Strong Leaders for North Carolina Schools: School Principal Preparation Programs

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April 14, 2015

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Executive Summary

Business for Educational Success and Transformation, North Carolina (BEST NC) is a non-profit advocacy organization formed in 2013 to unite an engaged and informed business perspective to dramatically transform and improve education in North Carolina. One of BEST NC’s three priority areas is Elevate Educators, which includes improving the quality of school leadership in North Carolina.

Policy Question:
How should BEST NC support the preparation of school principals in North Carolina?

Background:
The preparation for school principals in North Carolina has changed significantly twice in the past 20 years. Currently, the UNC system operates 13 Masters of School Administration (MSA) programs.1 Candidates who complete the MSA degree are certified to work as administrators within North Carolina public schools. This research project collected data about each of the 13 programs individually and makes comparisons across the programs in order to provide a comprehensive picture of the UNC MSA landscape.

Methodology:
To gather this data, the researcher used a review of key literature related to principal preparation, an analysis of MSA program websites, multiple in-depth interviews with every MSA program director and a few faculty members, artifact reviews of MSA program documents such as syllabi, and a survey of current and former students. These methods were chosen with the goal of triangulating and confirming data from multiple sources. Each of the 13 MSA programs participated in at least part of the research, but not all programs participated in every phase. Research is grouped into five key categories: recruitment, admissions, program structure, internship, and relationship with districts.

Findings:
The 13 MSA programs are similar in many ways, especially in regards to recruitment and admissions, but differ in program structure, the organization and evaluation of the internship, and the relationship that each program has with surrounding school districts. All programs use word of mouth as the primary recruitment strategy, and all programs accept at least 75% of applicants, with most accepting nearly all applicants who meet minimum admission standards. Admission requirements are relatively uniform across programs. All candidates must submit transcripts, complete an application, provide references, and be licensed North Carolina teachers with a minimum of two years of teaching experience. Most programs also request a writing sample, an interview, and a direct recommendation from a school supervisor, such as the sitting principal.

Most MSA programs in the State offer both in-person and online classes, but three programs offer completely online degrees. All programs require students to complete an internship, and most MSA candidates intern part-time in the school where they work full-time as a teacher. All

1 MSA in this report refers to MSA programs that are operated by the UNC system. There are other MSA programs in North Carolina, but the research presented in this report does not include those other programs.
internships are evaluated by the MSA program, but evaluation methods vary. Some programs have quality relationships with surrounding school districts, but most have loose formal relationships and do not regularly seek out or incorporate feedback from district leaders. Summary data is presented in the report, and individual program summaries are in Appendix D.

**Analysis:**
The similarities among programs is a significant finding due to the fact that all programs are competing for students, and that there is a decline in admissions among all MSA programs. The lack of diversity in choices for MSA candidates means that whichever program is able to offer the most attractive admissions process and coursework is at an advantage when recruiting students. This makes it challenging for programs to reform admissions policies or increase the rigor of individual programs. The rise in online programs further increases this competition. In addition, program directors and faculty from different schools rarely interact and therefore are unaware of how other programs are experiencing and/or addressing similar issues across the state. As a result of the lack of diversity among programs, the rise in online offerings, and the minimal interaction between programs and directors, most of the MSA programs are lowering their standards are seem to be in a race to the bottom.

**Next Steps for BEST NC**
In part due to this research, BEST NC has included the improvement of principal preparation as a part of the organization’s 2015 legislative agenda. As of February 2014, BEST NC has developed a comprehensive bill that, if passed, will dramatically transform the way teachers and principals are prepared in North Carolina. Moving forward, BEST NC will continue to use this research to inform their advocacy efforts.
I. Policy Question & Introduction

**Policy Question:**
How should BEST NC support principal preparation in North Carolina?

**What is the goal of this research?**
BEST NC expressed interest in learning more about the options currently available for principal preparation in North Carolina and how the organization (BEST NC) should proceed to ensure that North Carolina has high-quality principal preparation programs. This research provides BEST NC with an overview of the 13 Masters of School Administration (MSA) programs within the UNC system.

**Who is BEST NC?**
BEST NC (Business for Educational Success and Transformation, North Carolina) formed in 2013 to unite an engaged and informed business perspective to dramatically transform and improve education in North Carolina. As conveners, BEST NC brought together key stakeholders and education experts from across the state and the country in 2014 to develop a strategic and comprehensive Vision to guide the transformation of education in North Carolina. The three strategies that BEST NC identified to achieve the Vision 2020 are: Support Students, Elevate Educators, and Raise Expectations. This research on principal preparation fits into the strategy of elevating educators.

**Why is principal preparation important?**
Just as executive leaders are essential to the success of businesses (Day, 1988), principals are essential to the success of students and schools, “Approximately one-fourth of a school’s impact on academic achievement can be attributed to the school leader, second only to classroom teachers” (Doyle & Locke, 2014, p. 9). It is widely accepted that school leadership is one of the most important school-based factors that impacts student achievement, second only to the influence of the classroom teacher (Leithwood, Louis, Anderson, & Wahlstrom, 2004; Mendels, 2012).

The principal holds the highest leadership role in a school, makes decisions regarding the future of the school, sets the vision for the staff and students, guides instruction, makes curricular decisions, drafts and oversees the execution of the budget, executes critical staffing decisions, and more. It is a role that requires both flexibility and rigidity, and principals must know both when and how to use their power to influence change. Without adequate preparation, it is unrealistic to expect school leaders to be successful. UNC system MSA programs graduated 379 certified school administrators in 2012-2013 (Chapman, 2014), all of whom are eligible to assume leadership of a school in North Carolina. It is essential that these UNC-based programs are adequately preparing those graduates to take on the immense and important responsibility of leading North Carolina schools.
II. Principal Preparation in North Carolina

Recent History of Principal Preparation in North Carolina

The North Carolina General Assembly largely influenced principal preparation in North Carolina twice in the last two decades. In 1993, the state legislature phased out all public MSA programs in the state and required programs to reapply for accreditation based on higher standards. This happened again in 2007 when the legislature required the North Carolina State Board of Education to impose higher certification standards for aspiring school administrators and in turn hold MSA programs accountable for ensuring students could pass the new standards. Reviewing the legislative history is important to BEST NC because the organization has traditionally sought to influence education through statewide policy.

Prior to the 1993 legislative session, the legislature convened a taskforce to examine existing principal preparation programs. The taskforce found that the state licensed more administrators than were needed, the admission standards for programs were low, state resources were spread thin over the variety of programs, and minorities and women were underrepresented. In 1993, as a result of the taskforce recommendations, the legislature passed H.B. 257. This bill phased out all MSA programs in operation at the time, created higher standards that programs must meet to regain accreditation, and set a cap on the number of MSA programs the state would operate (H.B. 257, §116-74.21).

In tandem with the recertification of the MSA programs in 1993, the legislature created the North Carolina Principal Fellows Program. The program provides a two-year scholarship loan to eligible candidates who wish to complete an MSA at an approved state institution (§116-74.42). This program is still in operation and it is rare that a student is able to commit to being a full-time graduate student in an MSA program if he or she is not a Principal Fellow.

In 2007, the legislature required the North Carolina State Board of Education to develop a set of standards that MSA programs must meet in order to maintain state accreditation. Universities were required to redesign their MSA programs to comply with the new standards and had to present the specifics of the redesign to the state board by July 1, 2009 in order to regain accreditation (§115C-284). In 2008, the State Board created the North Carolina School Executive Evaluation Rubric for Preservice Candidates based on the existing administrator evaluation. Aspiring administrators are now required to demonstrate mastery based on the rubric prior to receiving the administrator license. All MSA programs underwent major changes to comply with the requirements of the state board. Currently, there are 13 MSA programs operated by the UNC system that are accredited by the state board.

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2 Principal preparation refers to the training that one must complete prior to receiving the credentials necessary to assume an administrator role in a K-12 school. Requirements for licensure vary by state. North Carolina requires that principal candidates matriculate through MSA programs or other state-approved licensure programs prior to becoming administrators. The one exception is that non-licensed individuals may be placed temporarily as assistant principals in cases where schools or districts are unable to find a licensed individual to fill the position.

3 An analysis published in 2010 by the UNC-CH Institute for Public Policy found no difference in effectiveness of principals who trained before the 1993 policy change compared to those who completed training after changes were implemented (Handa, Thompson, Marcus & Smith, 2010).
Until 2009, the options for principal preparation in North Carolina were UNC MSA programs and private colleges and universities in the state that offered traditional MSA or MSA-equivalent degrees. Between 2009 and 2011, four new alternatives became available. New Leaders for New Schools opened an office in Charlotte in 2009 and began certifying school leaders through their one-year intensive full-time program. The Northeast Leadership Academy opened in 2010 in partnership with NC State, and two other regional academies, Sandhills and Piedmont-Triad, opened in 2011 with Race to the Top grant funding. All regional academies prepared individuals to assume the principalship, but they were not degree programs (candidates did not earn an MSA). Only the Northeast Leadership Academy is still in operation, and offers a degree-equivalent to the MSA; the other two regional academies were not able to secure funding after Race to the Top ran out, and the New Leaders could not renew its contract in Charlotte. All of these programs, though different in design, provided alternatives to the existing public and private MSA programs.

Current Principal Preparation Landscape in North Carolina

All preparation programs in the state are required to prepare candidates based on the Standards for Executive School Leadership. North Carolina requires that all principal candidates demonstrate mastery of the following seven standards: strategic leadership, instructional leadership, cultural leadership, human resource leadership, managerial leadership, external development leadership, and micro-political leadership. All preparation programs require prospective principals to demonstrate mastery of these standards through the use of artifacts in an e-portfolio. The Department of Public Instruction (DPI) requires the e-portfolio for licensure.

UNC system MSA programs are seeing a decline in applications and degrees conferred (Chapman, 2014). A hypothesis for this decline is the absence of financial incentive to obtain a master’s degree and stay in the classroom. Like many states, North Carolina no longer awards pay increases simply because teachers have a master’s degree. In the past, teachers could earn an MSA degree and qualify for the masters pay increase while remaining in the classroom. Now, pay increases are awarded only if the master’s degree is related to the field in which the school employee is working. Another reason for decline in enrollment, also related to compensation, is that teacher salaries are increasing at a higher rate than principal salaries, resulting in relatively low salaries for principals considering the increase in responsibility, accountability and workload that one assumes when he or she becomes a school administrator (Doyle & Locke, 2014; Granados, 2014).
III. Research Design & Methodology

For this paper, the researcher collected the data using a many sited, multi scalar, and mixed methods research design (Small, 2011; Greene, Caracelli, & Graham, 1989; Creswell, 2013). The methods were used for the purpose of triangulating and comparing data collected from various sources.

The researcher gathered the data by using a variety of research methods: literature and website reviews, interviews, artifact review, and a survey. For a table of which programs participated in which research methods, see Appendix H.

**Literature and Website Reviews**

The researcher began by collecting and analyzing papers, reports and other key documents relating to best practice in principal preparation. This review of the literature provided the researcher with the knowledge needed to draft a framework for interviews with program directors. The complete literature review is available in Appendix G.

