



The Institute for Education Leadership
L'institut de leadership en éducation

TRANSITION TO THE ROLE OF PRINCIPAL AND VICE-PRINCIPAL STUDY



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION

The primary goal of this research was to gather quantitative and qualitative evidence from new school administrators¹ about their transitions from teaching to principal or vice-principal in order to inform tri-level system planning and action regarding the factors that facilitate succession planning and talent development, and the transition to those new to the role. The study's main objectives were to:

- gather benchmark and longitudinal data regarding supports for newly appointed vice-principals and principals in Ontario;
- explore newly appointed vice-principals and principals' transition experiences;
- identify the challenges and successes experienced by newly appointed vice-principals and principals;
- identify promising programs and practices; and
- gather recommendations regarding how vice-principals and principals' leadership transitions can be supported.

This research was guided by the following questions:

- What are the challenges and successes that newly appointed principals and vice-principals experience in their transition from teaching to the role of principal and vice-principal?
- How are they supported?
- What are their recommendations for improvement?

METHODOLOGY

Mixed methodology was used to collect quantitative and qualitative data during the 2012-2013 school year in order to provide an in-depth understanding of the newly appointed principals and vice-principals' transitional experiences. A sequential design using (a) an environmental scan, (b) an on-line survey, (c) individual interviews, and (d) focus group interviews was used to gather information about newly appointed vice-principals and principals' succession and transition experiences. Quantitative and qualitative data were derived from 290 survey responses (263 English and 27 French) and follow-up interviews with 42 principals and vice-principals (17 individual interview participants and 25 focus group interview participants).

FINDINGS

The participants' responses and the evidence collected from district school board, Ministry of Education, Institute for Educational Leadership (IEL), and professional association websites confirmed that considerable efforts have been and continue to be made to improve the leadership landscape in Ontario and to achieve high levels of student achievement.

74.9% of the participants reported feeling prepared for their role when they assumed the position

Participants identified many promising programs, particularly at the school district level, that have been initiated with the intention of supporting aspiring and newly appointed vice-principals and principals. The survey data showed that 74.9% of the participants reported feeling prepared for their role when they assumed the position. Their overall responses confirmed the importance of multi-pronged supports as educators prepare for and cross over from teaching to the role of principal or vice-principal. The most helpful pre-role preparation factors were related to the participants' ability to seek out and take advantage of professional learning and mentoring opportunities (95.6%), indicating a strong reliance on personal leadership resources. Opportunities to prepare for the role of principal or vice-principal were also provided by:

- pre-role preparation programs (89.5%);
- in-school principals and vice-principals (88.5%); and
- school districts (83.5%).

Factors supporting leadership learning and growth were related to:

- timely, targeted, and on-going professional development;
- job embedded opportunities for skill development and reflection;
- healthy coaching and mentoring relationships; and
- networks of critical supports.

¹ For the purposes of this study, new school administrators were identified as vice-principals and principals possessing 0-4 years of experience who were promoted directly from a teaching position.

Participants also reported receiving support from a variety of sources after assuming their new role, with the majority of support coming from their immediate supervisors, principal and vice-principal team members, and other principals and vice-principals outside of their schools. With respect to developing leadership practices and capacities, the majority of respondents reported receiving medium levels of support and achieving medium to high levels of growth. Factors supporting these new school principals and vice-principals leadership learning and growth were related to:

- timely, targeted, and on-going professional development that was geared towards their transitional needs and developmental stages;
- job embedded opportunities for skill development and reflection;
- healthy coaching and mentoring relationships; and
- networks of critical supports.

Participants emphasized the importance of “seeing success over time” and achieving personal and school goals that were consistent with their values. They expressed pride in their ability to grow as instructional leaders, support students, staff, and families, and develop and maintain trusting relationships with multiple stakeholders.

The key challenges were related to:

- increased workloads;
- stakeholders’ demands;
- the socio-political and cultural dynamics of their school and district; and
- the social and emotional aspects of the transition.

In addition to their successes, participants identified some factors that challenged their administrative and leadership learning prior to and after assuming their roles as school principals and vice-principals. Pre-role challenges were primarily related to:

- preparation and professional development;
- limited experiential opportunities to bridge teaching and administrative leadership;
- school and district politics; and
- opportunities to discuss the socio-emotional aspects of their transition.

The key challenges experienced after participants became principals or vice-principals were related to adapting to:

- increased workloads;
- stakeholders’ demands;
- the socio-political and cultural dynamics of their school and district; and
- the social and emotional aspects of the transition.

Vice-principals in general, particularly those occupying dual or acting roles, such as teaching and acting vice-principals, reported experiencing additional role overload and ambiguity due to unclear role parameters. These factors increased participants’ transitional stress and strain and limited their ability to achieve personal and professional balance.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The participants made a comprehensive range of recommendations to aspiring and newly appointed principals and vice-principals, Principal’s Qualifications Programs (PQP) providers, district school boards, the Ministry of Education, universities, and principal and vice-principal associations regarding ways in which principals and vice-principals’ transitions can be supported at the personal, professional and institutional levels. These recommendations highlight key areas that can be addressed in order to ensure that new principals and vice-principals are equipped with the personal and professional dispositions, skills and capacities required

to navigate the transition from teacher to principal and vice-principal. The action recommendations that follow build on the participants’ reports and recommendations. They are intended to provide starting points to consolidate and enhance the promising practices that are currently in place and are best addressed through consistent and collaborative dialogue with newly appointed vice-principals and principals, along with coordinated planning and partnerships and concerted action by policy makers, district school boards, professional associations and universities.

ACTION RECOMMENDATIONS

The following action recommendations are made in order to assist policymakers, professional associations, and school districts in developing coherent and systematic approaches to supporting leadership development and capacities:

Clarify Leadership Transitions, Roles, and Working Conditions

Build a clear, detailed, and consistent vision and policy for the transition from teaching to the role of principal or vice-principal that considers the nature of vice-principals and principals' transitions and how these transitions are connected to teacher leadership and to individual, organizational, and student success. Ensure that principals and vice-principals, school districts, the Ministry of Education, professional associations and teacher unions are involved as partners in creating this vision. Provide clear and systematic information to aspiring and newly appointed principals and vice-principals to facilitate understanding of the social and emotional changes that may potentially occur during their specific role transition along with strategies to address these changes. Establish clear parameters regarding the duties and responsibilities of the vice-principal role in order to demystify this leadership position, reduce overload and burnout, and ensure success.

Professional Development

Review and evaluate existing programs and approaches to leadership development both before and after appointment. Identify promising practices, gaps, overlaps, and opportunities and determine areas of responsibilities, e.g., role incumbents, schools, districts, Principal's Qualifications Programs (PQP) providers, professional associations, and Ministry of Education. Collaboratively determine 'must have' skills and capacities for aspiring and newly appointed principals and vice-principals and inform them of the specific professional development supports that will be provided by the Ministry of Education, school districts, and professional associations. Offer problem-based pedagogies as well as timely, targeted, and developmentally appropriate job embedded leadership experiences at the school and/or district levels to provide principal and vice-principal candidates and practicing principals and vice-principals with opportunities to connect research, theory, and practice, along with as a deeper understanding of their role and the leadership and management skills required.

Mentoring and Support

Review and revise existing mentoring programs and structures to ensure that all principals and vice-principals receive formal professional development as mentor-coaches and have a deep knowledge of the social, emotional, and cognitive changes that occur during this transition. Develop a clear conceptual organizer for targeted support for skill and capacity development and create systematic feedback processes that facilitate personal and professional growth and reflection. Initiate mentoring programs well in advance of principal and vice-principal candidates assuming their new role and ensure that all newly appointed vice-principals and principals who have never been vice-principals receive continuous coaching and mentoring beyond year one. Allow newly appointed school principals and vice-principals input into the selection of their mentors along with the ability to change mentors when necessary.

Holistic Approaches to Fitness and Well-being

Support newly appointed principals' and vice-principals' physical, emotional, and mental fitness by regularly monitoring and assessing their duties, responsibilities, and stakeholder demands. Review levels of job demands and stressors on newly appointed principals and vice-principals, and implement programs that encourage and support personal and professional wellness and life balance in order to prevent early burnout, physical illnesses, and mental break-downs.

Feedback Forums and IEL Research Based Focus Group

Offer systematic and scheduled opportunities at provincial, district, and the Ministry of Education levels that allow newly appointed principals and vice-principals to provide transitional feedback so that all education partners are knowledgeable of the newly appointed principals' and vice-principals' successes and challenges. Gather anonymous data from newly appointed principals and vice-principals annually (e.g., surveys, blogs) and present these findings to the IEL for review and revision of the transition process. Construct a research based tri-level focus group consisting of Ministry of Education, district, and principal professional association representatives to collect accurate data on the number of vice-principals and principals who are making the transition from teaching to the role of principal or vice-principal, review transition research, deliver recommendations regarding the transition process, and create an action plan to build on current successful practices. Revisit the process yearly as new data becomes available.

² Fink, D. (2010). *The succession challenge: Building and sustaining leadership capacity through succession management*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

CONCLUSION

International trends in educational administration indicate that school principal and vice-principal roles are becoming increasingly complex and challenging due to local and global reforms, rapid technological and demographic shifts, added levels of accountability, and diminished levels of support². At the same time, the Ontario leadership landscape is changing and will continue to change as vice-principals and principals in English and French language districts continue to retire. While presenting unique challenges, this confluence of individual, systemic, and societal transitions also carries many possibilities for transformation at all levels. This study focused on the transitional experiences of 290 newly appointed principals and vice-principals who were making the direct transitions from teaching to the role of principal or vice-principal. These individuals came into the role believing in their potential to transform schools and that they were prepared to be instructional leaders. They identified many areas of success and growth, indicating that a great deal of work is being done at the school, district, and professional association levels to support and mentor newly appointed principals and vice-principals. Although the participants experienced some successes, their experiences illustrate that becoming a 21st century leader challenges newly appointed principals and vice-principals cognitively, socially, emotionally, and physically as they adapt to new administrative identities, roles, and stakeholder demands that differ significantly from teaching. The participants' reliance on their own personal leadership resources and networks in order to access the kinds of professional development, support and mentoring needed to grow as pedagogical and instructional leaders is commendable

and indicative of committed and resilient leaders. However, their narratives of surviving and thriving point to the need for consistent, creative, and coordinated transitional supports that are responsive to newcomers' developmental needs and nested within systematic processes and coordinated partnerships at the school district, Ministry, principal professional association, union, and university levels.

The research on principal influence has long established that "Leadership is second only to classroom teaching in its influence on student achievement"³ and the guiding principles and practices of the Ontario Leadership Strategy (OLS) recognize the "need to take a long term, leadership approach to succession planning that starts at the teacher level" (p. 2)⁴. The vice-principal and principal leaders in this study were also passionate about their commitment to student and organizational success. They expressed their appreciation to the IEL at being asked for their input and they interpreted this as a sign that the IEL partners cared about their transitions. They also believed that their involvement in this research would produce positive changes and they offered a comprehensive range of short, medium and long term-approaches to leadership development that can be used to bridge teacher and principal and vice-principal transition to the role and provide the levels of systematic training, mentoring and coaching required to develop innovative, talented and resilient 21st century leaders. These recommendations can be achieved with comprehensive, creative and coordinated planning and action at the multiple system levels that is also inclusive of newly appointed principals and vice-principals' voices.

³ Leithwood, K., Seashore Louis, K., Anderson, S., & Wahlstrom, K. (2004). How leadership influences student learning. Center for Applied Research and Educational Improvement. Retrieved from <http://www.wallacefoundation.org/knowledge-center/school-leadership/key-research/Pages/How-Leadership-Influences-Student-Learning.aspx>

⁴ Ontario Ministry of Education: Retrieved from <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/policyfunding/leadership/index.html>

FULL REPORT

INTRODUCTION

The transition from teaching to administration is a complex social and emotional journey that impacts newly appointed principals and vice-principals, school constituents, and future district and provincial leadership in significant and unexpected ways (Armstrong, 2009). Although there are few publicly available statistics related to the actual number of teachers in Ontario who make this transition on a yearly basis, previous research in the areas of succession planning, recruitment, and retirements has pointed to unprecedented shifts in the province's administrative leadership landscape. For example, in 2001, Williams predicted that 71.7% of elementary principals and 74.2 % of secondary principals will have retired by 2007 (p. 6). In 2008, an Institute for Educational Leadership (IEL) study of the Ontario Ministry of Education's 2005-2006 demographic data also released the following important information related to potential principal and vice-principal retirements in English and French language districts. With respect to English language districts, this study reported that 37% of elementary school principals and almost half of secondary principals would be eligible to retire by 2008 (IEL, 2008, p. 20). In addition, 69% of Catholic secondary school principals and 61% of public secondary principals would be eligible to retire by 2011.

The transition from teaching to administration is a complex social and emotional journey.
(Armstrong, 2009)

This study also projected that after these retirements, the number of principals eligible to retire from 2009-2017 would remain around 10-15% for each three year period. Furthermore, beginning 2018, 53% of elementary vice-principals and 39% of secondary vice-principals in English language schools will be eligible to retire (p. 21). With respect to French language schools, it was predicted that almost half of the principals would be eligible to retire in 2018 and that "the largest number of vice-principals would be eligible to retire in 2018 or beyond" (p. 22). When combined with the reduced number of teachers applying for administrative positions, these impending shortages raised deep concerns regarding the future leadership in Ontario schools.

