiences of the African American women administrators who face the difficulty of overcoming dual burdens of racism and sexism.

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## APPENDICES

### APPENDIX A

#### Debriefers' Certification

I, Jean Morgan-Harper served as debriefer for this study, *African American Public School Principals in East Tennessee: Motivation for Leadership*. I met with Joe L. Canada to discuss his impressions and concerns about the interviews as well as any potential biases he noted. In addition, we talked about the redundancy noted in the interviews.

## APPENDIX B

### Auditor's Certification

The audit of Joe L. Canada's interviews with African American public school administrators and what is presented from them in chapter four is complete. I found everything to be accurately represented and the process for determining how to present the results to be sound.

## APPENDIX C

### Informed Consent Form

#### INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD East Tennessee State University

**TITLE;** African American Public School Principals in East Tennessee: Motivation for Leadership

**PURPOSE:**

The purpose of this research study is to explore and document the factors that motivated African American public school administrators in selected school districts in East Tennessee to become school leaders.

**DURATION:**

The subjects' participation in this research study is estimated to be one hour.

**PROCEDURES:**

The method of data collection for this qualitative will be the use of the interview guide and standardized questions. The interview guide will allow the interview to strive for more in-depth discussion of a topic or subject. The interview requires an on sight, verbal, first-hand interaction between subject and researcher. The interviews will be taped and transcribed with the consent of the participants.

**POSSIBLE RISKS/DISCOMFORTS:**

There are no known risks associated with this study for the participants.

**POSSIBLE BENEFITS and/or COMPENSATION:**

Participation in this study is voluntary and there will be no compensation offered for participation. The findings should prove to be useful in helping to understand what motivated African American school principals to enter the field of public school administration.

**CONTACT FOR QUESTION**

If you have any questions, problems or research-related medical problems at any time you may call Joe L. Canada at (XXX) -xxx-xxxx or Dr. Hal Knight at (423) 439-7616. You may call the chairman of the Institutional Review Board at (423) 439-6055 for any questions you may have about your rights as a research subject.

## CONFIDENTIALITY

Every attempt will be made to see that my study results are kept confidential. A copy of the records from this study will be stored at 1504 Ault Road, Knoxville, TN for at least 10 years after the end of this research. The results of this study may be published and/or presented at meetings without naming me as a subject. Although my rights and privacy will be maintained, the Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services, ETSU IRB for non-medical research and research related personnel from the ETSU Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis have access to the study records. My records will be kept completely confidential according to current legal requirements. They will be revealed unless required by law, or as noted above.

## VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION

The nature demand, risks, and benefits of the project have been explained to me as well as are known and available. I understand what my participation involves. Furthermore, I understand that I am free to ask questions and withdraw from the project at any time, without penalty. I understand that I can refuse to answer any question. I have read, or have had read to me, and fully understand the consent form. I sign it freely and voluntarily. A signed copy has been given to me.

My study record will be maintained in strictest confidence according to current legal requirements and will not be revealed unless required by law or as noted above.

SIGNATURE OF VOLUNTEER/DATE

---

SIGNATURE OF INVESTIGATOR/DATE

---

VITA

JOE L. CANADA

Personal Data:      Date of Birth: November 28, 1954  
                         Place of Birth: Robinsonville, Mississippi  
                         Marital Status: Married

Education:            Cameron University, Lawton, Oklahoma;  
                                 General Education, B.S.; 1986

                         University of Tennessee, Knoxville, Tennessee  
                                 Educational Psychology, M.S.; 1995

                         University Of Tennessee, Knoxville, Tennessee  
                                 Educational Leadership and Supervision, Ed.S.; 1997

                         East Tennessee State University, Johnson City, Tennessee;  
                                 Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis, Ed.D.; 2006

Professional  
Experience:            Residential Living Supervisor,  
                                 Knoxville Job Corps, Knoxville, TN  
                                 1993-1994

                         Counselor, Knox County Sheriff Department  
                                 Community Alternative to Prison  
                                 1994-1996

                         Teacher, Austin-East High School  
                                 Knox County Schools, Knoxville, TN  
                                 1994-1997

                         Assistant Principal, Alcoa High School  
                                 Alcoa City Schools  
                                 1997-2000

                         Adjunct Faculty, American Baptist College  
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                                 1998-present

                         Assistant Principal, Fulton High School  
                                 Knox County, TN  
                                 2000-present