Prior to conducting interviews, the researcher also reviewed MSA program websites. The website reviews helped shape the interview protocol and allowed the researcher to focus the interviews on information that was not available on program websites.

After conducting both the literature and website reviews, the researcher planned to confirm and expand on those findings by speaking with individuals most directly connected to the MSA programs. The researcher accomplished this by conducting interviews with MSA directors, other program faculty, and a variety of other individuals connected to the MSA programs.

**Interviews**

Interviews with MSA program directors and other program faculty were the primary research method used for this report. Interviews took place at various points throughout this project, from September-December, 2014. The researcher conducted initial interviews with most program directors as a way of learning about the program from the first-hand perspective of the individual most directly involved. In addition to these initial interviews with MSA program directors and faculty, she interviewed various individuals who were involved in principal preparation in the state. Such interviews included regional academy directors, representatives from various unions and organizations, and other private or non-profit programs and universities that work to prepare principals in North Carolina outside of the UNC system. For a complete interview list, see Appendix C.

After initial interviews were complete and the researcher developed a framework to analyze those interviews, she scheduled follow-up interviews with directors willing to participate. Six programs participated in follow-up interviews, four programs provided initial interviews late in the research process and only needed one interview to gather the necessary data, and three programs did not respond to requests for follow-up interviews. The initial interview protocol is available in Appendix J.
Comparing interview data to the findings from the literature and website reviews proved to be beneficial, but it was also necessary to verify the data provided by MSA directors in the interviews. The researcher had difficulty obtaining a thorough understanding of the specifics of the various courses and curriculum from interviews and websites alone. She decided to conduct a deeper analysis of program materials, such as program designs and syllabi. She attempted to triangulate the data and confirm the information provided from other methods through an artifact review and a survey of current and former MSA students.

Artifact Review and Survey
Programs were asked to participate in an artifact review of program syllabi and other relevant documents. Four directors responded to the request and submitted syllabi and related documents, two programs provided reasons for not participating, and the remaining seven did not respond to requests for data.

The researcher distributed a survey to all MSA program directors with an accompanying email addressed to current and former students. MSA directors were asked to participate by sending the survey and accompanying email to students. Only three programs chose to participate in the survey. Two programs responded to the request and explained that their program could not participate due to privacy concerns. A summary of the survey structure and a complete list of questions is available in Appendix K.

The minimal amount of participation in these rounds of research caused disappointment. However, the programs that did participate expressed satisfaction with the result of the research and those programs are most thoroughly portrayed in the findings due to the high level of participation. Those that participated in most, or all, of the research components also engaged in the sharing and presentation of findings.

WebEx Conference with Program Directors
The researcher collected, summarized, and shared the data with program directors via email, and then hosted a WebEx to present the information and collect feedback. Five program directors participated in the WebEx and contributed to a very productive conversation. One other director could not join the WebEx and instead provided written feedback on the draft report. The slides presented to MSA directors are available in Appendix E.

The WebEx presented a great opportunity to encourage collaboration among MSA program directors. The last time that program directors really worked together was in 2008 when they all were required to redesign their respective programs. Since then, the directors have remained siloed, dealing with similar problems across the state but lacking the opportunity to collaborate. The WebEx provided a launching point for continued communication among directors, and all who participated expressed their gratitude for organizing the event.
IV. Findings & Analysis

The researcher collected and organized the data into the following categories:

**Recruitment**: For most programs, the researcher collected data about the recruitment process. Directors who did not respond to requests for a follow-up interview did not provide information about their program’s recruitment process.

**Admissions**: All program directors provided information about admissions policies and requirements. Related admissions questions included the number of applicants and the average acceptance rate.

**Program Structure**: All program directors provided information about basic elements of the program, such as the location and length.

**Internships**: Every program requires students to complete an internship, and every director explained the internship requirement for his or her program in detail.

**Relationship with Districts**: All program directors provided information about the program’s relationship with surrounding districts during the initial interview, but more details emerged during follow-up interviews.

Data is reported by category below. For data reported by individual program, see Appendix D.

a. **Recruitment**

The recruitment process is similar for all programs. All programs that participated in interviews during which recruitment questions were asked indicated that the scope of recruitment is local and that the primary recruitment population is teachers. The scope of programs must be local due to the geography of the state, the requirement that an internship be completed and supervised by MSA faculty, and the requirement that MSA candidates have 2-3 years of experience teaching in North Carolina schools. Recruiting candidates from out of state is possible, but unlikely due to the teaching experience requirement.

Program directors explained that they use a variety of recruitment techniques, such as K-12 school visits and information sessions, but the main method of recruitment is word-of-mouth. Programs primarily rely on graduates to share their experiences and encourage others to pursue the degree. Another common recruitment technique is leveraging relationships with superintendents and nearby districts. Directors and other program faculty host information sessions in surrounding districts as a way to recruit new candidates. All programs have limited budget and staffing, so the recruitment methods used must be as inexpensive and convenient for the staff as possible.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recruitment Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SCOPE: Local</td>
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<tr>
<td>RECRUIT: Teachers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>METHOD: Word of Mouth</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

10
Most directors mentioned that the larger school of education or the graduate school includes information about the MSA program when doing broader recruitment activities, but that unspecific and untargeted methods do not typically yield a high number of applicants.

No program that participated in the recruitment portion of the interview mentioned an existing principal pipeline or program in place that actively seeks out high quality candidates. This lack of planning and intentionality in school leader development is a weakness of North Carolina principal preparation. Individuals who are enrolling in and completing MSA programs are recruited by the MSA programs, or those individuals choose to participate on their own. Formal recommendation, encouragement, or support from sitting principals, superintendents, or others is only required by nine programs.

b. Admissions
The admissions processes are generally standard across programs. All 13 programs require an application, undergraduate and graduate (if applicable) transcripts, and references. Nine programs specify that at least one recommendation must come from a current principal. Programs that do not explicitly require a principal recommendation explained that students often decide on their own to include his or her principal as a reference or recommendation. All programs also require that candidates were teachers for a minimum of two years, with most programs requiring that teachers who apply be licensed in the state and have a minimum of three years of school-based experience. Twelve of the 13 programs require a standardized test, usually the GRE or the MAT. Two programs indicated that they were in the process of eliminating the testing requirement as a way to recruit more applicants.

Seven programs require applicants to submit a writing sample or write an essay as a part of the application and nine programs include an interview as a part of the admissions process. Interviews are conducted in person, over the phone, or using programs such as Skype. Four programs require applicants to complete a sort of problem solving activity as a part of the application process. Only one program asks teachers to submit evidence of their performance in the classroom, and suggests that teachers submit their evaluations as evidence. Most programs do not assess teaching quality beyond principal or supervisor recommendations. This is likely due to the fact that objective measures of teacher quality do not exist for all teachers. Program directors also indicated that a principal recommendation is often used as a proxy for teacher quality, operating under the assumption that a sitting principal would not recommend a bad teacher to become a principal.
### ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS, BY PROGRAM

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PROGRAM</th>
<th>Application</th>
<th>Transcript</th>
<th>Test</th>
<th>Principal Rec.</th>
<th>Writing / Essay</th>
<th>Teacher Evals</th>
<th>Teaching Experience</th>
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<td>✔</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3 years</td>
</tr>
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</table>

*Blank spaces do not necessarily indicate that the program does not require it. More often, the information was not gathered or confirmed due to lack of follow-up interviews.

The range in the number of applicants programs receive is significant. One program admitted to only receiving five applications in a given year, while others estimated that their program received up to 60 or 70 applicants annually. Regardless of the number of applicants, every single program indicated an acceptance rate no lower than 70% of applicants. The average acceptance rate, based on the estimates provided during interviews with MSA directors, is 80%. Four programs directors said they accept 95% or more of applicants. The general consensus is that if an applicant meets the admissions criteria of a program, he or she is accepted. These high acceptance rates indicate either that MSA programs have set admission standards at a level that most applicants can meet, or that individuals who are applying are only those who know they can meet the admissions requirements.

Most program directors expressed concern that the number of applicants has been declining in recent years. Program directors provided explanations and hypotheses for the decline in enrollment. Many mentioned the recent General Assembly decision to restrict master’s pay increases to in-field degrees as a reason why teachers were not seeking out the MSA degree. Others cited the growth in non-UNC system programs, especially the prevalence on online programs, as a reason for the decline in applications. Another interesting hypothesis that emerged during the director WebEx is that the decline in individuals entering principal preparation programs is a result in the overall decline in teachers. There may be fewer teachers who are interested in becoming principals, or sitting principals may not be recommending that teachers become principals because of the difficulty they have replacing those teachers. Many directors expressed that they are under pressure to increase enrollment.
The fact that recruitment and admission policies are generally uniform across programs puts all programs at a disadvantage if they want to raise requirements or increase rigor. If one program increases the rigor of the application process, the other programs are at an advantage because applicants can choose to apply to programs where admission is easier. Recently, one program added a rigorous interview day to its admissions process. After one year, the program staff decided to discontinue to practice because they received feedback that the interview day deterred individuals to apply. Conversely, another program director expressed that he is in the process of eliminating the standardized test requirement for applications in order to attract more candidates. This struggle to compete for applicants is causing programs to engage in a race to the bottom in terms of admissions requirements. This easing of requirements, along with the decline of applicants and absence of an established leadership pipeline, raises concerns about the quality of individuals enrolled in and graduating from MSA programs.

c. Program Structure
Every program differs in structure. There is a broad spectrum on which programs can fall according to the different aspects that make up an MSA program.

Program length ranges from two to six years, with most candidates completing the degree in two to three years. The programs range from 36 to 45 credits. Eight of the 13 programs are cohort based, which means that students complete program requirements as groups and the coursework is sequenced to be completed together. Four programs offer regional options outside of the main campus for students to take classes and convene as cohorts in a more convenient geographical location, and five programs require that in-person courses be taken on the university’s main campus. Most MSA candidates complete the entire program as part-time graduate students, often working full time as teachers in addition to taking courses and completing the internship requirement. Most candidates are able to complete all requirements in 2-3 years.

Three of the 13 programs are completely online with optional face-to-face opportunities. The other 10 programs have elements of online, or blended, learning, but all 10 require a minimum of one face-to-face course. Of the online and blended learning options, most courses are asynchronous. Three program directors expressed a desire to increase online course offerings as a method of recruiting additional candidates. While online courses are not inherently better or worse than in-person options, it is important that these programs maintain high quality standards as they move toward offering more online options.

Four programs have unique emphases, including two that focus on developing principals to serve high-need, low-income, and/or urban schools. The other nine programs do not emphasize any specific type of school leadership and instead prepare principals to lead in any context. Due to the nature of the profession, many new principals will end up in high need schools simply because that is where the openings are the most available. Since all programs did not participate in the artifact review part of the research, it is not known how programs are preparing graduates to work in these high-need schools. However, all programs should be incorporating training for graduates to work in turn-around schools and other high-need environments.
**d. Internships**

The internship, or practicum, experience is often cited as the most critical aspect of any principal preparation program. This is the opportunity for MSA candidates to apply their learning in a real school context and learn from the administrator overseeing the internship.