In 2008, the Ontario Leadership Strategy (OLS) was launched in order "to foster leadership of the highest possible quality in schools and boards across the province to support student achievement" (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2009, p. 4). The goals of the OLS are to:

- attract the right people to leadership roles;
- develop personal leadership resources in individuals and promote effective leadership practices in order to have the greatest possible impact on student achievement and well-being and;
- develop leadership capacity and coherence in organizations to strengthen their ability to deliver on education priorities. (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2012, p. 9)

Succession planning and talent development were identified as essential components of the OLS and district school boards were required to institute a Board Leadership Development Strategy (BLDS) by 2011 (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2009).

RATIONALE AND OBJECTIVES

To date, very little research has focused specifically on these newly appointed principals and vice-principals' experiences, the ways in which these newcomers navigate leadership transitions and succession processes, their successes and challenges, and the programs that are in place to support them. Although there are no publicly available statistics regarding the number of principals and vice-principals who make the direct transition from teacher to principal or vice-principal in Ontario each year, estimates of the number of newly appointed principals and vice-principals provided by provincial principal and vice-principal professional associations indicate that their new membership was as follows: Ontario Principals' Council (OPC) - 1707 (since 2008); Catholic Principals' Council of Ontario (CPCO) - 490 (since 2009) and; Association des directions et directions adjointes des écoles franco-ontariennes (ADFO) - 122 (since 2009).

The study's main objectives were to:

- gather benchmark and longitudinal data regarding supports for newly appointed vice-principals and principals in Ontario;

- explore newly appointed vice-principals and principals' transition experiences;
- identify the challenges and successes experienced by newly appointed principals and vice-principals;
- identify promising programs and practices; and
- gather recommendations regarding how vice-principals and principals' leadership transitions can be supported.

This research was guided by the following questions:

- What are the challenges and successes that newly appointed principals and vice-principals experience in their transition from teaching to the role of principal and vice-principal?
- How are they supported?
- What are their recommendations for improvement?

METHODOLOGY

This study used mixed methodology (Creswell, 2009) in order to gather information about newly appointed principals and vice-principals' experiences of their transition from teaching to the role of principal or vice-principal. Data were gathered through complementary quantitative and qualitative methods during the 2012-2013 school year and included an environmental scan, an online survey, and individual and focus group interviews. This combined approach recognizes that educational leadership, change and transitions are complex personal, professional, and organizational processes that require integrating multiple approaches to data collection (Armstrong, 2009).

Using a mixed methods approach allowed for the integration of quantitative and qualitative research techniques and approaches, to test theories and hypotheses, and to uncover the best set of explanations for understanding results (Burke Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004; Harwell, 2011).

Sample Size

The sample for this study consisted of 290 newly appointed principals and vice-principals from French language and English language catholic and public school boards in Ontario who were: (a) vice-principals with 0-4 years in the position, and (b) principals with 0-4 years in the position who were appointed directly from a teaching position. Consistent with Brock University's Research Ethics Board (REB) protocols, the research team received approval from the REB and made ongoing efforts to ensure that the participants' confidentiality and anonymity of data were protected. The intent of this study

was to gather information from as many newly appointed principals and vice-principals as possible in order to collect baseline data on the transition from teacher to the role of principal or vice-principal. Directors of Education were asked to provide support for this research and to share the information about the study with their Board Leadership Development Strategy (BLDS) leads. Letters of invitation in French and English were distributed through school district BLDS leads, personal networks, and the following principal and vice-principal professional associations, ADFO, CPCO, OPC, and Toronto School Administrators' Association (TSAA). These letters provided potential participants with information about the purpose and scope of the study, their rights as participants, and guarantees of confidentiality. Vice-principals and principals who were interested in participating in the study and who met the study's criteria (i.e. had 0-4 years of experience and moved directly from teaching to the role of principal or vice-principal) were invited to complete the online survey and/or to contact the researchers if they were interested in participating in the study or required additional information.

A total of 336 participants accessed the online survey. Twenty of these participants either indicated they were not willing to participate or did not complete the survey. An additional 26 surveys were discarded because these participants indicated that they had more than four years of experience as principal or vice-principal. Most of the survey participants reported that they were excited about the opportunity to discuss their transitions and expressed gratitude to the Institute for Education Leadership (IEL) for providing opportunities for newly appointed principals and vice-principals to discuss their transitions and make recommendations for improvement. While 105 participants volunteered to take part in the follow-up interviews, most were unable to participate due to time constraints, unexpected emergencies at work and busy administrative schedules. Of the 42 principals and vice-principals who were available, 17 participated in follow-up individual interviews and an additional 25 participated in six focus group interviews.

Research Methods

A sequential design (Burke Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004; Creswell, 2009) using (a) an environmental scan, (b) an on-line survey, (c) individual interviews, and (d) focus group interviews was used to gather information about newly appointed vice-principals and principals' succession and transition experiences. The environmental scan was conducted in order to collect background information and was used to inform the design and development of the online survey. The

survey was used during the second phase of the study to collect statistical data, provide a broad picture of the general numeric trends (Creswell, 2009), and identify emerging themes related to participants' perspectives. After the second phase of the study was completed, individual and focus group interview protocols were developed based on the environmental scan and the survey data. These interviews were used to follow-up, clarify, validate and expand on the trends that emerged from the survey data (Creswell, 2009).

Environmental Scan

The environmental scan focussed on the research literature related to vice-principals and principals' transition to the role and succession experiences in Ontario, Canada, and international contexts. Reviews of Ministry of Education, district school board, Institute for Education Leadership (IEL) and professional association websites were also conducted in order to identify current trends and programs in the areas of leadership development, succession planning and talent development, and newly appointed principals and vice-principals transitions in Ontario.

On-line Survey

The information gathered in the environmental scan was used to inform the development and design of an online survey. This instrument was comprised of closed and open-ended questions and was used to gather information from the newly appointed vice-principals and principals regarding their:

- demographic backgrounds, e.g., gender, age, ethnicity, type of school, position, placement, and years of experience;
- early and ongoing preparation and supports;
- professional challenges and success; and
- recommendations to aspiring and newly appointed vice-principals and principals, Principal's Qualifications Program (PQP) providers, school districts, the Ministry of Education, universities and professional associations.

The initial draft of the online survey was field tested with 16 principals and vice-principals who provided feedback regarding the content, structure, organization, and length of the survey. This feedback, along with suggestions from Board Leadership Development Strategy (BLDS) leads and members of the IEL Implementation Committee, was incorporated into the final version of the online survey. In their *Letter of Invitation*, potential participants were provided with a web address that was linked to the survey. At the beginning of the survey, respondents were asked to indicate their willingness to

participate in the study. If they chose "Yes" they were allowed to continue to the next page. If they chose "No" they were directed to a page thanking them for their interest. At the end of the survey, participants were asked to indicate their willingness to participate in follow-up interviews. A copy of the online survey is provided in Appendix A.

Individual Interviews

The questions for the individual interviews were shaped by the results of the preliminary analysis of the on-line survey and sought to gather additional data from participants and to further clarify, strengthen, and validate key themes emerging from the surveys. Seventeen semi-structured interviews lasting approximately 60-75 minutes were conducted in English with 14 newly appointed principals and vice-principals and in French with 3 newly appointed principals and vice-principals. These interviews were conducted in person or by telephone by skilled researchers and provided a safe space for individual participants to dialogue about their transitions, successes and challenges, promising practices, and recommendations. Prompts were used to probe for additional details as necessary in order to ensure in-depth and accurate responses. All interviews were transcribed verbatim to ensure accuracy of recording. As part of member checking, participants were provided with copies of their transcripts in order to ensure accuracy of recording. A copy of the individual interview guide is provided in Appendix B.

Focus Group Interviews

An additional 25 English language principals and vice-principals participated in six focus group interviews. While a number of French language principals and vice-principals expressed interest in participating in these interviews, they were unable to do so due to time constraints and job demands. These interviews were conducted in person or by telephone by skilled researchers and lasted approximately 70-120 minutes. Similar to the individual interviews, the focus group questions were semi-structured and sought to gather additional data from participants to further clarify, strengthen, and validate the key themes emerging from the surveys. The focus group interviews were designed to provide a safe forum for the participants to discuss aspects of their transition with skilled interviewers and their peers in groups ranging from 3-6 participants. Prompts were provided to probe for additional details as necessary in order to ensure accurate and in-depth responses. All interviews were transcribed verbatim to ensure accuracy of recording. A copy of the focus group interview guide is provided in Appendix C.

Data Analysis

The research data were analyzed using a combination of quantitative and qualitative procedures. The quantitative data derived from the survey were analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). All of the participants' responses to the closed-ended questions were aggregated and analyzed using descriptive analysis. Where appropriate, the data were disaggregated by variables such as position, years of experience, panel, and school size and descriptive analyses were conducted in order to explore differences, similarities, and patterns in the participants' responses. The qualitative data from the open-ended survey questions and the individual and focus groups interview transcripts were analyzed inductively to determine similarities, differences, and emerging themes. After reading the interview transcripts, the researchers compared and contrasted the participants' responses and sorted them into broad categories based on the questions discussed in the interviews. After these categories were further reviewed and refined based on conversations between the researchers, the interview transcripts were coded for a priori and emerging codes (Coffey & Atkinson, 1996) using the NVivo qualitative analysis software program. The qualitative and quantitative results were triangulated in order to synthesize complementary results and to develop a more complete understanding of the participants' experiences through simultaneous comparison of the multiple data sources (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007).

Limitations

While this research provides benchmark information on newly appointed principals and vice-principals in Ontario, there are some limitations to this study that make it difficult to generalize to all of the newly appointed principals and vice-principals in the province. At the time of the study, the researchers were unable to access the statistics available regarding the number of newly appointed principals and vice-principals in Ontario or the number of principals and vice-principals who were invited to participate in this study. For these reasons, we were not able to determine the response rate of the survey. In addition, the participants were self-selected, which might have influenced their responses. Many of the French language principals and vice-principals who were interested in participating in the individual and focus groups interviews were unable to participate due to time constraints and work demands. Therefore, while the results of this study provide in-depth information on the direct transitions from teaching to the role of principal and vice-principal of the 290 participants, it is possible that they may not represent the experiences all of the newly appointed principals and vice-principals in Ontario.

RESULTS

The findings presented in this report are derived from three data sources (a) the 290 survey responses (263 English and 27 French) that met the required criteria for participation, (b) the data collected from the 17 individual interviews (3 Francophone and 14 Anglophone), and (c) the data collected from the six focus group interviews with 25 Anglophone principals and vice-principals. The next section of this

report presents the results of the online survey and the individual and focus group interviews with respect to: (a) the participants' characteristics (b) their early and on-going professional development (PD) and support, (c) their levels of support and growth in developing leadership practices and capacities, (d) their professional challenges and successes, and (e) their recommendations.

PARTICIPANTS' CHARACTERISTICS

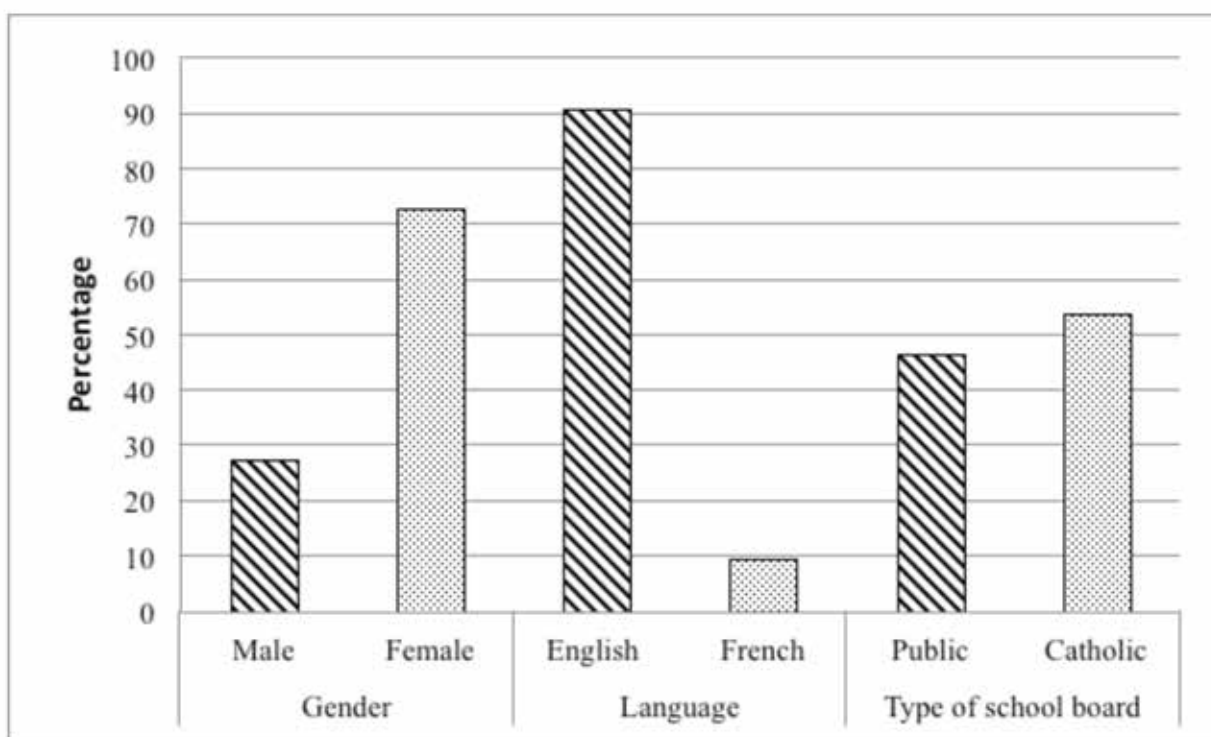
The newly appointed principals and vice-principals participating in this research responded to a range of questions related to their personal and professional backgrounds such as gender, language, ethnicity, school placement, and years of administrative experience. In the section below, we provide an overview of participants' characteristics based on the survey, individual interviews, and focus group interviews respectively.

Survey Participants

Figure 1 provides an overview of the survey participants' characteristics by gender, language, and type of board. The participants were predominantly female (72.7%), Caucasian (83.0%), between ages of 36-55 (90.0%), employed by Catholic boards (53.4%), and vice-principals (74%). With respect to years of administrative experience, approximately 38.0% of the respondents were in Year 1, 24.1% in Year 2, 24.8% in Year 3, and 13.4% in Year 4. In addition, 90.0% of the principals and vice-principals had permanent employment status and 79.7% were full-time principals and vice-principals with 10 years or more experience as classroom teachers. All of the part-time principals or vice-principals were teaching principals or vice-principals and the majority of this group (78.6%) taught special education classes. Fifty-five percent of the participants were placed in urban areas. Sixty-one percent of

the respondents were employed in K-6, K-8, or K-12 schools and 28.3% in Grades 9-12 schools. With respect to school size, survey participants were distributed as followed: fewer than 200 students (9.7%); 201-500 students (36.2%) students, 501-1000 students (32.8%), 1,001 - 2,000 students (17.9%), and 2,001 students and above (1.4%). Comparisons of the vice-principals and principals' characteristics revealed the following differences. With respect to employment status, all principals were full time compared to 72.9% of vice-principals; with respect to school size, 52.1% of principals worked in schools with enrolments ranging from 201-500 compared to 30.4 % of vice-principals and 61.7% of vice-principals worked in schools with enrolments between 501- 2,000 students. In addition, 67.6% of the principals worked in Catholic boards compared to 48.6% of the vice-principals.

Figure 1 – Survey Participants' Characteristics

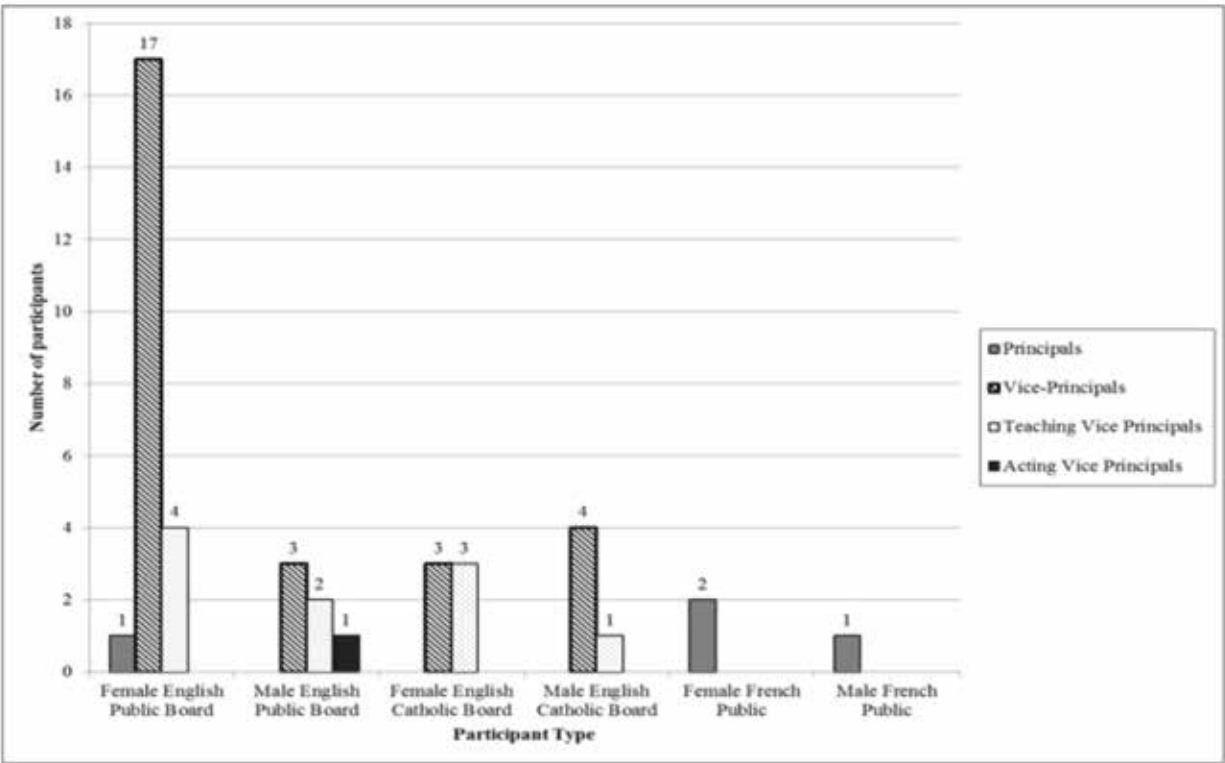


Focus Group and Individual Interview Participants

Figure 2 provides an overview of the individual and focus group participants' characteristics. A total of 42 vice-principals and principals participated in the focus group and individual interviews. The participants were predominantly Anglophone (39), public principals and vice-principals (69 of which 38 were vice-principals, females (30). Twenty-seven of the vice-principals were full-time, 1 was acting, and 10 were teaching vice-principals. Of the 25 individuals participating in the

focus groups interviews, 20 were full-time vice-principals and 5 were teaching vice-principals. Participants were primarily from public boards (17 public vs 8 catholic), female (19 females vs 6 males). Seventeen additional Anglophone principals and vice-principals participated in the individual interviews. These participants were primarily female (11 females vs 6 males), vice-principals (13 vice-principals vs 4 principals) and from public schools (14 public vs 3 Catholic).

Figure 2- Focus Group and Individual Interview Participants' Characteristics



EARLY AND ON-GOING PROFESSIONAL PREPARATION, DEVELOPMENT AND SUPPORTS

The survey and interview participants were asked to provide information regarding how they prepared themselves for the transition from teaching to the role of principal or vice-principal and the levels, the kinds of preparation and supports they received prior to and after becoming principal or vice-principal, and the factors and experiences that were most and least helpful in the transition process.

Pre-role Preparation for Principals and Vice-principals

In the second section of the survey, participants were asked to indicate their level of agreement with six statements regarding how they prepared themselves or were assisted in preparing for the transition prior to becoming principal or vice-principal. Table 1 below shows a high level of agreement with these statements, with the largest number of participants (95.6%) expressing agreement or strong agreement with the item *I sought out and took advantage of professional learning and mentoring opportunities (e.g., courses, resources, leadership roles)*

in order to prepare for my role. The exception to this response pattern was related to the statement *My vice-principal and principal association provided me with opportunities to learn about my current role* where 60% agreed or strongly agreed. The response pattern to this particular item was fairly consistent when the data were disaggregated by position (vice-principals = 31.3%; principals = 30.3%); language (English = 31.6%; French = 30.8%); and employment status (permanent = 30.2%; acting 45.8%).

Table 1- Pre-role Preparation and Supports

	Strongly Disagree (%)	Disagree (%)	Agree (%)	Strongly Agree (%)	N*
I sought out and took advantage of professional learning and mentoring opportunities (e.g., courses, resources, leadership roles) in order to prepare for my role	1.8	2.6	35.8	59.8	271
My teaching roles provided me with opportunities to learn about and practice my current role as vice-principal or principal	4.4	17.3	45.4	32.8	271
My vice-principal and/or principal provided me with opportunities to learn about and to practice my current role	4.8	6.7	45.7	42.8	269
My school board provided me with opportunities to learn about and practice my current role (e.g., aspiring leader program)	3.3	13.3	49.6	33.7	270
My vice-principal and principal association provided me with opportunities to learn about my current role	8.5	31.5	41.1	18.9	270
My Principals' Qualifications Program (PQP) provided me with opportunities to learn about my current role	1.5	8.6	58.2	31.7	268

N* - Percentages are out of the total of number of participants who responded to each question; this number is provided in the last column

Preparedness for the Role of Principal or Vice-Principal

The survey participants were also asked to indicate if they felt prepared for their role as vice-principal or principal and to explain their response. Table 2 shows that prior to appointment, the majority of participants (74.9%) felt prepared for the role. This result was fairly similar by position (principal - 84.8%; vice-principal - 72.3%); language (French - 80.0%; English - 74.4%); school type (public -73.9%; catholic -76.1%)

and years of experience in current role (ranging from 72.0% -79.0%). Differences emerged when permanent and acting principals' or vice-principals' perceptions of preparedness were compared. For example, while 76.0% of the principals or vice-principals in permanent positions felt prepared for the role, only 56.0% in acting positions felt prepared.

Table 2 - Perceptions of Preparedness for the Role of Principal or Vice-Principal

Prepared for role of principal or vice-principal	Overall		English				French	
			Public		Catholic			
	%	N*	%	N*	%	N*	%	N*
Yes	74.9	194	73.9	85	76.1	89	80.0	20
No	25.1	65	26.1	30	23.9	28	20.0	5

N* - Percentages are out of the total of number of participants who responded to each question; this number is provided in the last column.

Although the majority (74.9%) of the participants indicated in their responses to the closed survey item that they felt prepared for their role, when discussing feelings of preparedness in the open-ended survey questions and in the individual and focus group interviews, most of them reported that they discovered upon assuming their role that they were unprepared for the complexity and unpredictability of their administrative roles and transitions. These participants attributed this disjunction

to the fact that administrative learning is “a process of learning by doing for which one could not readily prepare”. When the survey, individual interview and focus group respondents were also asked to elaborate on the experiences (e.g., professional learning opportunities and resources) that were most helpful in supporting their transition before they became principals or vice-principals or that they wish were available, the following themes emerged.

Although the majority (74.9%) of the participants indicated in their responses that they felt prepared for their role, most of them reported that they discovered upon assuming their role that they were unprepared for the complexity and unpredictability of their administrative roles and transitions.

Most Helpful Pre-role Preparation Factors

In their qualitative survey comments and interviews, participants revealed that the most helpful pre-role factors were their personal characteristics and resources, prior teaching and leadership experiences, and professional development and professional development.

95% of the participants identified individual personal characteristics as most helpful in preparing them for their role.

Personal Characteristics

Consistent with Table 1, the majority of the participants (95%) identified individual characteristics, e.g., personal attributes, dispositions and skills as most helpful in preparing for their role of principal or vice-principal, confirming the importance of using their personal leadership resources in this transition. The most commonly cited personal characteristics were related: to engaging in continuous self-directed learning; using personal initiative to access information, opportunities, resources and professional development; and the ability to use interpersonal skills to building supportive relationships with principal or vice-principal mentors and sponsors.

The participants also identified the knowledge, skills and dispositions that they developed when they were teachers as invaluable to their ability to be effective instructional leaders.

Prior Teaching and Leadership Experiences

The participants also identified the knowledge, skills and dispositions that they developed when they were teachers as invaluable to their ability to be effective instructional leaders. They emphasized the benefits of engaging in formal and informal teacher leadership roles outside of the classroom when available (e.g., teacher-in-charge, literacy/math coach, board level consultant, provincial or district consultant, union steward, head of guidance, and committee chair). As illustrated by the two principals below, these teacher leadership roles exposed aspiring administrators to broader

system and administrative perspectives and allowed them to develop transferable leadership and management skills:

I have an extensive Special Education background and also working at the Board level prepared me for some of the situations that may occur within the school setting as a principal.

I was the head of guidance, so I worked closely with the principal and vice-principal. I had some administration time; I think I did that for a couple of years where I would give a period each semester to work with the office over attendance issues, discipline issues.

Professional Development and Professional Development

Formal opportunities to engage in professional development through Principal's Qualifications Program (PQP) courses, aspiring leaders' internships, and professional development workshops offered by school districts, principal and vice-principal associations and universities were also identified as helpful. Informal opportunities to engage in job-embedded professional development and forms of job shadowing with in-school principals and vice-principals in areas related to student discipline, information systems and other forms of technology were also conducive in building administrative knowledge and skills.

Least Helpful Pre-role Preparation Factors

When the survey and interview participants were asked to identify the pre-role experiences and opportunities that were least helpful or that they wish they had in the open-ended survey questions and in the individual and focus group interviews, the three factors that were most commonly referenced were connected to: information and professional development, bridge leadership opportunities and experiences, and access to sponsors and mentors.

Many participants reported entering their role lacking an in-depth understanding of the nature of the transition from teaching to the role of principal and vice-principal, administrative role demands, and their school/community contexts.

Information and Professional Development

Many participants reported entering their role lacking an in-depth understanding of the nature of the transition from teaching to the role of principal and vice-principal, administrative role demands, and their school/community contexts. They wished they had been able to access opportunities for experiential learning and job-embedded professional development such as principal and vice-principal internships and job shadowing that would provide time and targeted opportunities to practice their roles and develop that required managerial, interpersonal, and technical skills. These participants also wished they had received timely and relevant professional development in and information about policies and procedures related to safety, health and crisis management, occupational hazards, student discipline, Teacher Performance Appraisals, staff and parent complaints, discipline, and report cards. They also wished they had been provided with opportunities to engage in authentic dialogues with practicing principals and vice-principals about the potential benefits and drawbacks of administration and to receive information about the social and emotional changes and the isolation that occurred when moving from teaching to principal or vice-principal.

A key area of concern was related to collective agreements.

Bridge Leadership Opportunities and Experiences

A key area of concern was related to collective agreements between teacher federations and district school boards that limited aspiring leaders' ability to perform administrative tasks and functions that bridged teaching and principal or vice-principal leadership roles. Participants wished they had been allowed to engage in authentic leadership opportunities through administrative periods, teacher-in-charge roles, and administrative apprenticeships, as illustrated in the following representative quotes:

I wish as a teacher we were able to have more ability to set direction as leaders. I found that union [teacher federation] rules limited the headships' [department heads'] role in providing as much pre-experience as could have happened. It would also be nice to have more administrative periods attached to schools for teachers to gain office experience.