Every MSA program has a part-time internship option, and most students pursue the part-time option. All students in the UNC system have the opportunity to apply for the DPI Administrative Interns or Principal Fellows programs, which involve a paid, full-time internship. However, many do not apply or are not accepted to those two programs. Program directors indicated that students may not be interested in the Administrative Internship Program because the amount of the stipend is less than students’ current salaries (accepting the scholarship would be taking a pay cut). Instead, interns work full-time in the school in a different capacity, such as a teacher or counselor, while also completing internship responsibilities outside of his or her regular job requirements. The structure and negotiation of this relationship varies by person and by program, but students may complete internship activities during prep periods, before or after school, and during the summer. Program directors indicated that the part-time nature of these internships is not ideal, but is a reality due to the financial constraints that candidates would face if they resigned for a year to work as an intern. If financial aid or additional scholarships were available, it is possible that MSA candidates would choose to intern full-time.

Every program measures the internship differently: by semester, credits or total hours. Programs that use credits range from 12-15 credit hours over the course of two to three semesters, and programs that track hours require between 500 and 1000 hours. All candidates are permitted to complete the internship in the school where he or she works, or previously worked. Working as an intern in the school where the candidate is also teaching makes the most sense logistically, but there are inherent downsides to serving as both an employee and an intern under the same administrator.

Six programs require that interns complete the internship only after he or she has completed all other coursework requirements, but two allow students to choose when they complete the internship, and one program requires that the internship is concurrent with other coursework. The courses offered during the internship often require that interns apply lessons learning to the internship when possible.

Objectively measuring the success of the internship is challenging for MSA programs due to the small number of faculty available to observe interns and the regional dispersion of interns. Ten program directors explained that there is an evaluation at the end of the internship period, typically in the form of an oral exam or portfolio review. Other programs require interns to write memos or reflections about the experience. Oversight during the internship process varies widely by program, with one program only observing an intern twice throughout the entire internship, and another that observes interns a minimum of seven times. The range is largely dependent on the number of students in the program and the availability of faculty to conduct observations. In addition to the wide variance in oversight and accountability, managing the mentorship relationship between sitting principals and interns is a challenge. Principal mentors are often not compensated for their work with the interns, and program directors indicated that it is difficult
for programs to place firm requirements or expectations on the mentorship due to this lack of incentive. Overall, UNC system MSA programs have very little control or oversight during the internship process. This is not necessarily the fault of the directors or program faculty, instead it is a reality of the physical location of programs, the context of the internship experiences, and the limited resources available to the MSA programs.

e. Relationship with Districts
The relationship between UNC system MSA programs and surrounding or affiliated districts is the most difficult program component to measure because of the wide variation of possible relationships. In general, MSA programs are in contact with superintendents and principals in districts where students are interning. In addition, all programs are required to maintain a review board on which local superintendents sit in order to provide feedback to the MSA program and explain the needs of nearby districts. In practice, however, this does not always happen as intended. One program admitted to allowing this requirement to lapse, while others did not mention it at all. Only one program mentioned that it surveys local principals and superintendents to collect feedback about the program. Other directors emphasized the relationships between mentor principals and the program. No program admitted to changing the MSA program to meet the needs of surrounding districts. Most directors, when asked about this, explained that MSA programs have not and are not permitted to make significant changes due to the strict requirements of the 2008 rewrite of all MSA programs. Directors do not feel they have the necessary rights or permission to alter the programs. The lack of efficacy that directors feel, combined with limited resources and small staffs, leads to the lowered quality of interaction with local districts. If better resourced, program directors would probably be happy to engage more with district leaders and adjust programming to fit the needs of the district.
V. Discussion

a. Research Changes Over Time

When this research began, the goal was to provide recommendations to BEST NC that would inform the organization’s work during the 2015 legislative session. From September-December, the research progressed in that manner. The researcher provided interim findings and recommendations in December 2014 that helped shaped BEST NC’s legislative agenda. However, BEST NC hired the researcher as a full-time staff member in January 2015 and her role as a graduate student researcher merged with her full-time work at BEST NC. After joining BEST NC as an employee, she began serving as a member of the North Carolina NGA Principal Policy team. That team has requested and used her research at various times since January 2015.

In January, BEST NC began drafting a comprehensive bill that, if passed, would reform the talent pipeline in North Carolina. An element of the bill creates a competitive grant program requiring the restructuring of all principal preparation programs. The criteria for the restructure, or what programs must do in order to compete for funds, is based on the findings of this research.

b. Next Steps for BEST NC

BEST NC continues to lobby the North Carolina General Assembly and other decision makers to change principal preparation in North Carolina. As a staff member, the researcher will continue to work on this effort and will continue to serve on the NC NGA Principal Policy team until the work of that group is complete.

c. Implications of Research

Based on the Feb. 25 WebEx with program directors, there is a demand for collaboration among program directors. Participants on the call expressed interest in establishing a listserv for directors that can be used to share information and ideas for improvement. All of the directors on the call expressed similar concerns with the future of the UNC principal preparation programs. All directors agreed that overall interest in MSA programs is in decline, and provided hypotheses for why this was the case. Most participants also asked other directors for advice on various elements of their respective programs, such as the evaluation of interns and strengthening admissions requirements. Overall, this research was well-received by many of the program directors and their participation was very encouraging. The researcher expects that there will be program improvements and improved relations among programs as a result of this research. One program director anecdotally mentioned a change in the program’s admissions requirements based on the interview the researcher conducted with her.

If the competitive grant process passes, all MSA programs will have to adapt in order to maintain accreditation. While this will likely lead to the development of higher-quality principals, it will also likely cause the current program directors to make significant changes to existing programs that may result in job losses or other perceived negative consequences.
d. Data Validity

As is evident in Appendix H, not every program participated equally in this research. Therefore, information is missing from a few program summaries and conclusions could only be reached when uniform data across all programs was available. In addition, this research was not conducted with the intention of making statements or generalizations regarding program quality. The researcher did not label any programs as high or low quality, nor does this research lend an individual to draw those conclusions. The literature review allowed the researcher to understand the elements of high quality principal preparation programs, as defined by the literature, which led to the development of an interview protocol to determine the extent to which MSA programs had those elements. The researcher did not collect output data, such as impact of graduates on student achievement, so it is not possible to determine the effectiveness of programs in relation to preparedness and impact of program graduates.

VI. Conclusion

Prior to BEST NC expressing interest in this topic, there was very little attention paid to how UNC system MSA graduates were being prepared to lead North Carolina schools. Now, this topic is receiving a lot of attention from various entities in the State. While there is no correlation between increased attention and the timing of this research, it is an exciting time to be researching and reporting about principal preparation. School leadership is taking center stage in discussions about school improvement and student achievement in North Carolina. This research has informed many stakeholders about the current landscape of the MSA programs, and BEST NC will continue to work to increase awareness and advocate for improvements.
Bibliography


Chapman, A. (2014). Number of Degrees Awarded in Selected Programs - UNC Master in School Administration Programs.


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Appendix A: Initial Findings Memo to BEST NC, Dec. 2014
To: Brenda Berg and Julie Kowal, BEST NC
From: Katie Hagan
Date: December 12, 2014
Re: Principal Preparation in North Carolina, Status Update

The following memo outlines the current status of the research being conducted about principal preparation in North Carolina on behalf of BEST NC.

Recommendations for BEST NC

1) Convene Masters of School Administration (MSA) directors to discuss challenges they are having meeting legislative compliance while also aligning programs to best practice.
   - Provide guidance to help directors improve MSA programs, specifically the recruitment and admittance of high quality principal candidates.

2) Develop a funding source and structure that both supports MSA candidates to pursue a full-time, yearlong internship and requires district involvement and financial support.

Research Conducted on Principal Preparation Programs in NC

I interviewed 12 of the 13 MSA program directors, two of the three regional leadership academy directors, and other stakeholders involved with other program. I have reviewed the syllabi and other related documents of six programs. Outlined below are the trends in the data thus far:

I. Literature review
   a. High quality principal preparation should include a rigorous application and selection process, a meaningful and relevant full-time internship or practicum, and a strong relationship between the preparation program and nearby districts and schools.

II. Interviews
   a. Overall decline in applications and enrollment.
   b. All UNC MSA programs are similar, which causes a competition for applicants.
      Many programs are easing requirements to attract more applicants.
   c. Admissions processes are weak and programs report accepting 70-80% of applicants.
   d. Most internship requirements are completed part-time while candidates are teaching.
   e. Courses are increasingly offered online.
   f. Directors expressed empathy for MSA candidates because candidates work full time, and explained attempts to make it easy for candidates to meet course requirements.
   g. NELA and New Leaders are most aligned to what literature suggests is effective for principal preparation, but they are also the most expensive.
   h. Minimal aid available for individuals pursuing the MSA degree outside of the Principal Fellow program and DPI Administrative Intern program.
   i. Most relationships between MSA programs and districts are informal and programs are not influenced by district needs or characteristics.

III. Review of Syllabi
   a. UNC MSA programs have not changed content or course listings in any way since the curriculum was revised to accommodate the 2008 legislative changes.
   b. The lack of participation in this part of the research makes it difficult to draw conclusions about all programs.
MSA programs in North Carolina lack the necessary inputs to prepare quality principals.

*The three main areas of weakness identified are:*

1) Admissions and selection processes
2) Internship requirement
3) Relationships between programs and surrounding school districts.

**Admission and Selection Processes**
Admissions requirements for all MSA programs include: an online application, undergraduate transcripts, a minimum number of years of teaching experience, and references. Only seven of the 13 programs request writing samples and conduct interviews. Programs reported accepting, at minimum, 70% of applicants. In response to the falling number of applicants, some programs admitted to weakening standards to encourage individuals to apply. One such example is eliminating the GRE/MAT testing requirement. Some directors admitted to being lenient on the admissions criteria and permitting students to submit application materials after they were already accepted. These low standards and high acceptance rates combined with a decline in admissions cause concern regarding the quality of candidates in these MSA programs.

**Internship Requirement**
Internship requirements vary by program, but 12 of the 13 programs offer a part-time internship that candidates complete while working full time; only one program requires a full time internship. Part-time internships include responsibilities like lunch and bus duty. Due to their primary responsibility as teachers, counselors, etc., interns are unable to devote as much time to their internship duties as are full-time interns. Principal Fellows (PF) complete full-time internships as part of their fellowship, and 11 of the 13 MSA programs have Fellows. DPI also offers an Administrative Internship program for which individuals enrolled in full-time MSA programs can apply. Interns are paid as first year assistant principals during their internship, which can be a lower salary than candidates receive as teachers. Few program directors mentioned the Administrative Internship program as a financial aid option for students, which may indicate that program directors are either unaware of the option or are choosing not to recommend it. A review of literature supports that a full-time internship with quality feedback and mentoring is the most effective way to use the internship experience to prepare principals.