I think there should be an in-between phase introduced moving from teacher to vice-principal where people are given the opportunity to actually participate in the role before being "thrown" into it -- a brief job shadow does not really prepare anyone for all the tasks required.

Participants also noted that limited access to mentors hindered their transition.

Access to Sponsors and Mentors

Participants also noted that limited access to principals and vice-principals who were available and willing to actively sponsor and mentor them hindered their transition. These participants wished they had access to principal and vice-principal mentors and coaches who would support and guide them through the promotion process, provide insider information about the role, and offer opportunities to practice administrative skills.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND SUPPORTS RECEIVED AFTER BECOMING A PRINCIPAL OR VICE-PRINCIPAL

The survey and individual and focus group interviews also sought to determine participants' perceptions of the kinds of professional development and supports they received after becoming principals and vice-principals. In Section 3 of the survey, participants responded to 11 statements related to the kinds of professional learning and supports they received. Table 3 shows that the highest levels of professional support and mentoring were received from principal and vice-principal colleagues and immediate supervisors:

- Opportunities to meet and collaborate with fellow vice-principals and principals in district (82%);
- Support, mentoring, and feedback from fellow vice-principals and principals (79.8%); and
- Support, feedback and mentoring from my immediate supervisor regarding performance (76.4%)

Further disaggregation of the survey data revealed that although 53.3% of the participants agreed that they had received professional development in, and hands-on opportunities to practice my communication and coaching

skills, this response pattern varied when demographic factors were examined. For example, while the response pattern for permanent principals and vice-principals was 55.4%, it was 36.0% for acting principals and vice-principals, indicating larger gaps in professional development for principals and vice-principals in acting positions.

The three main areas where most participants reported receiving no professional support and/or mentoring were related to navigating district politics, discussing socio-emotional transitional changes, and practicing communication and coaching skills:

- Professional development in how to navigate school and district politics (66.1%);
- Opportunities to discuss the social and emotional aspects of the transition from teaching to the position of principals and vice-principals (62.3%); and
- Professional development in, and hands-on opportunities to practice my communication and coaching skills (46.7%)

Table 3 - Professional Learning and Mentoring Received after Becoming Principals and Vice-Principals

	Yes (%)	No (%)	N*
Clear information about my duties, roles, and responsibilities from my supervisor	70.5	29.5	258
Orientation to the school and opportunities to learn about the different programs and supports for students	68.6	31.4	258
Opportunities to consult with supervisors and/or colleagues regarding new and existing initiatives and policies (e.g., collective agreements, disciplinary and emergency response procedures)	75.6	24.4	258
Professional development for hands-on opportunities to develop administrative skills (e.g., on-calls, scheduling, student registration, budgeting, facilities management, performance appraisals)	60.6	39.4	259
Professional development in, and hands-on opportunities to practice my communication and coaching skills	53.3	46.7	259
Opportunities to discuss the social and emotional aspects of the transition from teaching to principals or vice-principals	37.7	62.3	257
Professional development in how to navigate school and district politics	33.9	66.1	257
Opportunities to meet and collaborate with fellow vice-principals and principals in my area	82.2	17.8	259
Support, mentoring, and feedback from fellow vice-principals and principals	79.8	20.2	258
Support, feedback and mentoring from my immediate supervisor regarding performance	76.4	23.6	258
Support from district leadership mentoring programs	65.1	34.9	258

N* - Percentages are out of the total of number of participants who responded to each question; this number is provided in the last column.

The following information was provided when the survey, individual interview and focus group respondents were asked to identify and further elaborate on the experiences (e.g., professional learning opportunities and resources) that were most and least helpful in supporting their transition after they became principals or vice-principals.

Most Helpful Factors after Becoming Principals and Vice-principals

When responding to the open-ended survey items and the individual and focus group interview questions, the participants reiterated the importance of their own personal characteristics, professional development, and principals or vice-principals mentoring and support.

Personal Characteristics

Participants indicated that the most helpful factors that facilitated their transition from teaching to principal or vice-principal after they were in their role were their own personal characteristics. These were defined as individual attributes related to engaging in continuous self-directed learning, using personal initiative to access information, resources and professional development, and building supportive relationships with mentors and sponsors. These responses are consistent with the survey responses related to pre-role preparation for their principal and vice-principal roles (Table 1).

The most beneficial professional development and learning opportunities were related to: human resource management; communication; operations; finances; instruction; inclusion; and community building.

Professional Development and Learning Opportunities

Participants identified many helpful areas of professional development and learning opportunities that were undertaken through their own personal initiative (e.g., PQP and Additional Qualifications courses, and Master's degrees), under the direction of their school boards (e.g., principal and vice-principal meetings) and through their principal associations. The most beneficial professional development and learning opportunities were related to the following areas: human resource management (staffing, labour relations, legal issues, Teacher Performance Appraisals); communication (conflict management, courageous conversations); operations (scheduling, health and safety); finances (budget); instruction (assessment and evaluation, special education, second language learning); inclusion (equity, diversity); and community building (professional learning communities and parental engagement). Participants reported that professional learning was maximized when these sessions were timely, ongoing, targeted to newly appointed principals' and vice-principals' transitional needs and developmental stages and offered job-

embedded opportunities for skill development and reflection. They also identified helpful "spin-off benefits" related to attending professional development sessions and principals and vice-principals meetings. These unintended benefits included learning about emerging trends and new initiatives, participating in forums where their questions were answered, and building networks of support with newly appointed and experienced principals and vice-principals, as illustrated in the following representative responses:

The issues series offered by our board gave us the opportunity to network with our fellow newly appointed vice-principals and discuss successes, failures and everything in between.

I also benefitted from board PD, where I was able to attend sessions in my end of the city, as opposed to where I worked, which allowed me to connect with colleagues that knew me from my teaching positions and who provided me with positive feedback as well.

Participants reported that in most districts, formal individual and group mentoring was offered primarily during the first year.

Mentoring and Principal and Vice-principal Supports

Table 3 shows that the majority of the survey participants reported receiving the highest levels of support, mentoring and feedback from fellow vice-principals and principals (79.8%) and their immediate supervisors (76.4%). When discussing helpful factors in their open-ended responses, the participants emphasized the benefits of formal and informal mentoring and support from superintendents, principals, and principals and vice-principals teams who understood the transitional needs of the newly appointed principals and vice-principals and took time to answer questions, model appropriate administrative behaviours, explain policies and procedures, demonstrate practices, and provide growth-promoting feedback. Participants reported that in most districts, formal individual and group mentoring was offered primarily during the first year. The greatest benefits came from mentoring programs that were clearly structured, responsive to newly appointed principals and vice-principals developmental needs, and paired mentees with empathetic and experienced principals and vice-principals who provided emotional support and built relational trust, as illustrated in these representative responses:

Our board has a program, which matches newly appointed principals and vice-principals with a mentor. I have a retired superintendent who has been mentoring me for two years. We meet several times per year and I can honestly say that without him I might have gone back to the classroom. He allowed me the opportunity to troubleshoot and problem solve in a confidential and supportive manner. I could not have succeeded without him. This is the best program I have experienced in 21 years of teaching.

I had a mentor principal as part of a Ministry intervention for low performing schools. She was wonderful to just talk to. We didn't really do much about instructional leadership. She just talked me off the ledge.

Participants reported that informal emotional and technical support from supervisors and colleagues was helpful in supporting their role transition.

In addition to formal mentoring programs, participants reported that informal emotional and technical support from supervisors and colleagues was helpful in supporting their role transition. Vice-principals were more likely to emphasize the importance of principals as mentors because of the close supervisory nature of their administrative relationship. The most helpful principals were identified as “empathetic”, “modeling exemplary practice”, and providing “hands-on support”, “in the moment advice”, opportunities for “collaboration and reflection”, and “a balance of autonomy and support”. Participants also reported benefitting from supportive relationships with in-school administrative team members and principal and vice-principal colleagues outside of school who understood and anticipated their learning and emotional needs and offered technical and emotional support:

The principal has been very supportive. Allows me to take the lead in many situations and debriefs with me afterwards. Another vice-principal in the building is always available for advice and guidance. The principal and two vice-principals try to have lunch together every day. This allows us to share our thoughts and what is happening during the day.

My principal partners have been my best resource. Other vice-principals have been supportive as well, as we share common challenges and questions. Our local association is also available to answer questions.

The participants also highlighted the importance of the support they received from other professionals, e.g., support staff, teachers, and board personnel. Support from family members, particularly from spouses, was also identified as important, as explained by this acting vice-principal, “The support of my husband in raising the family. The time away from them is a serious consideration in potentially not accepting a permanent contract.”

Least Helpful Factors after Becoming Principal or Vice-principal

In addition to identifying the most helpful factors, the participants were provided with opportunities in the open-ended survey questions and the individual and focus group interviews to identify the factors that were least helpful after assuming their administrative role. For the most part, these responses were focused on aspects of their role preparation and professional development and transitional mentoring.

74.9% of the participants felt that they were prepared for their role.

Role Preparation and Professional development

The findings in Table 2 confirm that the majority (74.9%) of the participants felt that they were prepared for their role. Table 3 also shows that most of the participants (70.5%) received clear information about their duties, roles and responsibilities from their supervisors and had opportunities to consult with supervisors and colleagues regarding new and existing initiatives (75.6%). At the same time, the participants’ responses in Table 3 show that some of them did not receive hands-on professional development. For example, 39.4% of the participants reported that they received no professional development for, or hands-on opportunities to develop administrative skills, practice their communication and coaching skills (46.7%), discuss the socio-emotional aspects of their transition (62.3%), and navigate school and district politics (66.1%). When asked to elaborate further on these items in the open-ended survey questions and the interviews,

these respondents described their leadership learning as “mostly on the fly”, i.e., “a process of learning by doing” and being “left to float or sink on your own” as described in the following representative comments:

It would have been advantageous to know about the expectations of the vice-principal before arriving at the school in September. For example, health and safety is in the vice-principal portfolio. This was challenging to navigate, particularly because the professional development came later in the year. Similarly, timetabling, progressive discipline/suspension policies and procedures would have been helpful to know.

[I had no] professional development supports on professional learning communities, report cards, staff/human resources relations; opportunities to understand any computer systems that are assigned to you as a vice-principal, i.e., ESIS, SCARRI, ePrincipal, JDE, etc. You are left on your own to figure out how these systems work and this is extremely time consuming and frustrating.

Transitional Mentoring and Support

Table 3 also shows that the majority of participants reported receiving support, mentoring and feedback from fellow vice-principals (79.8%) and immediate supervisors regarding performance (76.4%) and district leadership mentoring programs (65.1%). In their qualitative responses to the open-ended survey and interview questions the participants who felt unsupported identified limited opportunities for direct contact and communication with, and feedback from other principals and vice-principals and assigned mentors as unhelpful to their professional learning and growth, as illustrated in this representative comment: “I had very little contact or time for contact with other principals and vice-principals. [There is] no sounding board to reflect if what I am seeing and thinking is real and how best to handle it.” The participants also reported that their least helpful mentoring experiences occurred when mentees were matched with mentors who were incompatible, who were unavailable when mentees required assistance, and/or who were retired or “out of touch” and when leadership development leads were unresponsive to mentees’ queries.

DEVELOPING LEADERSHIP PRACTICES AND CAPACITIES

Section 4 of the online survey sought to determine the newly appointed vice-principals and principals' perceptions of (a) the levels of support and professional development they received and (b) their levels of growth in developing leadership practices and capacities after they assumed their role. Participants were asked to respond to items related to the five domains of leadership practice outlined in the Ontario Leadership Framework (OLF): (1) Setting directions, (2) Building relationships and developing people, (3) Developing the organization to support desired practices, (4) Improving the instructional program, and (5) Securing accountability.

Levels of Support and Professional Development

More than 50% of participants reported receiving medium to high levels of support in most domains as evidenced in Table 4.1. Exceptions to this pattern were found in the following seven areas, where participants indicated that they had received no support or low levels of support:

- Building staff members' sense of internal accountability (62.6%);

- Buffering staff from distractions to their work (62.2%);
- Establishing productive working relationships with teacher federation representatives (61.9%);
- Connecting the school to its wider environment (60.9%);
- Staffing the instructional program (59.8%);
- Allocating resources in support of the school's vision and goals (52.6%); and
- Meeting the demands for external accountability (50.2%).

A breakdown of responses by participants' current position, language, and employment status showed similar response patterns, with the exception of the 7 variables mentioned above. However, there was an exception to this pattern of response when participants' current positions were compared. More than 50% of the principals reported receiving no support or low levels of support in two areas: (1) Providing support and demonstrating consideration for individual staff members (54.2%), and (2) Stimulating growth in the professional capacities of staff (54.2%). This result was not found for vice-principals and was not evident when the results were aggregated.