**Relationship between MSA Programs and Surrounding Districts**
Most programs reported having informal relationships with surrounding districts or districts that host interns. If the relationship is formal, it usually involves superintendents or principals serving on the advisory board for the MSA program. Advisory boards meet infrequently and rarely offer changes to programs. MSA programs are limited in the changes they can make to overall programming due to legislative mandates to align to the NC Standards for School Executives. Program directors said that they spoke with or surveyed principals that hosted interns, and they also expressed that feedback was typically positive. However, all directors indicated that no significant changes have been made as a result of feedback since 2008. This lack of involvement and feedback from districts implies that programs may be unaware of district needs. Few programs conduct follow-up research with graduates to determine the effectiveness of their respective programs.
Appendix B: Memo to NC NGA Principal Project Team
TO: LeKisha Jordan, Education Policy Analyst, Office of the Governor, NC
FROM: Katie Hagan, Policy Fellow, BEST NC
RE: NGA Principal Effectiveness Policy Working Group
DATE: January 26, 2015

This is a summary of key findings collected via interviews with UNC MSA program directors, a review of UNC MSA program websites, and an analysis of program documents provided by program directors. This research was conducted by Katie Hagan on behalf of BEST NC.

Admissions
- Number of applicants varies by program, from 5-70 per program per year
- Directors estimated acceptance rates from 70-100% (average=80%); many mentioned that if a candidate meets application requirements, he or she is accepted
- Most directors said the number of applicants has declined in recent years
- Reasons cited for the decline in enrollment: the recent General Assembly decision to restrict master’s pay increases to in-field masters and growth in non-UNC system programs, especially the prevalence on online programs

Program Structures
- Length: 2-6 years
- Credits: 36-45
- 8 programs are cohort-based
- 4 programs have regional cohort options
- 5 programs require on-campus meetings
- 3 programs are 100% online (with optional face-to-face meetings)
- Most online courses or online components of blended courses are asynchronous
- 4 programs have unique emphases, including two that focus on developing principals to serve high-need, low-income, and/or urban schools (NCCU and NC A&T)

Internships
- Most students choose to intern part-time (student works primarily as teacher, counselor, etc., and completes internship outside of regular job requirements)
- Length: 12-15 credit hours over the course of two to three semesters, or between 500 and 1000 hours
- Most complete the internship in the school where he or she is already employed
- 8 programs require that interns complete the internship following all other coursework requirements, three allow students to intern while taking courses
- DPI Administrative Internship option is unattractive to candidates who would take a pay cut by accepting the stipend
- Students are observed 2-7 times during the internship, depending on program
- Internship evaluation varies by program, but typically involves some combination of student reflection, mentor evaluation, and an oral exam or portfolio review
- Programs do not offer incentives or compensation for principals who serve as mentors
Appendix C: Data points presented to NC NGA Principal Policy Project Team, Feb. 2015

- The current incentive structure is the more students in the program, the more money the program receives both from tuition and from UNC GA for staffing purposes. Additional incentives for degree-seeking vs. credentialing (people who already have a master’s can get a credential from programs that allows them to become principals without getting another master’s)
- In interviews, some programs admitted to lowering admission standards in order to attract more candidates since there has been a decline in applications
- All programs only accept teachers who are licensed to teach in NC and have a minimum of 2-3 years of teaching experience – so no teachers from surrounding states can enroll until they obtain a NC teaching license
- Elimination of master’s bump for MSAs in the classroom was cited in interviews as a reason for decline in applications
- No program indicated that they actively track recruitment and admissions – no clear numbers about how many are applying vs. how many are accepted, but general estimates ranged from 75-100% of applicants being accepted
- Recruitment activities range by program, but since staffing is minimal for most MSAs (most have part-time directors and no other staff), efforts are limited. Primary strategy is word of mouth and school visits during internship observations (limited, non-systematic).
- Two scholarship options available for students: principal fellows program and DPI administrative internship
  - PF: Pays full tuition and provides a stipend for year 1, students take classes full-time; pays salary for fellows for year two so they can intern full-time
  - DPI: Pays interns a 1st year administrator salary and no benefits and interns are required to work as full-time interns
- Many programs emphasized the growth, or expected growth, of online course offerings; explained as a strategy to increase enrollment and save money.
- All program directors that I interviewed said that they do not track students after graduation – no idea on job placement, how many end up as principals, etc.
- No data on impact of graduates on student performance
- No system in place to help MSA graduates get into admin roles – no career services, minimal networking opportunities, no emphasis on job placement after graduation
- All programs offer part-time internship opportunities, and most students choose that option
- Evaluation and oversight of interns varies widely by program, from 2-7 observations over the course of the internship
- Principal mentors have no oversight – MSA directors mostly just expressed their gratitude that principals were willing to host interns
- No support from schools of education for newly placed principals or APs once they are in administrative positions
- District satisfaction with MSA programs is not collected or tracked in any way. The relationships between districts and programs vary widely, but are generally informal and district feedback does not influence programs.
### Recruitment and Admissions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Answer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How does the program recruit?</td>
<td>Word of mouth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Who is being recruited?</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is the scope?</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is the application process?</td>
<td>Online application, transcripts, references, standardized test scores, and a minimum of three years of teaching experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How many people apply?</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How many are accepted?</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Program Structure

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Answer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How long is the program?</td>
<td>Two years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How many credits?</td>
<td>36 credits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is the program cohort-based?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are courses online or in-person?</td>
<td>Online</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Where are the in-person classes?</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What teaching methods are used?</td>
<td>Online courses</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Internship

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Answer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Is the internship full or part time?</td>
<td>Part</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is the internship paid or unpaid?</td>
<td>Unpaid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How long is the internship?</td>
<td>2 or 3 semesters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Where do students intern?</td>
<td>Where the student works</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do students intern while taking courses?</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How are internships evaluated?</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How often are interns visited or observed?</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is required of the principal mentor?</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Other Notes: None.
## Recruitment and Admissions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>How does the program recruit?</strong></th>
<th>School visits, relationships with local district leaders and principals, word of mouth via student recommendations, information sessions, webinars and flyers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Who is being recruited?</strong></td>
<td>Teachers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>What is the scope?</strong></td>
<td>Local/Statewide</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>What is the application process?</strong></td>
<td>Online application, transcripts, standardized test scores, references, principal recommendation, a minimum of three years of teaching experience, essay/writing sample, problem solving activity, and an interview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>How many people apply?</strong></td>
<td>60-70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>How many are accepted?</strong></td>
<td>60-70 (90-100% of applicants)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Program Structure

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>How long is the program?</strong></th>
<th>Two years</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>How many credits?</strong></td>
<td>42 credits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Is the program cohort-based?</strong></td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Are courses online or in-person?</strong></td>
<td>Both</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Where are the in-person classes?</strong></td>
<td>Geographically based cohorts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>What teaching methods are used?</strong></td>
<td>Blended learning, project-based learning, role-playing, minimal lecturing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Internship

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Is the internship full or part time?</strong></th>
<th>Part</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Is the internship paid or unpaid?</strong></td>
<td>Unpaid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>How long is the internship?</strong></td>
<td>15 credit hours (one full year)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Where do students intern?</strong></td>
<td>Where the student works</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Do students intern while taking courses?</strong></td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>How are internships evaluated?</strong></td>
<td>Weekly journals, portfolio development and review, oral exam, a formative and summative evaluation by principal mentor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>How often are interns visited or observed?</strong></td>
<td>Four times throughout the year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>What is required of the principal mentor?</strong></td>
<td>Evaluations of the intern, compliance with ECU supervisor manual</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Other Notes: ECU has a unique Service Learning component. ECU also provides principal mentors with a newsletter and hosts an annual celebration and feedback session with principal mentors and interns.
### ELIZABETH CITY STATE UNIVERSITY

#### Recruitment and Admissions

| How does the program recruit? | School visits, word of mouth from former students and district leaders, and assistance from the school of education |
| Who is being recruited? | Teachers |
| What is the scope? | Local, Northeastern North Carolina |
| What is the application process? | Online application, transcripts, standardized test scores, three references, at least three years of teaching experience (licensed), statement of purpose, and an interview |
| How many people apply? | 5-20 |
| How many are accepted? | All applicants |

#### Program Structure

| How long is the program? | Two to three years |
| How many credits? | 36-42 credits, depending on the student |
| Is the program cohort-based? | Yes |
| Are courses online or in-person? | Both |
| Where are the in-person classes? | On the main campus |
| What teaching methods are used? | Combination of lecture, hands-on, and collaboration |

#### Internship

| Is the internship full or part time? | Part |
| Is the internship paid or unpaid? | Unpaid |
| How long is the internship? | 500 hours usually completed over the course of 6-15 credits |
| Where do students intern? | Where the student works |
| Do students intern while taking courses? | Yes |
| How are internships evaluated? | Written portfolio and oral presentation |
| How often are interns visited or observed? | 2 visits per 3 credit enrollment |
| What is required of the principal mentor? | A pre and post evaluation |

**Other Notes:** Elizabeth City State has embedded internship labs with some of the courses and students are required to complete coursework activities over the course of their internship lab. Interns in labs are observed by a professor once during the course.
**FAYETTEVILLE STATE UNIVERSITY**

**Recruitment and Admissions**

| How does the program recruit? | School visits, word of mouth from former students and district leaders, flyers, and visits to venues where principals are meeting |
| Who is being recruited? | Teachers |
| What is the scope? | Local |
| What is the application process? | Online application, transcripts, standardized test scores, references, at least three years of teaching experience (licensed), essay or writing sample, an in-person interview, and a problem solving activity |
| How many people apply? | Approximately 30 |
| How many are accepted? | Approximately 20 |

**Program Structure**

| How long is the program? | Two years |
| How many credits? | 42 credits |
| Is the program cohort-based? | Yes |
| Are courses online or in-person? | Both, aim for one in-person, one online, and one blended per week |
| Where are the in-person classes? | On the main campus |
| What teaching methods are used? | Varies – a lot of teamwork, problem-based instruction, field experiences, reflection and observation, and instructional technology |

**Internship**

| Is the internship full or part time? | Full |
| Is the internship paid or unpaid? | Paid (DPI) |
| How long is the internship? | 3 semesters (15 credits) |
| Where do students intern? | Students choice |
| Do students intern while taking courses? | No, intern following coursework |
| How are internships evaluated? | Unknown |
| How often are interns visited or observed? | 4 times in the fall, 2-3 times in the spring |
| What is required of the principal mentor? | Conferences and ongoing communication, evaluation, and facilitation of opportunities for interns to complete evidences |

**Other Notes:** Fayetteville State estimates that 80% of graduates are employed as APs prior to finishing the degree. They also host a career fair for students prior to graduation.
## Recruitment and Admissions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Answer</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How does the program recruit?</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Who is being recruited?</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is the scope?</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is the application process?</td>
<td>Online application, transcripts, standardized test scores, references, principal recommendation, at least three years of teaching experience, essay or writing sample, and an interview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How many people apply?</td>
<td>Approximately 50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How many are accepted?</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Program Structure

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Answer</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How long is the program?</td>
<td>Two to three years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How many credits?</td>
<td>42 credits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is the program cohort-based?</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are courses online or in-person?</td>
<td>In person</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Where are the in-person classes?</td>
<td>On the main campus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What teaching methods are used?</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Internship

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Answer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Is the internship full or part time?</td>
<td>Part</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is the internship paid or unpaid?</td>
<td>Unpaid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How long is the internship?</td>
<td>12 credit hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Where do students intern?</td>
<td>Where the student works</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do students intern while taking courses?</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How are internships evaluated?</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How often are interns visited or observed?</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is required of the principal mentor?</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

## Other Notes:
The MSA program at A&T has an emphasis on preparing principals for high-need, urban school districts. The program also has a collaborative agreement with 15 districts which means that the program supplies those districts with interns in exchange for the district hiring the intern if there is a vacancy.
**Recruitment and Admissions**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Answer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How does the program recruit?</td>
<td>Word of mouth from former students and district leaders, open houses, and personal outreach by program faculty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Who is being recruited?</td>
<td>Teachers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is the scope?</td>
<td>Local</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is the application process?</td>
<td>Online application, transcripts, GRE scores, two references, principal recommendation, at least three years of teaching experience (licensed), essay or writing sample, and an interview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How many people apply?</td>
<td>Up to 24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How many are accepted?</td>
<td>All</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Program Structure**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Answer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How long is the program?</td>
<td>2-3 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How many credits?</td>
<td>45 credits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is the program cohort-based?</td>
<td>No, but there is a sequence to the courses so students on similar paths end up together</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are courses online or in-person?</td>
<td>Both</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Where are the in-person classes?</td>
<td>On the main campus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What teaching methods are used?</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Internship**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Answer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Is the internship full or part time?</td>
<td>Part</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is the internship paid or unpaid?</td>
<td>Unpaid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How long is the internship?</td>
<td>12 credits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Where do students intern?</td>
<td>Where the student works</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do students intern while taking courses?</td>
<td>No, intern following coursework</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How are internships evaluated?</td>
<td>2 mentor evaluations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How often are interns visited or observed?</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is required of the principal mentor?</td>
<td>Attend a principal orientation hosted by NCCU, two evaluations</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Other Notes:** The MSA program at NCCU, and Dr. Malone in particular, is very involved and connected with the surrounding districts and communities. It was very evident during the interview with Dr. Malone that the program has quality relationships with principals and district leaders and that those relationships inform program improvements and changes.
**Recruitment and Admissions**

| How does the program recruit? | School visits, word of mouth from former students and district leaders, and personal outreach from Dr. Hicks |
| Who is being recruited? | Teachers |
| What is the scope? | Local |

| What is the application process? | Online application, transcripts, standardized test scores, references, principal recommendation, at least three years of teaching experience (licensed), essay or writing sample, an interview, and an assessment day |
| How many people apply? | 30-40 |
| How many are accepted? | All who meet qualifications |

**Program Structure**

| How long is the program? | Two years |
| How many credits? | 42 credits |
| Is the program cohort-based? | Yes |
| Are courses online or in-person? | In person |
| Where are the in-person classes? | Geographically based cohorts |
| What teaching methods are used? | Varies – projects, some lecture, student-led learning |

**Internship**

| Is the internship full or part time? | Part |
| Is the internship paid or unpaid? | Unpaid |
| How long is the internship? | 1 full year (Fall, Spring, Summer) |
| Where do students intern? | Where the student works |
| Do students intern while taking courses? | Yes |
| How are internships evaluated? | Evaluated by principal mentor |
| How often are interns visited or observed? | 2 visits per semester |
| What is required of the principal mentor? | Final evaluation of intern |

**Other Notes:** A unique aspect of the program at NC State is the admission process that includes an assessment day. This rigorous evaluation of applicants is based on a practice first developed and used by the Northeast Leadership Academy. Applicants are interviewed by various individuals, including K-12 students and program faculty, and are asked to role play and respond to a variety of scenarios.
UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA, CHAPEL HILL

Recruitment and Admissions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Answer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How does the program recruit?</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Who is being recruited?</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is the scope?</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is the application process?</td>
<td>Online application, transcripts, principal recommendation, at least two years of teaching experience, and an essay or writing sample</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How many people apply?</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How many are accepted?</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Program Structure

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Answer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How long is the program?</td>
<td>5 semesters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How many credits?</td>
<td>36 credits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is the program cohort-based?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are courses online or in-person?</td>
<td>Both</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Where are the in-person classes?</td>
<td>Regionally based cohorts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What teaching methods are used?</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Internship

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Answer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Is the internship full or part time?</td>
<td>Part</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is the internship paid or unpaid?</td>
<td>Unpaid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How long is the internship?</td>
<td>12 credits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Where do students intern?</td>
<td>Where the student works</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do students intern while taking courses?</td>
<td>No, intern following coursework</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How are internships evaluated?</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How often are interns visited or observed?</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is required of the principal mentor?</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Other Notes: None.
UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA, CHARLOTTE

Recruitment and Admissions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Answer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How does the program recruit?</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Who is being recruited?</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is the scope?</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is the application process?</td>
<td>Online application, transcripts, standardized test scores, references, at least three years of teaching experience, essay, and an interview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How many people apply?</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How many are accepted?</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Program Structure

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Answer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How long is the program?</td>
<td>Two to three years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How many credits?</td>
<td>39 credits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is the program cohort-based?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are courses online or in-person?</td>
<td>Both</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Where are the in-person classes?</td>
<td>On the main campus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What teaching methods are used?</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Internship

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Answer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Is the internship full or part time?</td>
<td>Part</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is the internship paid or unpaid?</td>
<td>Unpaid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How long is the internship?</td>
<td>12 credits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Where do students intern?</td>
<td>Where the student works</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do students intern while taking courses?</td>
<td>No, intern following coursework</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How are internships evaluated?</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How often are interns visited or observed?</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is required of the principal mentor?</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Other Notes: None.
UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA, GREENSBORO

Recruitment and Admissions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Answer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How does the program recruit?</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Who is being recruited?</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is the scope?</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is the application process?</td>
<td>Online application, transcripts, standardized test scores, references, principal recommendation, an interview, and a problem solving activity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How many people apply?</td>
<td>35-40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How many are accepted?</td>
<td>70%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Program Structure

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Answer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How long is the program?</td>
<td>5 years (maximum)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How many credits?</td>
<td>42 credits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is the program cohort-based?</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are courses online or in-person?</td>
<td>Both</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Where are the in-person classes?</td>
<td>On the main campus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What teaching methods are used?</td>
<td>Moving away from lectures, but otherwise unknown</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Internship

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Answer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Is the internship full or part time?</td>
<td>Part</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is the internship paid or unpaid?</td>
<td>Unpaid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How long is the internship?</td>
<td>12 credits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Where do students intern?</td>
<td>Where the student works</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do students intern while taking courses?</td>
<td>No, intern following coursework</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How are internships evaluated?</td>
<td>Internship memo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How often are interns visited or observed?</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is required of the principal mentor?</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Other Notes: Professors at UNC Greensboro are not permitted to offer 100% online courses; there must be some face-to-face component.
UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA, PEMBROKE

Recruitment and Admissions

| How does the program recruit? | School visits, word of mouth of former students, personal outreach from program faculty, and assistance with large scale recruitment from the graduate school |
| Who is being recruited? | Teachers |
| What is the scope? | Local |
| What is the application process? | Online application, transcripts, standardized test scores, three references, principal recommendation, at least three years of teaching experience, and an interview |
| How many people apply? | 20-30 |
| How many are accepted? | 90% |

Program Structure

| How long is the program? | Approximately two years |
| How many credits? | 39 credits |
| Is the program cohort-based? | No |
| Are courses online or in-person? | Both |
| Where are the in-person classes? | On the main campus |
| What teaching methods are used? | Unknown |

Internship

| Is the internship full or part time? | Part |
| Is the internship paid or unpaid? | Unpaid |
| How long is the internship? | 500-1000 hours |
| Where do students intern? | Where the student works |
| Do students intern while taking courses? | Depends on student |
| How are internships evaluated? | Oral exam |
| How often are interns visited or observed? | 3 visits per semester |
| What is required of the principal mentor? | Unknown |

Other Notes: Internship hour requirements vary depending on the primary role of the intern. Interns who work full time as teachers are only required to complete 500 hours, interns who work full time in a school but are not teachers or administrators are required to complete 750 hours, and administrators are required to complete 1000 hours.
### Recruitment and Admissions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Answer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How does the program recruit?</td>
<td>School/district visits, online and word of mouth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Who is being recruited?</td>
<td>Teachers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is the scope?</td>
<td>Local</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is the application process?</td>
<td>Online application, transcripts, standardized test scores, references, at least three years of teaching experience, and evidence of teacher performance (such as an evaluation)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How many people apply?</td>
<td>20-40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How many are accepted?</td>
<td>More than 70%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Program Structure

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Answer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How long is the program?</td>
<td>Approximately 2 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How many credits?</td>
<td>36 credits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is the program cohort-based?</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are courses online or in-person?</td>
<td>Online</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Where are the in-person classes?</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What teaching methods are used?</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Internship

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Answer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Is the internship full or part time?</td>
<td>Part</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is the internship paid or unpaid?</td>
<td>Unpaid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How long is the internship?</td>
<td>2-3 semesters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Where do students intern?</td>
<td>Where the student works</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do students intern while taking courses?</td>
<td>No, intern following coursework</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How are internships evaluated?</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How often are interns visited or observed?</td>
<td>5 total observations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is required of the principal mentor?</td>
<td>Weekly meetings and evaluations every semester</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Other Notes: Courses offered at UNC Wilmington may be either synchronous or asynchronous. The MSA program also holds full-class meeting sessions on campus at various times throughout the year, but attendance is not required.
Recruitment and Admissions

| **How does the program recruit?** | Word of mouth, Facebook, fact sheets and brochure, and through the WCU graduate school |
| **Who is being recruited?** | Teachers |
| **What is the scope?** | Local |
| **What is the application process?** | Online application, transcripts, standardized test scores, references, principal recommendation, and at least three years of teaching experience |
| **How many people apply?** | 60 |
| **How many are accepted?** | 95% |

Program Structure

| **How long is the program?** | Under 6 years, most complete in 2-3 years |
| **How many credits?** | 39 credits |
| **Is the program cohort-based?** | Yes |
| **Are courses online or in-person?** | All online |
| **Where are the in-person classes?** | N/A |
| **What teaching methods are used?** | Synchronous meetings, individual work, group work, discussion boards; moving away from recorded lectures |

Internship

| **Is the internship full or part time?** | Part |
| **Is the internship paid or unpaid?** | Unpaid |
| **How long is the internship?** | 3 semesters |
| **Where do students intern?** | Where the student works |
| **Do students intern while taking courses?** | Yes, if they choose to |
| **How are internships evaluated?** | Reflections, change project, evaluation on 21st Century Learning pre-service rubric |
| **How often are interns visited or observed?** | Twice during entire internship |
| **What is required of the principal mentor?** | Minimal requirements |

Other Notes: Students meet three times per semester per course in a synchronous session and all other coursework is done asynchronously. Students also come together twice during the program for an in-person two-day session. The MSA program at WCU also includes a change project, which they think helps students engage more with their district and school beyond the internship requirement.
Principal Preparation in North Carolina

PRESENTATION OF DATA TO UNC MSA PROGRAM DIRECTORS
Introductions

1. What is your name?
2. Where do you work?
3. How long have you been in your current position?

Agenda

- Overview of the Research and Data
- Questions and Comments
- Program Highlights
- Closing
Project Overview

Why Principal Preparation?