Table 4.1 – Level of Support and Professional development Received in Developing Leadership Practices and Capacities

LEADERSHIP PRACTICES AND CAPACITIES	LEVEL OF SUPPORT				
	None %	Low %	Medium %	High %	N*
SETTING DIRECTIONS					
Building a shared vision	15.2	33.2	37.8	13.8	217
Identifying specific, shared, short-term goals	11.5	27.6	40.1	20.7	217
Creating high performance expectations	12.5	25.9	42.6	19.0	216
Communicating the vision and goals	10.3	30.4	45.8	13.6	214
BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS AND DEVELOPING PEOPLE					
Providing support and demonstrating consideration for individual staff members	17.1	29.5	32.9	20.5	210
Stimulating growth in the professional capacities of staff	17.6	26.2	39.0	17.1	210
Modeling the school's values and practices	12.4	23.9	40.2	23.4	209
Building trusting relationships with and among staff, student and parents	13.4	20.6	39.2	26.8	209
Establishing productive working relationships with teacher federation representatives	31.4	30.5	26.2	11.9	210

LEADERSHIP PRACTICES AND CAPACITIES	LEVEL OF SUPPORT				
	None %	Low %	Medium %	High %	N*
DEVELOPING THE ORGANIZATION TO SUPPORT DESIRED PRACTICES					
Building collaborative cultures and distributing leadership	13.3	27.1	42.9	16.7	210
Structuring the organization to facilitate collaboration	15.3	28.7	42.1	13.9	209
Building productive relationships with families and communities	17.1	31.0	34.3	17.6	210
Connecting the school to its wider environment	23.3	37.6	31.0	8.1	210
Maintaining a safe and healthy environment	7.6	20.5	35.2	36.7	210
Allocating resources in support of the school's vision and goals	22.5	30.1	32.5	14.8	209
IMPROVING THE INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAM					
Staffing the instructional program	23.9	34.9	32.1	9.1	209
Providing instructional support	10.0	24.9	45.9	19.1	209
Monitoring student learning and school improvement progress	9.1	23.9	41.1	25.8	209
Buffering staff from distractions to their work	35.9	26.3	26.8	11.0	209
SECURING ACCOUNTABILITY					
Building staff members' sense of internal accountability	28.2	34.4	28.2	9.1	209
Meeting the demands for external accountability	19.6	36.4	36.4	13.4	209

N* - Percentages are out of the total of number of participants who responded to each question; this number is provided in the last column.

Levels of Growth: Table 4.2 below presents participants' responses to the same statements, but in relation to levels of growth. Overall more than half of the participants indicated medium or high levels of growth to all statements. This pattern was consistent by current position, language, and current employment status. The highest areas of growth were related to:

- Building trusting relationships with and among staff, students and parents (56.4%);
- Maintaining a safe and healthy environment (48.5%); and
- Providing support and demonstrating consideration for individual staff members (48.3%).

Conversely, the lowest levels of growth were related to:

- Building staff members' sense of internal accountability (35.6 %);
- Connecting the school to its wider environment (35.0%);
- Buffering staff from distractions to their work (31.8 %); and
- Establishing productive working relationships with teacher federation representatives (31.4%).

Table 4.2 - Level of Growth in Developing Leadership Practices and Capacities

LEADERSHIP PRACTICES AND CAPACITIES	LEVEL OF GROWTH			
	Low %	Medium %	High %	N*
SETTING DIRECTIONS				
Building a shared vision	19.0	54.5	26.5	211
Identifying specific, shared, short-term goals	14.8	54.8	30.5	210
Creating high performance expectations	21.2	57.7	21.2	208
Communicating the vision and goals	18.0	58.7	23.3	206
BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS AND DEVELOPING PEOPLE				
Providing support and demonstrating consideration for individual staff members	8.4	43.3	48.3	203
Stimulating growth in the professional capacities of staff	17.7	49.3	33.0	203
Modeling the school's values and practices	9.9	47.8	42.4	203
Building trusting relationships with and among staff, student and parents	5.9	37.7	56.4	204
Establishing productive working relationships with teacher federation representatives	31.4	42.2	26.5	204
DEVELOPING THE ORGANIZATION TO SUPPORT DESIRED PRACTICES				
Building collaborative cultures and distributing leadership	15.9	55.7	28.4	201
Structuring the organization to facilitate collaboration	21.1	52.3	26.6	199
Building productive relationships with families and communities	16.1	49.7	34.2	199
Connecting the school to its wider environment	35.0	50.5	14.5	200
Maintaining a safe and healthy environment	8.0	43.5	48.5	200
Allocating resources in support of the school's vision and goals	26.6	46.2	27.1	199
IMPROVING THE INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAM				
Staffing the instructional program	25.2	49.5	25.2	202
Providing instructional support	15.8	56.7	27.6	203
Monitoring student learning and school improvement progress	17.2	47.3	35.5	203
Buffering staff from distractions to their work	31.8	46.3	21.9	201
SECURING ACCOUNTABILITY				
Building staff members' sense of internal accountability	35.6	46.0	18.3	202
Meeting the demands for external accountability	25.2	55.0	19.8	202

N* - Percentages are out of the total of number of participants who responded to each question; this number is provided in the last column.

PROFESSIONAL CHALLENGES AND SUCCESSES

The survey, individual interviews, and focus groups interviews also sought to determine the challenges and successes the newly appointed principals and vice-principals experienced while undertaking their duties and responsibilities. In Section 5 of the survey, the vice-principals and principals were asked to indicate (1) the level of support and professional development they received, and (2) the level of challenge they experienced with relation to the statements listed in Table 5.1 and Table 5.2.

More than half of the participants indicated receiving no support or low levels of support in the following five areas:

- working with diverse individuals, communities, and agencies;
- responding to parental inquiries;
- selecting, supervising, mentoring, and supporting staff ;
- providing formal and informal feedback to teachers on instructional practices; and
- engaging staff in courageous conversations about equity and inclusion.

Levels of Support and Professional Development

Table 5.1 shows that more than half of the participants indicated receiving no support or low levels of support in the following six areas:

- working with diverse individuals, communities, and agencies (53.2%);
- responding to parental inquiries (56.0%);
- selecting, supervising, mentoring, and supporting staff (55.4%);
- providing formal and informal feedback to teachers on instructional practices (54.3%); and
- engaging staff in courageous conversations about equity and inclusion (53.7%).

Participants reported that they received medium to high levels of support in the following areas:

- supporting staff in using multiple data sources to assess and improve the instructional program;
- supporting students with special needs; and
- dealing with emergencies and crises

When the data were disaggregated, similar patterns were found by current position, language, and current employment status except for three areas. With respect to Providing formal and informal feedback to teachers on instructional practices, 52.3% of vice-principals and 66.7% of French language principals and vice-principals indicated receiving medium levels of support. More than half of the acting vice-principals (53.3%) reported receiving no support or low levels of support in the two areas of *Managing conflict between and among stakeholders* and *Engaging staff in professional development*. Conversely, participants reported that they received medium to high levels of support in the following areas:

- supporting staff in using multiple data sources to assess and improve the instructional program (67.2%);
- supporting students with special needs (63.9%); and
- dealing with emergencies and crises (59.0%).

Levels of Challenge

Participants identified most duties and responsibilities as moderately challenging, except for Working with diverse individuals, communities, and agencies, where participants found this not challenging (43.2%) or moderately challenging (44.3%). Similar patterns were found when the data were disaggregated by current position, language, and current employment status except for the following: (a) Principals rated the statement Selecting, supervising, mentoring, and supporting staff as moderately challenging (36.4%) or challenging (40.9%), and (b) Francophone participants felt that the following three areas were not challenging: Working with diverse individuals, communities and agencies (66.7%), Responding to parental inquiries (50.0%), and Engaging staff in professional development (55.6%).

Table 5.1 – Duties and Responsibilities: Level of Support and Professional development

DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES	LEVEL OF SUPPORT AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT				
	None %	Low %	Medium %	High %	N*
Supporting students with special needs	8.5	27.7	39.0	24.9	177
Managing conflict between and among stakeholders (e.g., teachers, students, parents)	17.6	31.3	40.9	10.2	176
Dealing with emergencies and crises	9.1	31.8	42.0	17.0	176
Working with diverse individuals, communities, and agencies	16.6	36.6	37.1	9.7	175
Responding to parental inquiries	18.3	37.7	31.4	12.6	175
Engaging staff in professional development	15.4	29.1	37.1	18.3	175
Selecting, supervising, mentoring, and supporting staff	17.1	38.3	37.1	7.4	175
Providing formal and informal feedback to teachers on instructional practices	17.7	36.6	38.9	6.9	175
Supporting staff in using multiple data sources to assess and improve the instructional program	10.9	32.0	44.6	12.6	175
Engaging staff in courageous conversations about equity and inclusion	20.0	33.7	37.7	8.6	175

N* - Percentages are out of the total of number of participants who responded to each question; this number is provided in the last column.

Table 5.2 – Duties and Responsibilities: Level of Challenge

DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES	LEVEL OF CHALLENGE				
	Not Challenging %	Moderately Challenging %	Challenging %	Extremely Challenging %	N*
Supporting students with special needs	15.3	38.4	29.4	16.9	177
Managing conflict between and among stakeholders (e.g., teachers, students, parents)	8.5	52.3	26.1	13.1	176
Dealing with emergencies and crises	18.8	51.1	21.0	9.1	176
Working with diverse individuals, communities, and agencies	43.2	44.3	10.2	2.3	176
Responding to parental inquiries	33.1	45.7	17.7	3.4	175
Engaging staff in professional development	23.4	46.9	21.7	8.0	175
Selecting, supervising, mentoring, and supporting staff	14.3	54.3	26.3	5.1	175
Providing formal and informal feedback to teachers on instructional practices	16.0	48.6	32.0	3.4	175
Supporting staff in using multiple data sources to the assess and improve the instructional program	15.4	53.7	25.1	5.7	175
Engaging staff in courageous conversations about equity and inclusion	22.9	48.6	21.7	6.9	175

N* - Percentages are out of the total of number of participants who responded to each question; this number is provided in the last column.

DEVELOPING PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL RESOURCES

Participants were also asked to indicate (1) the level of support and professional development they received and (2) the level of challenge they experienced in developing personal and professional resources.

Levels of Support

Participants' responses were clustered primarily in the low to medium areas of support. Table 6.1 shows that participants reported receiving none to low levels of support in the following 10 of the 14 areas identified:

- Understanding the social and emotional changes that occur in the transition from teacher to administration (77.4%);
- Balancing work demands and my personal life (72.6%);
- Discerning and managing emotions (66.8%);
- Finding time for reflection and feedback on personal growth (66.8%);
- Influencing and motivating different stakeholder groups (66.1%);

- Developing knowledge of the cultural and political dynamics of my school and district (58.9%);
- Recognizing the need for and accessing personal and professional supports when needed (55.8%);
- Maintaining a hopeful and positive attitude under challenging circumstances (64.4%);
- Prioritizing and responding to conflicting demands (58.1%); and
- Finding time to develop professionally and improve my own leadership practices (50.9%).

Medium to high levels of support were reported in the following areas:

- Developing knowledge of school and classroom conditions that improve teaching and learning (70.0%);
- Setting and achieving personal and professional goals (60.3%); and
- Making decisions that are based on sound personal and professional ethical principles (65.7%).

Table 6.1 – Developing Personal and Professional Resources: Level of Support and Professional development

DEVELOPING PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL RESOURCES	LEVEL OF CHALLENGE				
	None %	Low %	Medium %	High %	N*
Developing knowledge of school and classroom conditions that improve teaching and learning	9.2	20.7	43.7	26.4	174
Developing knowledge of the cultural and political dynamics of my school and district	20.0	38.9	33.1	8.0	175
Setting and achieving personal and professional goals	13.2	26.4	43.1	17.2	174
Prioritizing and responding to conflicting demands	23.0	35.1	34.5	7.5	174
Developing expertise in anticipating, interpreting and solving problems	15.6	43.4	31.8	9.2	173
Making decisions that are based on sound personal and professional ethical principles	13.2	31.0	40.8	14.9	174
Influencing and motivating different stakeholder groups	20.7	45.4	27.6	6.3	174
Discerning and managing emotions	25.1	41.7	26.9	6.3	175
Understanding the social and emotional changes that occur in the transition from teacher to principal or vice-principal	41.0	36.4	16.8	5.8	173
Recognizing the need for and accessing personal and professional supports when needed	18.4	37.4	32.2	12.1	174

DEVELOPING PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL RESOURCES	LEVEL OF CHALLENGE				
	None %	Low %	Medium %	High %	N*
Finding time for reflection and feedback on personal growth	26.4	37.4	28.7	7.5	174
Maintaining a hopeful and positive attitude under challenging circumstances	27.0	37.4	24.1	11.5	174
Finding time to develop professionally and improve my own leadership practices	16.6	34.3	37.1	12.0	175
Balancing work demands and my personal life	30.3	42.3	21.7	5.7	175

N* - Percentages are out of the total of number of participants who responded to each question; this number is provided in the last column.

Levels of Challenge

Table 6.2 shows that in most areas, the majority of participants reported experiencing moderate levels of challenge in developing personal and professional resources. The three areas that most participants identified as not challenging were:

- Making decisions that are based on sound personal and professional ethical principles (43.6%);
- Recognizing the need for and accessing personal and professional supports when needed (39.9%); and
- Setting and achieving personal and professional goals (34.7%).

The areas that were identified as challenging or extremely challenging were as follows:

- Balancing work demands and my personal life (67.2%);
- Finding time for reflection and feedback on personal growth (58.5%); and
- Prioritizing and responding to conflicting demands (42.2%)

Table 6.2 – Duties and Responsibilities: Level of Challenge

DEVELOPING PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL RESOURCES	LEVEL OF CHALLENGE				N*
	Not Challenging %	Moderately Challenging %	Challenging %	Extremely Challenging %	
Developing knowledge of school and classroom conditions that improve teaching and learning	29.5	48.0	19.1	3.5	173
Developing knowledge of the cultural and political dynamics of my school and district	29.9	48.9	17.8	3.4	174
Setting and achieving personal and professional goals	34.7	49.7	12.7	2.9	173
Prioritizing and responding to conflicting demands	16.8	41.0	28.9	13.3	173
Developing expertise in anticipating, interpreting and solving problems	21.5	55.8	19.2	3.5	172
Making decisions that are based on sound personal and professional ethical principles	43.6	46.0	12.2	1.2	172
Influencing and motivating different stakeholder groups	15.0	52.6	28.3	4.0	173
Discerning and managing emotions	31.6	47.7	13.8	6.9	174

DEVELOPING PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL RESOURCES	LEVEL OF CHALLENGE				
	Not Challenging %	Moderately Challenging %	Challenging %	Extremely Challenging %	N*
Understanding the social and emotional changes that occur in the transition from teacher to principal or vice-principal	19.1	43.9	23.7	13.3	173
Recognizing the need for and accessing personal and professional supports when needed	39.9	38.7	16.2	5.2	173
Finding time for reflection and feedback on personal growth	21.4	30.1	28.3	20.2	173
Maintaining a hopeful and positive attitude under challenging circumstances	29.7	38.4	23.8	8.1	172
Finding time to develop professionally and improve my own leadership practices	9.2	37.9	36.2	16.7	174
Balancing work demands and my personal life	4.6	28.2	36.2	31.0	174

N* - Percentages are out of the total of number of participants who responded to each question; this number is provided in the last column.