- Duke Master’s Project
- BEST NC’s Interest
- Because it’s incredibly important!
Research Methods

- Literature Review
- Websites/Public Information
- Interviews
- Artifact Reviews
- MSA Student Survey*

* Survey will remain open until March 30 if other programs would like to participate.

Data Collected

- Recruitment
- Admissions
- Program Structure
- Internship
- Relationship with Districts
Findings: Recruitment

- **Scope:** Local
- **Primary recruit:** NC Teachers
- **Primary recruitment method:** Word of Mouth
- **Other methods:** recommendations from local district and school leaders; online and print advertisement; information sessions; larger school of education recruitment; K-12 school visits

Findings: Admissions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PROGRAM</th>
<th>Application</th>
<th>Transcript</th>
<th>Test</th>
<th>Principal Rec.</th>
<th>Writing/ Essay</th>
<th>Teacher Perf</th>
<th>Teaching Experience</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Appalachia State</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ECU</td>
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<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elizabeth City State</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fayetteville State</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NC A&amp;T</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NC Central</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NC State</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNC CH</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
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<td></td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNCC</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNCG</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNCP</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNCW</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Findings: Program Structure

- Length ranges from 2-6 years
- Programs range from 36-45 credits
- 8 of the 13 programs are cohort-based
- 4 of the 13 programs offer geographically based cohorts
- 4 of the 13 programs require in-person meetings to occur on the university’s main campus
- 3 of the 13 programs have 100% online options

Findings: Internship

- All programs accommodate those who wish to intern full-time
- Full-time interns are typically PF or DPI Administrative Interns
- Most interns choose part-time option
- Internship length: 12-15 credits or 500-1000 hours
- Requirements of principal mentors vary by program
- Evaluation of the internship varies by program
- Interns observed anywhere from 2 to 7 times during internship
Findings: Relationship w/ District

- Statute requirements:
  - Programs maintain cross-functional work teams that include school-based personnel
  - MSA programs have signed agreements with LEAs.
- Few programs go beyond basic requirements and engage authentically with local districts.
- Minimal MSA degree content or curriculum adjustments based on district needs since 2009.
- Lack of MSA staffing cited as reason for minimal involvement

Findings: Survey

- 47% of candidates enrolled to become a principal
- Most students only applied to one program
- 8.5% were formally referred by their district
- 42% of students took out loans to fund their degree
- 37% of respondents interned (or intend to intern) part-time
- 40% of respondents were PF or DPI interns
Findings: Survey (cont’d)

- Majority heard about the program they attend(ed) from a colleague
- Most respondents had 10 or fewer years of teaching experience when they began the MSA
- 40% of respondents would like more interaction with local districts
- Graduates felt most unprepared to analyze budgets, allocate resources and maintain facilities
- Graduates felt most prepared in the areas of self-improvement and ethical principles
- Only 1 graduate who responded is now a principal (16 are APs, 10 are teachers)
- 68% of graduates who responded would definitely choose the same MSA program if given the opportunity to do it over again

Feedback? Questions? Comments?
Program Highlights

- Spend a few minutes sharing some innovative or effective practices that your program is doing.

How can BEST NC support your program and your work?
Next Steps

- Email Katie with any additional feedback.
- Consider participating in the student survey.
- Let Katie know how BEST NC can support MSA programs.

Contact Information

Katie Hagan  
Katherine.Hagan@duke.edu  
757-589-0490
Appendix F: Timeline

May-July, 2014: Worked as a summer intern at BEST NC

August, 2014:
- Worked with BEST NC to determine the policy question.
- Began literature and website reviews.
- Drafted initial interview protocol.

September, 2014:
- Began conducting initial interview with program directors and faculty.
- Requested artifacts from program directors.

October, 2014:
- Continued conducting initial interviews with MSA directors.
- Drafted program summaries for each MSA program to identify gaps in data.
- Based on gaps in data, drafted follow-up interview protocols for each program.

November, 2014:
- Drafted MSA student survey.
- Continued initial interviews and began follow-up interviews with MSA directors who were willing to participate.

December, 2014:
- Concluded interviews with MSA directors.
- Distributed MSA student survey to directors.
- Provided BEST NC with initial findings memo that was used to inform BEST NC’s 2015 Legislative Agenda (see Appendix A).

January, 2015:
- Hired full-time by BEST NC.
- Drafted memo of findings for North Carolina NGA Principal Policy Team⁴ (see Appendix B for copy of memo submitted).
- Began survey data analysis.
- Drafted an initial findings document to share with MSA directors for the purpose of collecting feedback on the data collected and reported (see Appendix D for individual program summaries).

February, 2015:
- Briefed North Carolina NGA Principal Policy Team on key findings of research and participated in February meeting (see Appendix C for data points that were presented).

⁴ Governor Pat McCrory’s education team applied for and received a grant from the National Governor’s Association (NGA) to examine principal policies and data in North Carolina and draft legislation to improve the preparation, development, and evaluation of principals in the State. The team will meet monthly from January-July.
- Assisted BEST NC in the drafting of legislation that, if passed, would reform the UNC system MSA programs through a competitive grant process.
- Shared initial findings documents with MSA directors and requested feedback.
- Hosted WebEx with MSA directors to present summary of findings, gather feedback, and provide directors with an opportunity to collaborate.
- Ongoing survey data analysis (survey closed March 30, 2015 to accommodate MSA programs that decided to participate after February 25 WebEx conference).
Appendix G: Literature Review

There is no perfect principal preparation program, primarily due to the fact that the needs of schools, districts, and states vary dramatically and no single program could prepare a principal ready to assume leadership in every context. However, there are identified elements that should be incorporated into successful principal preparation programs. I categorized the research on principal preparation into two categories: the content of the curriculum and the overall structure of the program, which includes the way the content is delivered.

Content

For the purpose of this research, content is defined as the curriculum of a program and the inclusion of extracurricular elements, such as internships and mentorships. Curriculum includes courses and the standards that are covered within and across courses. Content does not include the organization or sequencing of courses or the way in which content is delivered within courses. It is important that all preparation programs include content that will adequately prepare aspiring administrators to lead schools.

Researchers\(^5\) in the field of school leadership have reached a consensus regarding the content of a principal preparation program. Hess and Kelly (2005) explain the seven elements of principal preparation as, “managing for results, managing personnel, technical knowledge, external leadership, norms and values, managing classroom instruction, and leadership and school culture” (p. 247). Similarly, a report commissioned by the Wallace Foundation identified four goals that successful leaders will have to adopt upon assuming the role of principal: creating and sustaining a competitive environment, empowering others to make significant decisions, providing instructional guidance, and developing and implementing strategic and school-improvement plans (Leithwood et al., 2004). Another review of preparation programs claims that successful preparation will have, “A coherent curriculum that addresses effective instructional leadership, organizational development, and change management and that aligns with state and professional standards” (Orr & Orphanos, 2010). In summary, students in principal preparation programs should graduate with experience and coursework that will prepare them to manage community relationships (Hess & Kelly, 2005; Huang, Beachum, White, Kaimal, Fitzgerald, & Reed, 2013), lead change within a school (Orr & Orphanos, 2010; Darling-Hammond et al., 2007), use data effectively and efficiently (Hess & Kelly, 2005), assume the role of an instructional leader (Orr & Orphanos, 2010; Leithwood et al., 2004; Hess & Kelly 2005; Darling-Hammond et al., 2007), make personnel decisions (Leithwood et al., 2004; Hess & Kelly, 2005), and manage school culture (Hess & Kelly, 2005).

The content of principal preparation programs should also include preparing leaders to work in a variety of schools and situations, such as a low-income student population, a multiethnic or multiracial student population, and/or a high percentage of low-performing students (Levine, 2005). Data supports that principal preparation is most effective when it prepares candidates in the context of the relevancy of their work (Hess & Kelly, 2005; Darling-Hammond LaPointe, 2004).

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\(^5\) The researchers cited in this paper represent the most referenced and reputable in the field of school leadership. The Wallace Foundation is also referenced throughout the paper and is a leader in school leadership research and reform.
Meyerson, Orr, & Cohen, 2007). It’s considered useful for principals to receive their preparatory training in settings where they may eventually serve as administrators (i.e., urban principal candidates should prepare in urban districts). This body of research acknowledges that future principals have a variety of options after completing principal preparation programs, and the skills and knowledge it takes to run a school vary according to the unique challenges that school presents (Whitaker, King & Vogel, 2004). Therefore, preparation programs should expose aspiring school administrators to as many school types and structures as possible in order to ensure that these students are aware of the variety of situations in which they may one day find themselves. This is especially important for BEST NC and North Carolina due to the incredible diversity of schools, districts, and counties within the state. Aspiring administrators need to be aware of and prepared for a diversity of experiences.

Students in principal preparation programs need opportunities to practice what they are learning in an authentic sustained setting, such as an internship or practicum (Darling-Hammond et al., 2007; Huang et al., 2012; Levine, 2005). Practicums or internships are an opportunity to learn while doing, which research on leadership broadly supports is “the most effective way to develop individual leadership skills” (Derue & Wellman, 2009). Future principals need to learn to connect the content of their coursework to current and past experiences (Darling-Hammond et al., 2007; Hess & Kelly, 2005; Mezirow, 1997; Whitaker, 2004). A critique of principal preparation programs is the lack of opportunities or experiences for these individuals to apply their learning prior to assuming the role of administrator (Darling-Hammond et al., 2007; Levine, 2005). Whitaker et al. (2004) make that case that principal preparation programs need to provide a “direct connection between theories presented in educational leadership preparation programs and the application of those theories to the challenges encountered by principals” (210).

Principal preparation programs can have exceptional content as evidenced by course listings and syllabi, but without effective delivery of such content or adequate structural components of programs, aspiring school administrators will not learn how to apply the content and curriculum. The disconnect between theory and practice, or content learned vs. applied, was the impetus for legislative intervention in North Carolina and the main driver for principal preparation reform nationwide.