KEY CHALLENGES EXPERIENCED IN THE TRANSITION

In addition to responding to the closed survey items, the research participants were also provided with opportunities to elaborate further on the key challenges they encountered in the open-ended survey items and the individual and focus group interviews. For the most part, these responses were clustered around the following themes: (1) role configurations, expectations and workload demands, (2) cultural and political contexts, and (3) work life balance and scaffolding.

Role Configurations, Expectations and Workload Demands

Participants identified many differences between teaching and administrative roles, responsibilities, expectations, workload demands, and role configurations.

When asked to elaborate in the open-ended survey questions and the individual and focus group interviews on their key challenges, the participants identified many differences between teaching and administrative roles, responsibilities, expectations, workload demands, and role configurations that challenged them cognitively, emotionally and physically. For example, the participants described learning to think and behave like a principal or vice-principal as a “long and steep learning curve” requiring unaccustomed skills such as “seeing the big picture”, multi-tasking, dealing with crises, and responding to and prioritizing conflicting demands. Additional challenges were connected to dealing with overwhelming workloads, lack of time to accomplish key tasks, conflicting expectations and high levels of demand from principal and vice-principal colleagues and school stakeholders, along with the expectation that “you come in knowing how to do the job”, as illustrated in this participant’s comment:

First and second year participants described the increase in duties, responsibilities and workloads as physically and emotionally stressful.

There is an exponential leap in level of demands and expectations going from teaching to principal or vice-principal. The role requires one to be “on” (active,

thinking, problem-solving and responsive to people) non-stop for at least 10 hours plus per day.

First and second year participants described the increase in duties, responsibilities and workloads as physically and emotionally stressful, particularly when they were unable to define their role’ parameters and/or did not have the time, technical skills and the procedural knowledge required to complete everyday managerial and disciplinary tasks (e.g., on-calls processes for occasional teachers, suspensions). The following representative quotations illustrate some of the participants’ challenges regarding difficult workloads and a lack of transitional support:

The workload is heavy especially in the first year. There needs to be a more methodical way of moving into the role rather than...game on! There needs to be expectations that we will look after our stress (i.e., we must take a lunch break...my current principal has not encouraged this, in fact I was discouraged from taking a 15 minute walk when I voiced elevated stress level).

Accepting responsibility for most things with little or no clear outline of duties or roles. Having everything thrown at me, and finding the time to do everything. Fighting the fatigue nightly.

The participants reported that increased levels of responsibility and scrutiny, as well as “the need for excessive and thorough documentation” limited their ability to support staff and student learning and to bring about the desired changes in practice to improve results.

Additional areas of challenge were related to “increased external accountability matched with a diminished power” which hindered the participants’ ability to exercise instructional leadership. The participants also reported that increased levels of responsibility and scrutiny, as well as “the need for excessive and thorough documentation” limited their ability to support staff and student learning and to bring about the desired changes in practice to improve results. While these challenges were common for all principals and vice-principals, they were further compounded for vice-principals who were assigned joint administrative and classroom teaching roles or

joint schools (e.g., acting, teaching, and shared vice-principals). The following representative comments illustrate how splitting time between administration and teaching presented additional challenges:

Being a VP [vice-principal] with teaching responsibilities often feels like I am not doing justice to either position. Scheduled teaching is predictable but many circumstances that a VP encounters are not.

Finding the time to acquire the administrative skills and knowledge I desire given the time and effort I must dedicate to the responsibilities that relate to the teaching component of my position. I also find it difficult to know when to say no.

Cultural and Political Contexts

An overarching theme in the participants' description of their challenges was related to school and district politics.

An overarching theme in the participants' description of their challenges was related to school and district politics, particularly the existence of a difficult provincial political climate that inhibited the development of productive working relationships with teaching colleagues and parents. In Table 6.2, 70.1% of survey respondents identified developing knowledge of the cultural and political dynamics of their school as district as moderately challenging, challenging or extremely challenging, while in Table 6.1, 58.9% reported receiving no or low levels of support in developing knowledge of the cultural and political dynamics of their school and district. When participants were asked to provide additional information about their challenges in their open-ended survey items and the individual and focus group interviews, the majority of these examples were connected to working with staff and community members within school contexts.

Working with Staff

The survey participants rated most of the duties and responsibilities associated with working with staff as moderately challenging, challenging or extremely challenging, e.g., engaging staff in professional development, selecting, supervising, mentoring and supporting staff, providing formal and informal feedback to teachers, supporting staff in using multiple data sources and engaging staff in courageous conversations about equity and inclusion (Table 5.2). In the

qualitative data from the open-ended survey questions and the individual and focus group interviews related to the challenges associated with working with staff, participants also reported that navigating "the politics of administration and hierarchy" was challenging, particularly as it related to supervising and motivating unionized staff.

The participants also reported that ongoing provincial negotiations between teacher federations, school boards and the province created strained relationships and limited these principals' and vice-principals' ability to build viable bridges between and among groups (e.g., between parents and staff), engage teachers in instructional leadership and implement new initiatives related to classroom instruction. The following representative comment illustrates some of these cultural and political dynamics:

The key challenge is in working in a highly unionized environment where contracts dictate interactions between principals and teachers. We are accountable for school improvement yet we have no power to hire appropriate staff, monitor progress and teacher performance or demand improvements of teaching practice. Because of union constraints I do not have the authority to mandate proper teaching strategies and accountability. I have provided countless hours for professional development, sharing of school data, assessment and yet movement towards greater success is stagnant because teacher unions make it clear that we can only "invite" teachers to develop practice. This has made our job an oxymoron of sorts—we are accountable with no power to make those who work in schools "accountable" to the children, parents and the taxpayers.

Tensions between teachers and principals and vice-principals also added an additional layer of challenge for teaching vice-principals and acting vice-principals because of their joint teaching and administrative roles and responsibilities, as explained by this acting vice-principal:

Because I am an acting VP [vice-principal], I am still a union member (on leave of absence) which has set me up on several occasions to be attacked by teachers who like to have the union rep in and discuss if I was somehow unprofessional with them (for example if they think I was being critical for any reason they believe that breaks the union rule that one teacher cannot be critical of another). I find this really irritating especially since I am usually not being critical. I am just trying to do my job. I feel the

acting VP position makes life VERY difficult for the new vice-principal (but that is okay, if it needs to be this way, I use it as a professional development tool to find ways to overcome these interpersonal challenges). I just hope it doesn't go on for too long.

Working with Community

When the survey participants were asked to indicate their levels of challenge in working with stakeholders, the majority of participants described tasks such as influencing and motivating different stakeholder groups, and managing conflict among stakeholders moderately challenging, challenging or extremely challenging (Table 5.2).

In the additional qualitative data gathered from the open-ended survey items and the individual and focus group interviews, participants reported that provincial, district, and school politics restricted opportunities to build positive relationships between and among school constituents and local communities. Some participants also reported that building relationships with parents was challenging, particularly when they were not provided with advance information from superintendents, principals, or administrative team members about local political and cultural dynamics. Principals and vice-principals who were placed in affluent communities reported high levels of entitlement by students and parents, and “high level of political interference in how school programs are selected, supported, and prioritized”. The inability to support impoverished communities and to access programs for families and students with mental health issues was also identified as challenging, particularly when relevant professional development and resources were unavailable:

Providing mental health support to students and families in crisis was something I was not prepared for, when a parent comes to the school at 6 pm with their child in crisis, begging for help and I don't know what to do or where to turn.

While participants expressed commitment to building positive school-community relationships, some principals and vice-principals indicated that the lack of clear guidelines challenged their ability to focus on school priorities, as explained below:

The board needs to consolidate who can walk in and do what in schools. [There is a] constant stream of requests from people off the street to volunteer, visit, sell us something -- really interferes with ability to meet needs of our main clientele: the students and their families.

Work Life Balance and Scaffolding

Participants also reported challenges related to balancing their professional demands and their personal lives. Table 6.2 displays the different levels of challenge experienced, with the majority of survey participants reporting the following items as challenging or extremely challenging: balancing work demands and their personal life (67.2%), finding time for reflection and feedback on personal growth (58.5%), and prioritizing and responding to conflicting demands (42.2%). When discussing challenges related to personal well-being and work life balance in their open-ended survey responses and in the individual focus and group interviews, participants identified difficult and unmanageable workloads as challenging to their transition and their ability to be effective instructional leaders. These participants reported that they assumed that they would have been assigned workloads that were commensurate with their level of experience and that they would be provided with support and scaffolding from their supervisors. They voiced concerns about what appeared to be a lack of system awareness of their workload and its impact on their leadership learning, physical and emotional well-being and work life balance:

No one is overseeing our workload. [I have] immediate supervisors who don't understand that work is not the ONLY important element in my life. No one seems to be interested in my well-being (aside from my immediate colleagues who have been in the role longer and feel the same). There is no one listening to our concerns, frustrations, and requests to stop adding more to our workload.

It has been overwhelming. The support I have received after I became a VP [vice-principal] has been from my own initiative, with the exception of my former VP offering to show me how to do Ontario Secondary School Literacy Testing (OSSLT) on the Ministry website. I work from 7am up to 7pm with no break. It is exhausting and at this point a decision I think I may regret, but I do know that it is early in this next step.

Participants with young children also reported that their day-to-day workload demands and long hours challenged their ability to spend time with their families and to balance their personal and professional lives, as expressed below:

I have a young family and I am up early and home late.

Finding time to do all that is required while keeping in mind the needs of my family. Personal life - very little time. My family lost patience in always waiting for me to be available.

Many participants reported that their challenges were compounded by the lack of scaffolding and support for the social and emotional aspects of their transition. While many survey participants reported receiving valuable professional development opportunities and supports (Tables 3, 4.1 and 5.1), the majority reported receiving no support or low levels of support and professional development in areas related to personal well-being and work life balance, e.g., understanding the social and emotional changes that occur in the transition from teaching to principal and vice-principal (77.4%), balancing work demands and their personal life (72.6%), and finding time for reflection and personal growth (66.8%) (Table 6.1). These themes were also prevalent in the qualitative data, particularly with respect to the lack of venues for newly appointed principals and vice-principals to access emotional support and to voice concerns about their mental well-being, as illustrated by these vice-principals:

It is challenging to voice concern of mental health, emotions etc. without looking weak. I find that the role is isolating, I can't talk to staff about many issues – confidentiality and some of my issues are about my principal and I have no one I can talk to about this. My principal and I have a different style and approach. I could use more support navigating this relationship.

Additional challenges were connected to the requirement for principals and vice-principals to remain on school premises due to a teachers' work-to-rule. These restrictions also imposed limits on these principals' and vice-principals' ability to access mentoring, professional development and networking sessions outside of school as illustrated in the following representative comments:

This year, due to the climate with the teachers' work to rule, the board insisted that the vice-principals stay in their buildings which greatly impeded our networking and learning. With the chance to meet with other vice-principal teams, we were able to ask questions and build a network of support for different situations.

I find it extremely challenging to find opportunities for professional development that will prepare me to take the next step to principal. Although the board has laid out the competencies, they are vague and not altogether helpful for planning actual involvement in system wide initiatives that will help me to be prepared for the next step.

KEY SUCCESSES EXPERIENCED IN THE TRANSITION

As evidenced in Table 4.2, the majority of participants reported medium or high levels of growth in developing leadership practices and capacities. When asked to describe their key successes in the open-ended survey items and the individual and focus group interviews, many participants identified a number of areas of growth and gain and expressed pride

in their ability to overcome some of the obstacles that they initially perceived as insurmountable. For the most part, these successes were connected to their ability to develop and use their own personal characteristics and resources in order to grow as instructional leaders and managers, facilitate staff and student success, and build relationships with stakeholders.

The participants underscored the importance of “seeing success over time” and achieving personal and school goals that were consistent with their values.

GROWING AS INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERS AND MANAGERS

The participants underscored the importance of “seeing success over time” and achieving personal and school goals that were consistent with their values. For many of the first and second year principals and vice-principals, success was initially a process of surviving, i.e., being able to respond to the day to day demands and “staying afloat” as captured below:

I don't feel like I am merely treading water, I feel like I might be doing the doggie paddle. I survived and, eventually, thrived.

Integral to participants' narratives of surviving and thriving were themes of engaging in “continuous learning”, using their personal acumen to develop required competencies and to access professional development and resources, and learning from mistakes. Participants expressed pride in their ability to integrate and transfer learning from school to school, solve problems, and creatively leverage their knowledge to support staff, students, and parents as illustrated in the representative comments below:

I was able to learn some operation aspects myself - how to use Trillium, how to schedule exams, OSSLT, how to timetable and stay within the confines of the collective agreement. There are lots of on-line tools that can be accessed after school hours.

I have many transferable leadership skills from other roles and my community involvement. I have

been blessed to have opportunities to be creative and innovative in my role within the numerous programs I oversee. I like the autonomy.

With respect to students, participants expressed pride in their ability to “make a difference” by supporting them academically and emotionally and creating conditions that sustained student success. The most frequently mentioned achievements were related to supporting “at risk students”, instituting consistent school-wide approaches to behavior which reduced disciplinary infractions, and “improving school spirit”. Leading instructional practice through dialogue and modeling, and helping staff improve instructional practices were also identified as important gains, particularly for principals and vice-principals who were more experienced and were able to remain in the same school:

I have really enjoyed developing and working with staff in a long-term professional plan - 2.5 years at the same school made this possible.

I have also found success in being able to provide teachers with the time to work together and to move forward slowly. I have also had great success in leading change and supporting our special needs students in the school.

Building Relationships

The majority of participants (83.9%) indicated medium to high levels of growth in building productive relationships

with families and communities (Table 4.2). These results were confirmed in their open-ended responses in the survey and the interviews. Most participants expressed confidence in their ability to work collaboratively with and provide support to a wide variety of stakeholders inside and outside of their school community. For the most part, their successes were related to developing and maintaining trusting relationships, handling conflicts respectfully and productively, supporting students and families, and engaging parents and the larger community as partners as illustrated in the following comments:

I am working hard to repair damaged relationships within the staff so that we can have more of a team approach and all take responsibility for every student.

I made a point of 'opening up' the school to our community so that we would be seen as accessible to everyone. This

has had a very positive impact on parental engagement; in getting to know the community better, I came to realize that I knew very little about the impacts of poverty on learning so I've started to research this and have purchased a mentor text so our staff can also learn more about this topic as it relates to about 70% of our students.

Many principals and vice-principals also expressed satisfaction in their ability to build authentic and positive relationships with other supportive leaders inside and outside of their school:

I realized that I needed to find my own network of individuals to have coffee with and converse with outside of school... I am part of a small group of female educational leaders in my area and we will meet for dinner and professional dialogue.

PRINCIPALS' AND VICE-PRINCIPALS' RECOMMENDATIONS

The research participants were invited to make recommendations for improving the transition to the role of vice-principal or principal through open-ended questions in the survey and in the individual and focus group interviews. This section reports on the participants' recommendations to the following groups: (a) newly appointed and aspiring principals and vice-principals, (b) Principal's Qualification Program (PQP) providers, (c) school districts and the Ministry, (d) universities, and (e) principals and vice-principals' associations.

Newly Appointed and Aspiring Principal and Vice-principal

Participants' advice to newly appointed and aspiring principals and vice-principals was clustered around five main areas: (1) employing and developing personal dispositions and resources, (2) understanding the role of principals and vice-principals and transitions to the role, (3) building relationships and networks of support, (4) accessing professional development and development and (5) maintaining mental fitness and work-life balance.

Employing and Developing Personal Dispositions and Resources

Participants attributed administrative success primarily to "experience and personality". They recommended that aspiring and newly appointed principals and vice-principals:

- develop awareness of their own strengths and weaknesses through reflection and formal and informal feedback mechanisms; and
- intentionally use their personal initiative to build their own administrative competence and capacity.

Understanding the Role of the Principal and Vice-Principal and Transitions to the Role

Participants advised newly appointed and aspiring principals and vice-principals to:

- learn as much as possible from newly appointed and former principals and vice-principals, supervisors, and mentors about the 'pros and cons' of administration and the transition from teaching to the role of principal or vice-principal; and
- prepare themselves for the potential psychological and physical stress associated with the following: loneliness and isolation from former teaching colleagues; increased time commitments, work demands, and responsibilities; highly political contexts and unionized environments; variable levels of support and power; insufficient financial

remuneration; and potential negative impacts on personal and family relationships.

Building Relationships and Networks of Support

Participants underscored the importance of providing and accessing support and developing strategic alliances at all organizational levels. They urged newly appointed and aspiring principals and vice-principals to:

- develop caring and supportive relationships with as many stakeholders as possible (e.g., principals and vice-principals, staff, students, parents);
- build networks of support through participating in coaching and mentoring programs and professional learning communities; and
- cultivate a variety of informal mentors (particularly their own principal) and a diverse circle of people (e.g., family, colleagues, and supervisors) to whom they could turn for support, advice and answers.

Accessing Professional Development

Aspiring and newly appointed principals and vice-principals were encouraged to:

- engage in continuous learning and professional development in order to mitigate the “very steep learning curve” of administration and to ensure ongoing professional growth and competence;
- actively seek out knowledge about the theoretical and practical aspects of organizational systems and political dynamics to enable whole school/system thinking; and
- seek out multiple and varied opportunities to develop administrative skills and competencies, such as working or volunteering in different administrative and leadership roles and settings to acquire hands-on technical skills, disciplinary and behavioural strategies, and a good knowledge of school and community support systems.

Maintaining Mental Fitness and Work-life Balance

Participants underscored the importance of striving for a healthy balance, personally and professionally in order to avoid early burnout. Aspiring principals and vice-principals were advised to:

- proceed with caution or stay in teaching; and
- consider the potential negative impacts on their family and to “have their mental, physical and family life in perfect order”.

Newly appointed principals and vice-principals were also advised to:

- manage time and maintain balance by establishing priorities and delegating responsibilities;
- be patient with themselves;

- spend time with friends and family; and
- find venues outside of school where they could find support to help them manage role stress, e.g., regular exercise and other forms of stress relief.

Principal’s Qualifications Program (PQP) Providers

Participants recommended that professional development providers at the professional association and university levels continue to provide high-quality programs in face-to-face and on-line learning formats.

Participants recommended that PQP providers at the professional association and university levels continue to provide high-quality programs in face-to-face and on-line learning formats.

The following recommendations were also made regarding PQP structure and content:

- redesign the PQP to create a balance between theory, policy, and practice by including experiential learning components (e.g., formal job shadowing and internships) so that participants can gain administrative insights through ‘lived experience’;
- restructure the PQP so that: (a) PQP Part 1 is taken prior to appointment and focuses more on the more theoretical aspects of leadership; (b) PQP Part 2 is taken after appointment and is offered as a formal internship program that places successful principal and vice-principal candidates in two placements - one in their own school and another outside of their school or district; (c) separate courses for elementary and secondary candidates are made available; and (d) additional post-PQP sessions for newly appointed principals and vice-principals are offered in the form of shorter refresher courses to support learning while principals and vice-principals are in their new role;
- employ skilled and informed instructors, i.e., practicing principals and vice-principals who lead by example and who possess up-to-date knowledge about policies and trends in instructional leadership;
- provide opportunities for principal and vice-principal candidates to engage in honest dialogues with newly appointed and experienced principals and vice-principals about the changes that occur during the transition from teacher to

- principal or vice-principal, the realities of the job, and the pros and cons of working as an administrative team; and
- facilitate connections between theory and practice by complementing the theoretical components of each course with problem-based learning activities and case studies that are based on real situations, and hands-on professional development modules (e.g., instructional leadership, interpersonal and team building skills, communication and conflict management, district and Ministry software, health and safety, teacher performance appraisals, collective agreements, mental health supports, special education, poverty, emotional intelligence, youth counseling, time management, well-being and work-life balance).

School Districts and the Ministry

Participants recommended that the school districts and the Ministry continue to provide leadership development and mentoring supports and that they consult with newly appointed principals and vice-principals regarding their needs in the following areas: (1) bridging teaching and administrative roles; (2) working terms and conditions; (3) selection, placement, and induction; (4) support and mentoring; and (5) professional development and professional development.

Participants recommended that the school districts and the Ministry continue to provide leadership development and mentoring supports.

Bridging Teaching and Administrative Roles

Participants suggested that the Ministry and school boards institute the following recommendations in order to ensure more systematic and fluid approaches to enable a smooth crossover from teaching to principal or vice-principal:

- foster a broader and more developmental view of educational leadership by creating a leadership continuum that includes teacher leadership;
- institute shared and distributed forms of leadership in order to facilitate and sustain collaboration between principals and vice-principals and teachers;
- provide developmental professional development opportunities that are designed to cultivate instructional leadership, beginning when new teachers are hired;
- reach out to teacher candidates from minoritized groups to make them aware of different pathways to leadership;
- collaborate with teacher federations to allow teachers to assume formal and informal administrative duties responsibilities without teacher federation sanctions; and
- extend the option to return to teaching without loss of former position or seniority.

Working Terms and Conditions

Participants identified increased workload, working hours, accountability demands and decreased power and financial remuneration as barriers to individual competence, instructional leadership, and institutional capacity. They recommended that the Ministry and school boards work together to:

- reduce external demands e.g., new initiatives, reports, emails, and paperwork so that principals and vice-principals can focus on instructional leadership, school priorities, and capacity building;
- review principals and vice-principals' terms and conditions of employment and provide compensation that is commensurate with administrative workload and responsibilities;
- ensure role clarity for vice-principals and work with principals and vice-principals to: (a) review the current provisions in the Education Act that allow principals to delegate duties to vice-principals that promote distributed leadership, (b) create a manual, as part of this review process, that clearly outlines expectations of vice-principals' roles and duties, the types of leadership and management professional development that should occur at different developmental stages, and (c) detail the role of the principal in providing support and professional development to their vice-principals;
- review the role of the teaching and shared vice-principals and, where possible, eliminate the classroom teaching portions of the vice-principalship; and
- provide administrative support teachers (AST) in single-principal schools.

Selection, Placement, and Induction

Participants recommended that boards review their recruitment, hiring, and placement processes in order to ensure equity and transparency. They suggested that in order to offset newcomer overload and burn-out, school districts:

- match principal and vice-principal candidates' skill sets to school needs;
- review policies and practices around assigning newly appointed vice-principals to dual schools, joint teaching roles, and across different panels;
- provide formal orientation programs and "pre-start

workshops” in areas such as policies, procedures, and technical software at least two weeks before school starts;

- formalize opportunities for newly appointed principals and vice-principals to meet with their principals, administrative team members and previous role incumbents to discuss job expectations, prioritize critical roles, and negotiate and allocate monthly duties; and
- provide additional time during the early stages of the transition for newly appointed principals and vice-principals to familiarize themselves with their roles and visit their assigned school.

Support and Mentoring

Participants emphasized the need for mentoring and graduated transitional supports as follows:

- pair newly appointed vice-principals with capable and proven principals at least for the first two years of their transition;
- ensure explicit continuation of formal mentoring programs beyond Year 1 of the transition;
- ensure that supervisory officers and principals with newly appointed vice-principals are trained as mentors and coaches;
- ensure that supervisory officers are accessible to newly appointed vice-principals, particularly in situations of conflict with their principal;
- provide release time for and institute mechanisms that require newly appointed vice-principals and principals and their supervisors to engage in regular and ongoing career planning and feedback cycles;
- ensure that formal mentoring programs have clear and consistent guidelines regarding mentors’ roles and responsibilities and realistic timelines to complete the required professional development;
- begin mentoring programs before appointment, extend programs beyond the first year in the role, and allow newly appointed principals to participate in formal mentoring programs;
- allow newly appointed principals and vice-principals input into choosing their mentor;
- provide support structures for newly appointed principals and vice-principals in the event of mentor-mentee problems; and
- create additional opportunities for peer-to-peer mentoring and networking before and after appointment.

Professional Development and Professional Development

Participants suggested that there should be some level of accountability at the Ministry and board levels to provide professional development, workshops, and independent learning activities that connect leadership policy and theory to school principals and vice-principals working realities. They recommended that the Ministry and boards:

- create formal and informal experiential opportunities and professional development sessions to support and encourage aspiring leaders and support newly appointed principals and vice-principals;
- complement instructional leadership professional development with practical professional development in the day-to-day tasks integral to running the school and supporting the instructional program;
- ensure that professional development is on-going during the year and timed to allow newcomers to process information;
- prioritize essential skills and competencies and provide hands-on sessions for principals and vice-principals;
- institute formalized opportunities to develop administrative knowledge, skills, and dispositions, e.g., internships, job shadowing, teacher in charge, administrative periods;
- create opportunities to discuss the school initiatives and operations with counterparts from other districts;
- provide release time and supply coverage for essential or important professional development; and
- provide additional funding incentives for principals and vice-principals to engage in continuous leadership learning and professional development, e.g., Additional Qualifications and Masters level courses and conferences.

Universities

Many participants reported a lack of awareness regarding the kinds of services universities offered to support newly appointed principals’ and vice-principals’ transitions apart from PQP programs. Participants recommended that universities:

- collaborate with the Ministry, school boards, and professional associations to devise a more comprehensive approach to leadership that includes teacher leadership;
- offer Master’s programs in instructional leadership with a practicum or internship component and a Masters of Business Administration (MBA) in school administration;
- allow teachers and principals and vice-principals access to Masters courses even if they are not planning on obtaining master’s accreditation;

- share research that is leadership focused through face-to-face, blended and online formats;
- undertake additional research on the role of principals and vice-principals and transitions to the role; and
- provide regular information regarding available supports and programs.

Principal and Vice-principal Associations

Participants recommended that professional associations support newly appointed principals and vice-principals through: (a) professional development (b) advocacy, and (c) mentoring and networking.

Participants recommended that professional associations support newly appointed principals and vice-principals through professional development, advocacy, and mentoring and networking.

Professional Development

Participants appreciated the multi-layered services associations provide and they suggested that they:

- continue the current suite of services related to professional development, counseling, email about professional and social events and relevant news items;
- become more visible early in the transition and share information about their programs, supports, and role demands and expectations;
- proactively seek out resources and create graduated professional learning opportunities targeted towards the developmental needs of aspiring and new leaders;
- provide additional free and/or affordable supports and courses that are not currently offered by school boards and offer professional opportunities in multiple formats and different locations to members and teachers who were short-listed for principal and vice-principal positions; and
- collaborate with school boards to create a leadership academy that is accessible to aspiring and newly appointed principals and vice-principals.