Structure

The structural components of principal preparation programs are where most preparation programs vary, and where strong content can fall apart. Structure refers to whether or not the program is cohort-based, the program admission requirements, program location and duration, whether the program is part or full time, how instruction is delivered within courses, the structure of the internship requirement, the relationship of programs with local schools and districts, and a variety of other elements. All principal preparation program structures should include the use of cohorts (Greenlee, 2010), rigorous admission requirements (Orr & Orphanos, 2010; Levine, 2005), relevant and applied practical experience in the form of an extended practicum or internship experience (Levine, 2005), the involvement of a mentor (Darling-Hammond et al., 2007), a blend of both online and face-to-face courses (Choi, Browne-Ferrigno, & Muth, 2005), and a relationship with local schools and districts (Whitaker et al., 2004; ).
The most widely accepted and researched best practice regarding the structure of principal preparation programs is the use of the cohort model. A cohort is “a group of students who enter and move through a program of studies together” (Greenlee, 2010, p. 358), and non-cohort models are when individuals move through his or her courses with random groups of other students in each class. The use of the cohort model is not particularly new in graduate level education, but the incorporation of the model in principal preparation programs has increased in popularity (Huang et al., 2012). In 2000, 63% of educational leadership programs utilized the cohort model (Greenlee, 2010). Higher reported levels of trust, cohesiveness and satisfaction were identified to be the statistically significant differences between cohort and non-cohort students (Greenlee, 2010; Huang et al., 2012). Cohorts are also associated with improved academic performance, an increase in the use of reflective strategies, and stronger group learning skills (Barnett, Basom, Yerkes, & Norris, 2000). In addition, there have been linkages between the presence of a cohort during principal preparation and the ability of a principal to do his or her job effectively once in a leadership role (Barnett et al., 2000). The use of cohorts increases the social capital of cohort members as well, “social capital is based on relationships, which are created through interpersonal exchange” (Day, 2001, pg. 585).

There are a few disadvantages to using the cohort model as a structure. The most notable disadvantage is the additional work load and stress that some instructors assume when teaching within this model (Barnett et al., 2000). In addition, non-cohort students in the same programs have reported feeling left out due to their lack of cohesiveness within the larger cohort (Greenlee, 2010). However, the advantages far outweigh the disadvantages of this model.

All principal preparation programs have admission requirements, but those range widely by program. Levine (2005) refers to the low admission standards and the high number of degrees awarded in school administration as a “race to the bottom” (p. 24). Orr & Orphanos (2010) also found that “many programs have been shown to use weak selection criteria based on prior academic performance or leadership experience” (p. 24). The admission standards and cost to the student enrolled in a principal preparation program are important to consider in the context of North Carolina due to the differences between MSA programs (low admission standards, high cost to student) and regional leadership academies (higher admission standards, no cost to student). Every MSA director I spoke to indicated that his or her program had between a 70-90% acceptance rate, while the Northeast Leadership Academy has a 20-50% acceptance rate.

Future principals need to master the content and standards necessary to be school leaders, which is accomplished by providing opportunities for aspiring school leadership students to guide their own learning, apply lessons learned to real-world problems, link the content to their current and past experiences, and build relationships with fellow aspiring principals (Huang et al., 2013; Whitaker et al., 2005). Delivery of the content goes beyond the way students in these programs are organized in to cohorts. Huang et al. (2012) and Darling-Hammond et al. (2007) found that course instructors should use active learning strategies and problem-based learning to help students link school leadership theory to practice.

Offering internships and mentorships is an essential element of content, but the design and scale of those practical application activities within programs can increase or decrease the effectiveness. For example, principals who work full-time as teachers while also completing their
Internships may gain less from that experience compared to those who are able to work full-time as interns in administration and be compensated for that internship. Levine (2005) found evidence of this, “when offered a choice between a traditional educational administration program, and a one- to two-year program that combined coursework with a paid apprenticeship with an experienced principal, 80 percent of the respondents preferred the paid apprenticeship route” (p. 41).

An often built-in element of internships is the inclusion of a mentor, usually a principal or assistant principal, who oversees the internship. Official mentorship relationships that are fostered and encouraged by preparation programs have been linked to higher preparation and satisfaction levels as self-reported by graduates of those programs (Huang et al., 2012). Darling-Hammond (2007) also refers to this component as clinical experience, “experiences that allow prospective leaders to learn the many facets of their complex jobs in close collaboration with highly skilled veteran leaders” (p. 5). Again, the facilitation and oversight of this relationship will ultimately determine the effectiveness.

Increasingly, face-to-face courses are being replaced by online courses. Some critics of MSA and other traditional principal preparation programs refer to the programs as “cash cows” (Levine, 2005), and online courses are more economical from the university perspective. Supporters of online courses also claim that online courses “allow ample time for quality feedback, provide a buffer for those less adept in face-to-face communications, and enhance spontaneity” (Choi et al., 2005). There are criticisms regarding the increasing popularity of online courses, including the lack of cohesiveness that online cohorts report feeling when compared to cohorts that meet face-to-face regularly and the false feeling of learning that online courses may offer (Choi et al., 2005). However, there has not been a lot of definitive research in favor of either face-to-face or online learning as applied to principal preparation. There is a general perception that a mix of face-to-face courses and both synchronous and asynchronous online courses is the most economical, practical and effective way to structure these programs (Huang et al., 2012; Choi et al., 2005).

Another element that is mentioned in the literature but could benefit from additional research is the relationship that principal preparation programs maintain with local school districts. A criticism of preparation programs is the lack of collaboration between programs and districts (Whitaker et al., 2004; Best Practices, 2012). Whitaker (2004) explains, “No longer can preparation programs design and deliver learning experiences without the integral involvement of the school districts they serve” (219). Regional academies emerged as a way for preparation programs to recruit and prepare administrators to work in specific, often hard to staff regions. These programs maintain close relationships with districts in the region they serve, which is something that is valued by both districts and students in those programs.
Appendix H: Stages of Research and Programs that Participated in Each Stage

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Program Directors who participated in WebEx on February 25, 2015:

Ann Allen, Western Carolina University
Miriam Chitiga, Fayetteville State University
Saundra Copeland, Elizabeth City State University
Greg Hicks, North Carolina State University
Marjorie Ringler, East Carolina University

Program directors who provided written feedback by February 28, 2015:

Bill Sterrett, UNC Wilmington
Appendix I: Interview List

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<td>WCU</td>
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<td>CMS Aspiring Leaders Program</td>
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<td>Jim</td>
<td>MSA Faculty</td>
<td>UNCC</td>
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<td>Brady</td>
<td>Anna</td>
<td>Director, MSA Program</td>
<td>Piedmont-Triad Leadership Academy</td>
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<td>Vice President for Academic &amp; University Programs</td>
<td>UNC-GA</td>
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<td>Randolph Co.</td>
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<td>New Leaders Charlotte/Gov. Office</td>
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* Role refers to the individual’s current or former role as related to principal preparation.

Last updated: 1/25/14
Appendix J: Interview Protocol

Interviewer: Katie Hagan
Interviewee:
Date of Interview:
Content (program):

Thank you so much for agreeing to talk to me today. As I mentioned in my email, I am a graduate student at Duke working on my Master’s Project. The Duke MP is essentially a yearlong consulting project during which students acquire a client and develop a research question that will benefit the client. My client is BEST NC, a statewide nonprofit that was developed by North Carolina business leaders who believe that there is a clear link between the state economy and the strength of our education system. As business leaders, they are increasingly interested in talent development and support in our schools, which led to their inquiry about how they can and should support principal development in the state.

This part of my research is primarily informational. I am just trying to learn more about MSA and principal development programs in the state beyond what’s available on program websites and publications. This interview should not take more than 45 minutes so we will be finished by ______, and it is broken into a few key parts. The first thing I would like to know more about is the admissions process, but before I begin, do you have any questions?

Before we get started, do you mind if I record this interview?

Great, thanks! The first questions I have are about the admissions process for the MSA program.

Admissions/Acceptance:
1. How many students apply annually to the ______ program?
2. How many are accepted?
   a. What percentage?
3. I read on your website that there are some things you would like in an applicant, like (INSERT REQUIREMENTS HERE), but is there a typical applicant that you are looking for?
   a. (Probe interviewee to describe ideal candidate, get them to use qualities to describe candidate)
   b. How do applicants demonstrate their ability to lead?
   c. Do you factor prior success as a teacher (as measured by student outcomes during the applicants time in the classroom) in your acceptance decisions?
4. Are tests are required prior to admittance?
   a. If yes or no, why or why not?
   b. What tests?
5. What is the annual cost of the program for full time students?
   a. If an option, what is the cost for part-time students?
6. Is there aid available for admitted students?
   a. What types of aid?
   b. How many students use it?
7. What is the average prior work experience of applicants prior to beginning the MSA program?
   a. Former teachers?
   b. Straight out of undergraduate?
   c. Assistant principals?
   d. Career changes/Other professions?

Now we are moving on to discuss the structure of the MSA program, but before we do, is there anything you would like to add about the admissions process?

Structure of the Program

8. Is the program cohort based?
   a. Why or why not?
   b. How does the cohort model work for part-time students?
   c. How do students know which classes to take?

9. Do you develop individualized plans for principal development?
   a. Why or why not?

10. Which of the following ways is instruction delivered to students in the program?
    a. Lecture based?
    b. Online?
    c. Experiential
    d. Small group

Now we are moving on to discuss the content of the MSA program, but before we do, is there anything you would like to add about the structure?

Content of the Program

11. How are course offerings determined?

12. Do you make changes to the program year-to-year?
    a. What kinds of changes?
    b. How are decisions regarding those changes made?

13. Do you use research is used to support curricular decisions?
    a. What research in particular?

14. Are there elements of the program that reflect best practice?
    a. What elements are they?

15. What does the curriculum emphasize most?
    a. How would you rank student achievement (achievement of the students in the schools where principals will lead) in terms of emphasis?

16. Does your relationship with districts influence decisions regarding the content of your program?
    a. To what extent?
    b. Are the demands/needs of districts a factor when planning for the next cohort of students?

17. How do students in the program learn to impact the performance of students they will one day have in their schools?

18. Please describe the internship process.
    a. How is an internship determined to be successful?
b. How are students placed in to their internships?
19. Do students in the program go through a portfolio review process?
   a. How do students in the program demonstrate their successful mastery of the seven
      standards for North Carolina executives?
20. Have you seen changes in principal training in North Carolina?
   a. What changes have you seen?

Now we are moving on to discuss the path of students once they complete the program, but
before we do, is there anything you would like to add about the content?

After the MSA
21. Where do most students go to work after they finish the program?
   a. Stay in state?
   b. Return to school where they were teaching before the program?
22. Do you support students through the process of finding and securing employment after
    the program ends?
   a. How?
23. Is there any particular emphasis on high demand jobs/working in area with high need?

We are almost finished. I just have a few more questions about principal development broadly,
but before I move on, do you have anything else you would like to add about the content of the
program?