Advocacy

Participants recommended that associations:

- gain substantive power so that they could influence key educational policies;
- lobby the Ministry and boards for improved compensation and working conditions for principals and vice-principals;
- advocate more strongly for principals and vice-principals to have more power in decision making, staffing, teacher performance reviews, and improved controls over building management;
- foster inclusionary practices that allow vice-principals greater voice, e.g., direct access to board and Ministry information and the ability to attend monthly vice-principal and or principal meetings; and
- advocate with district school boards and Ministry of Education to structure newly appointed principals' and vice-principals' roles so that they are given time to understand critical aspects of the job prior to starting other administrative tasks.

Support and Mentoring

In order to support newcomers and to counter early burnout, participants recommended that professional associations:

- provide more personal and emotional support through on-going counseling and enhance existing practices with more direct personal support, e.g., phone calls and emails welcoming newly appointed principals and vice-principals and offering assistance;
- support, encourage, and monitor newly appointed principals and vice-principals more closely by explaining role challenges, parameters, and pitfalls and how associations can support vice-principals and principals, assisting newly appointed members with paperwork after appointment, and providing opportunities to check-in, e.g., an accessible help line to answer questions;
- collaborate with school districts to design and create meaningful and sustained mentorship programs that include opportunities for individual and peer mentoring, job-embedded learning, and cognitive coaching;
- facilitate additional networking opportunities for newcomers to meet with peers at the same stage of their career, and with current and retired vice-principals and principals in order to dialogue, share best practices, and exchange information and experiences within and across schools and districts; and
- provide a provincial platform for one-to-one mentoring and sharing.

SUMMARY AND ACTION RECOMMENDATIONS

This research gathered quantitative and qualitative evidence from newly appointed principals and vice-principals about their transitions from teaching to the role of principal and vice-principal. Specifically, it sought to explore newly appointed vice-principals and principals' transition experiences, their challenges and successes, to identify promising programs and practices, and to gather recommendations regarding how newly appointed vice-principals and principals' leadership transitions can be supported. The findings presented in this report are based on quantitative and qualitative data collected from 290 survey responses (263 English and 27 French) and follow-up interviews with 42 principals and vice-principals (17 individual interview and 25 focus group interview participants). The participants' responses and the evidence collected from district school board, Ministry of Education, IEL, and professional association websites confirmed that considerable efforts have been and continue to be made to improve the leadership landscape in Ontario and to achieve high levels of achievement. The participants also identified many promising programs, particularly at the district levels, that have been initiated with the intention of supporting aspiring and newly appointed vice-principals and principals. Their overall responses confirmed the importance of multi-pronged supports personal, professional and institutional supports as educators prepare for and make the transition from teaching to administrative roles.

The research findings indicate that considerable interventions have been made in the leadership learning landscape in Ontario and that there are many programs in place to support aspiring and newly appointed principals and vice-principals.

The majority of the participants (74.9%) reported feeling prepared for their role. As evidenced in Table 1, the most helpful pre-role preparation factors were connected to participants' ability to seek out and take advantage of professional learning and mentoring opportunities (95.6%), indicating a strong reliance on personal leadership resources. Opportunities to prepare for the role of principal or vice-principal were also provided by pre-role preparation programs (89.5%), in-school principals and vice-principals (88.5%), and school districts (83.5%). Table 3 shows that participants also reported receiving support from a variety of sources after assuming administrative roles, with the majority of support

coming from immediate supervisors, administrative team members, and other principals and vice-principals outside of their schools. With respect to developing leadership practices and capacities, Tables 4.1 shows that participants received medium levels of support and Table 4.2 shows that they experienced medium to high levels of growth. Factors supporting these newly appointed principals' and vice-principals' leadership learning and growth positively were connected to timely, targeted, and on-going professional development and professional development that was geared towards the newly appointed leaders' transitional needs and developmental stages. Job-embedded opportunities for skill development and reflection, healthy coaching and mentoring relationships and networks of critical supports were also identified as invaluable supports.

The participants also reported encountering some personal, professional, and institutional factors that challenged their administrative and leadership learning. Pre-role transitional challenges were connected primarily to preparation and professional development factors and limited experiential opportunities that bridged teaching and administrative leadership. While support and mentoring were available after the participants assumed their role, Table 3 identified multiple areas where participants did not receive required supports. These include professional development in soft areas which are core to transitional growth and leadership competence, such as navigating school and district politics (66.1%), opportunities to discuss the socio-emotional aspects of their transition (62.3%) and professional development in and opportunities to practice their communication and coaching skills (46.7%). Table 5.1 also indicated varying levels of support, with more than half of the participants reporting that they received no support or low levels of support related to core duties and responsibilities after assuming their positions.

Participants were also challenged by factors related to their workloads, the socio-political and cultural dynamics of their school and district, and social and emotional aspects of this transition. A prevalent theme in the participants' discussions about school and district politics was the existence of a difficult provincial political climate and its impact on their ability to develop productive working relationships with teaching colleagues and communities. As evidenced in Table 6.2, 70.1 % of the survey respondents identified developing knowledge of the cultural and political dynamics of their

school as district as moderately challenging, challenging or extremely challenging. Table 6.1 also shows that 58.9% of the survey participants reported receiving no support or low levels of support in developing knowledge of the cultural and political dynamics of their school and district, indicating the need for additional professional development in this area. Additional areas of challenge were related to increased external accountability, responsibility and scrutiny, diminished power, and institutional requirements related to excessive and thorough documentation. These managerial requirements limited these newly appointed principals' and vice-principals' ability to support staff and student learning and to bring about the desired changes in practice to improve results. While these leadership challenges were common for all principals and vice-principals, they were further compounded for vice-principals who were assigned joint administrative and classroom teaching roles or joint schools (e.g., acting, teaching, and shared vice-principals). Vice-principals in general, particularly those occupying dual or acting roles, e.g., teaching and acting vice-principals, experienced additional role challenges due to unclear role parameters. These factors increased transitional stress and strain and the participants' ability to achieve personal and professional balance and well-being.

The participants made a comprehensive range of recommendations to aspiring and newly appointed principals and vice-principals, Principal's Qualifications Programs (PQP) providers, district school boards, the Ministry of Education, universities, and principal and vice-principal associations regarding ways in which principals and vice-principals' transitions can be supported at the personal, professional and institutional levels. These recommendations highlighted many areas that can be addressed in order to ensure that newly appointed principals and vice-principals are equipped with the personal and professional dispositions, skills and capacities required to successfully navigate the transition from teacher to principal or vice-principal. The action recommendations that follow build on the participants' reports and recommendations. They are intended to provide starting points to consolidate and enhance the promising practices that are currently in place and are best addressed through consistent and collaborative dialogue with new vice-principals and principals, along with coordinated planning and partnerships and concerted action by policy makers, district school boards, professional associations and universities.

Action Recommendations

The research findings indicate that considerable interventions have been made in the leadership learning landscape in Ontario and that there are many programs in place to support aspiring and newly appointed principals and vice-principals. It is encouraging to note that almost 75% of the vice-principals and principals in this study came in feeling prepared for their role. For the most part, these principals and vice-principals underscored the importance of employing their own personal leadership resources to meet these challenges and to grow as leaders. Their success was also buttressed by responsive and relevant pre- and during role professional development, support and mentoring. At the same time, their responses and recommendations also indicate that there is still work to be done in order to equip newly appointed principals and vice-principals with the skills and competencies required to navigate the complex cognitive, social, and emotional challenges newcomers are likely to encounter in the transition from teaching to principal and vice-principal roles. The participants identified areas that can be improved in order to support newly appointed principals' and vice-principals' leadership growth and capacity. The following action recommendations are made in order to assist policymakers, professional associations, and districts in developing coherent and systematic approaches to supporting newcomers' leadership development and capacities.

Leadership Transitions, Roles, and Working Conditions

Build a clear, detailed, and consistent vision and policy for the transition from teaching to the role of principal or vice-principal that considers the nature of vice-principals' and principals' transitions and how these transitions are connected to teacher leadership and to individual, organizational, and student success. Ensure that principals and vice-principals, school districts, the Ministry of Education, professional associations and teacher federations are involved as partners in creating this vision. Provide clear and systematic information to aspiring and newly appointed principals and vice-principals to facilitate understanding of the social and emotional changes that may potentially occur during their specific role transition along with strategies to address these changes. Provide opportunities for principal and vice-principal internships and fellowships and for principals and vice-principals to return to teaching without penalty. Establish clear parameters regarding the duties and responsibilities of the vice-principal's role in order to maximize the leadership potential of this position, reduce overload and burnout this position, and ensure success.

Professional Development and Professional Development

Review and evaluate existing programs and approaches to principals and vice-principals professional development and leadership development both before and after appointment. Identify promising practices, gaps, overlaps, and opportunities and determine areas of responsibilities, e.g., role incumbents, schools, districts, PQP providers, professional associations, and Ministry of Education. Collaboratively determine 'must have' skills and capacities for aspiring and newly appointed principals and vice-principals and inform them of the specific professional development supports that will be provided by the Ministry of Education, school boards, and professional associations. Offer problem-based pedagogies at all levels, as well as timely, targeted, and developmentally appropriate job-embedded leadership experiences, e.g., apprenticeships, fellowships and job shadowing at the Principal Qualification Program, school and/or board level in order to provide candidates and role incumbents with opportunities to connect research, theory, and practice along with as a deeper understanding of their role and the leadership and management skills required.

Mentoring and Support

Review and revise existing mentoring programs and structures to ensure that all principals receive formal mentor-coach professional development and have a deep knowledge of the social, emotional, and cognitive changes that occur during this transition. Develop a clear conceptual organizer for targeted support for competency and capacity building and create systematic feedback processes that facilitate personal and professional growth and reflection. Initiate mentoring programs well in advance of principal and vice-principal candidates assuming administrative roles and ensure that all newly appointed vice-principals and principals who have never been in the role receive continuous coaching and mentoring beyond year one. Allow newly appointed principals and vice-principals input into the selection of their mentors along with the ability to change mentors when necessary.

Holistic Approaches to Fitness and Well-being

Support newly appointed principals' and vice-principals' physical, emotional, and mental fitness by regularly monitoring and assessing demands and challenges. Review levels of job demands and stressors on newly appointed principals and vice-principals and implement programs that encourage and support personal and professional wellness and personal life balance in order to prevent early burnout, physical illnesses, and mental break-downs.

Feedback Forums and Institute for Education Leadership (IEL) Research Based Focus Groups

Offer systematic and scheduled opportunities at the provincial, district school board, and the Ministry of Education levels that allow newly appointed principals and vice-principals to provide transitional feedback so that all education partners are knowledgeable of the principals' and vice-principals' successes and challenges. Gather anonymous data from newly appointed principals and vice-principals annually (e.g., surveys, blogs, discussion lines) and present these findings to the IEL for review and revision of the transition process. Construct a research based tri-level focus group consisting of Ministry of Education, school board, and principal association personnel to collect accurate data on the number of vice-principals and principals who are making the transition from teaching to principal and vice-principal, review transition research, deliver recommendations regarding the transition process, and create an action plan to build on current successful practices. Revisit the process yearly as new data becomes available.

CONCLUSION

International trends in educational administration indicate that the role of school principal and vice-principal is becoming increasingly complex and challenging due to local and global reforms, technological changes, demographic shifts, added levels of accountability, and diminished levels of support (Fink, 2010). At the same time, the Ontario leadership landscape is changing and will continue to change as principals and vice-principals in English and French language boards continue to retire. While presenting unique challenges, this confluence of individual, systemic, and societal transitions also carries many possibilities for transformation at all levels. This study focused on the transitional experiences of 290 newly appointed principals and vice-principals who were making the direct transitions from teaching to principal and vice-principal. These principals and vice-principals came into administration believing in their potential to transform schools and that they were prepared to be instructional leaders. They identified many areas of success and growth, indicating that a great deal of work is being done at the school, district, and professional association levels to support and mentor newly appointed principals and vice-principals. Although the participants experienced some successes, their experiences illustrate that becoming a 21st century leader challenges newly appointed principals and vice-principals cognitively, socially, emotionally, and physically as they adapt to new administrative identities, roles, and external demand environments that differ

significantly from teaching. The participants' reliance on their own personal resources and networks in order to access the kinds of professional development, support and mentoring needed to grow as pedagogical and instructional leaders is commendable and indicative of committed and resilient leaders. However, their narratives of surviving and thriving point to the need for consistent, creative, and coordinated transitional supports that are responsive to newcomers' developmental needs and nested within systematic processes and constructive partnerships at the school district, Ministry of Education, professional association, teacher federation, and university levels.

The research on principal influence has long established that "Leadership is second only to classroom teaching in its influence on student achievement" (Leithwood, Seashore Louis, Anderson, & Wahlstrom, 2004) and the guiding principles and practices of the Ontario Leadership Strategy recognize the "need to take a long term, leadership approach to

succession planning that starts at the teacher level" (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2009, p. 2). The vice-principal and principal leaders in this study were also passionate about their commitment to student and organizational success. They expressed their appreciation to the IEL at being asked for their input and they interpreted this as a sign that the IEL partners cared about their transitions. They also believed that their involvement in this research would produce positive changes in theory, policy, and practice and they offered a comprehensive range of short, medium and long term-approaches to leadership professional development and development that can be used to bridge teacher and principals and vice-principals role transitions and provide the levels of systematic professional development, mentoring and coaching required to develop innovative, talented and resilient 21st century leaders. These recommendations can be achieved with comprehensive, creative and coordinated planning and action at the multiple system levels that is also inclusive of newly appointed principals, and vice-principals' voices.

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