Other
24. In your own opinion, what is the benefit of the receiving an MSA?
   a. In your opinion, why do you think the state requires it?
   b. Do you think this requirement is necessary?
25. If there were not an MSA requirement, how would you design principal development
    programs?
   a. What would you change to the existing requirements that individuals must meet in
      order to become principals in North Carolina?
26. Do you solicit feedback in order to make improvements to your program?
   a. From whom?
   b. To what end?
27. What is the role of the newer regional academies in North Carolina?
28. What do we need more of in North Carolina in regards to principal development?
29. What does your program need in order to remain successful?
30. Where should organizations like BEST NC be focusing their efforts?
31. Is there anything I have not asked about that you would like to mention?

Thank you so much for your time. I really enjoyed our conversation and learning more about the
__________________ program. Please let me know if you have any additional follow-up questions or
comments, and I will probably be in touch once I have finished surveying the principals, which is
happening in mid to late October.
Appendix K: Survey Text

This survey was distributed to current or former (graduated) MSA students via Qualtrics. The MSA program advisors received the survey questions in advance, had the opportunity to provide feedback, and that feedback was incorporated in the final survey.

There are four audiences who received this survey: current first year students, current second year students, MSA program attendees who graduated prior to 2008, and MSA program attendees who graduated after 2008.

Question 1:
Please select the option that best describes your current position:
- First year or credit equivalent MSA student
- Second year or credit equivalent MSA student
- MSA program graduate, graduation date 2008-2014
- MSA program graduate, graduation date prior to 2008

Once individuals select the answer that best describes them, they were routed to a survey specifically for that option. Option D is routed to a page that thanked them for their participation but explained their input is not needed at this time.

Options A, B and C are very similar. Option B has questions about the internship requirement. Question C asks more questions related to how program graduates applied learning after graduation.

Option A Survey: First Year MSA Students

Background information
1. Name (optional)(will not be shared with program nor in any other public recording)
2. Expected graduation date (select month and year)
3. Program (drop down menu of all 13 MSA programs and other option)
4. Why are you currently enrolled in your MSA program?
   - I want to be a principal.
   - I want to be as assistant principal.
   - I want to work as a district-level administrator (i.e. central office).
   - I want to work in another administrator role in a school.
   - Other (box to elaborate)
5. Years of teaching experience (drop down, 1-30)
6. Years of non-teaching school leadership experience, such as dean, assistant principal or principal. (drop down, 1-30)
7. Are you a Principal Fellow?
   - Yes
   - No
   - I don’t know what that is.
8. In which counties and/or states did you teach prior to returning to enrolling in this program? (type responses)

9. In which county do you plan to intern (or complete your practicum/residency)? (type response)

10. Are you planning to intern part-time or full-time?
   o Part-time
   o Full-time

11. Were you referred by your district to pursue this program?
   o Yes, I was formally referred or nominated.
   o Yes, someone informally suggested I pursue the degree.
   o No, I chose to receive the degree on my own.

12. How are you paying for the program?
   o I have scholarships that cover 100% of my tuition.
   o I pay for it all myself without loans
   o I pay for it all myself with some loans.
   o I pay for it all myself using loans for the entire cost.
   o I pay for part of it myself, and the other part is paid for by someone else. (box for whom)
   o Someone besides me pays 100% of my tuition (not a scholarship).

Admissions information

13. How did you hear about the MSA program where you are currently enrolled? Check all that apply.
   o From my principal
   o From another administrator at my school
   o From a teacher at my school
   o Advertisement in print
   o Advertisement online
   o Information session at my school
   o Information session on campus
   o Information session somewhere else
   o Directly from a recruiter from the program
   o Not sure

14. When you applied to your MSA program, what did you have to submit or do? (select all that apply)
   o An online application
   o Undergraduate transcripts
   o Resume
   o Writing Sample
   o Essay
   o References
   o Principal recommendation
   o Other recommendation
   o Problem solving activity
   o GRE or MAT scores
   o Teaching evaluation
15. Indicate the level to which you agree with the following statements: (1-7 scale)
   o The MSA program I am enrolled in has strict admission standards.
   o The MSA program I am enrolled in is rigorous.

16. To how many programs did you apply? (Drop down, 1-12)

Program information

17. To what extent are the following true of your principal preparation program? (true, somewhat true, neutral, somewhat false, false)
   o I am in a student cohort - a defined group of individuals who began the program together and will stay or stayed together throughout our courses.
   o Former school administrators teach in the program.
   o Current school administrators teach in the program.
   o Former district leaders teach in the program.
   o Current district leaders teach in the program.
   o Faculty members are very knowledgeable about their subject matter.

18. To what extent do you agree with the following qualities as they relate to your principal preparation program? (scale of 1-7 for each statement)
   o The program emphasizes strategic leadership
   o The program emphasizes instructional leadership
   o The program emphasizes cultural leadership
   o The program emphasizes human resource leadership
   o The program emphasizes managerial leadership
   o The program emphasizes external development leadership
   o The program emphasizes micro-political leadership

19. Indicate the level at which you feel prepared to perform the following: (scale of 1-7 for each statement, change “agree” to “prepared”, i.e. significantly prepared, prepared, somewhat prepared)
   o Enhance teacher’s instructional capacity
   o Promote instruction that maximizes student learning
   o Promote robust and meaningful curricula and assessment programs
   o Promote the development of an inclusive school climate characterized by supportive relationships and a personalized culture of care.
   o Promote professionally normed communities for teachers and other professional staff.
   o Ensure effective and efficient management of the school or district to promote student social and academic learning.
   o Adhere to ethical principles and professional norms.
   o Ensure the development of an equitable and culturally responsive school.
   o Ensure the development of a culture of continuous school improvement.
Ensure the development, articulation, implementation, and stewardship of a child-centered vision of quality schooling that is shared by all members of the school community.

20. How is most instruction delivered in your program?
   - All online
   - Most online
   - Evenly blended online and in person
   - Some online, but most in person
   - All in person

21. If you have online courses, how are they organized?
   - All courses are asynchronous (offered online with no set meeting time, students complete course at own pace)
   - Most courses are asynchronous with a few synchronous (offered online and meeting times are set, entire class meets at the same time in a virtual setting) sessions
   - Evenly blended between asynchronous and synchronous
   - Some asynchronous, but most are synchronous
   - All synchronous

22. To what extent are these practices part of your coursework? (1-7 scale, but change "agree" to “often”, i.e. very often, often, somewhat often, etc.)
   - Lectures
   - Participation in small group work
   - Analysis and discussion of case studies
   - Field-based projects in which students apply ideas in the field
   - Use of problem-based learning approaches
   - Research or inquiry projects
   - Journal writing of experiences
   - Portfolio demonstrating learning and competencies

23. Indicate to what extent you agree with the following statements (1-7 scale)
   - My course work is comprehensive and provides a coherent learning experience
   - The program provides opportunities for self-assessment as a leader
   - I am asked to reflect on practice and analyze how to improve it
   - The program provides assessments of my skill development and leadership competencies
   - The program integrates theory and practice
   - The faculty provides opportunities to evaluate the program

Relationship with local districts

24. Do you interact with current school administrators through the MSA program?
   - Yes
   - No

25. If yes, how often?
   - 1-3 times per year
   - 4-6 times per year
   - More than 6 times per year
26. In your opinion, is your program tailored to suit the current needs of schools and districts?
   o Yes, the program adjusts frequently to the needs of schools and districts.
   o Yes, the program content adjusts somewhat based on the needs of schools and districts.
   o No, the program does not change, but it is appropriate for all schools and districts.
   o No, the program does not suit the current needs of schools and districts.
   o Not sure.

27. Would you prefer to have more interaction or engagements with local districts and leaders?
   o Yes, I would like more interaction and engagement with local districts and leaders.
   o No, the current level of interaction and engagement is appropriate.
   o No, I would like less interaction and engagement with local districts and leaders.
   o There is not currently any interaction or engagement with local districts and leaders.

Final Questions
28. What advice would you give to your current principal preparation program director and instructors? (comment box)
29. Do you wish to be contacted in order to provide more information? Yes/No
30. If so, what is your contact information? (comment box)

Option B Survey: Second Year MSA Program

1. Name (optional)(will not be shared with program nor in any other public recording)
2. Expected graduation date (select month and year)
3. Program (drop down menu of all 13 MSA programs and other option)
4. Why are you currently enrolled in the MSA program?
   o I want to be a principal.
   o I want to be as assistant principal.
   o I want to work as a district-level administrator (i.e. central office).
   o I want to work in another administrator role in a school.
   o Other (box to elaborate)
5. Years of teaching experience (drop down, 1-30)
6. Years of non-teaching school leadership experience, such as dean, assistant principal or principal. (drop down, 1-30)
7. Are you a Principal Fellow?
   o Yes.
   o No.
   o I don’t know what that is.
8. Are you a DPI Administrative Intern?
   o Yes.
   o No.
9. If you answered no to both the Principal Fellow and Administrative Intern questions, please explain why you are not participating in those programs. (comment box)

10. In which counties and/or states did you teach prior to returning to enrolling in this program? (type responses)

11. Were you referred by your district to pursue this program?
   o Yes, I was formally referred or nominated.
   o Yes, someone informally suggested I pursue the degree.
   o No, I chose to receive the degree on my own.

12. How are you paying for the program?
   o I have scholarships that cover 100% of my tuition.
   o I pay for it all myself without loans.
   o I pay for it all myself with some loans.
   o I pay for it all myself using loans for the entire cost.
   o I pay for part of it myself, and the other part is paid for by someone else. (box for whom)
   o Someone besides me pays 100% of my tuition (not a scholarship).

Admissions information

13. How did you hear about the MSA program where you are currently enrolled? Check all that apply.
   o From my principal
   o From another administrator at my school
   o From a teacher at my school
   o Advertisement in print
   o Advertisement online
   o Information session at my school
   o Information session on campus
   o Information session somewhere else
   o Directly from a recruiter from the program
   o Not sure

14. When you applied to your MSA program, what did you have to submit or do? (list, select all that apply)
   o An online application
   o Undergraduate transcripts
   o Resume
   o Writing Sample
   o Essay
   o References
   o Principal recommendation
   o Other Recommendation
   o Problem solving activity
   o GRE or MAT scores
   o Teaching evaluation
   o In-Person Interview
15. Indicate the level to which you agree with the following statements: (1-7 scale)
   a. The MSA program I am enrolled in has strict admission standards.
   b. The MSA program I am enrolled in is rigorous.

16. To how many programs did you apply? (Drop down, 1-13, more option)

**Program information**

17. To what extent are the following true of your principal preparation program? (true, somewhat true, neutral, somewhat false, false)
   - I am in a student cohort - a defined group of individuals who began the program together and will stay or stayed together throughout our courses.
   - Practicing school/district administrators teach in the program.
   - Faculty members are very knowledgeable about their subject matter.

18. To what extent do you agree with the following qualities as they relate to your principal preparation program? (scale of 1-7 for each statement)
   - The program emphasized strategic leadership
   - The program emphasized instructional leadership
   - The program emphasized cultural leadership
   - The program emphasized human resource leadership
   - The program emphasized managerial leadership
   - The program emphasized external development leadership
   - The program emphasized micro-political leadership

19. Indicate the level at which you feel prepared to perform the following: (scale of 1-7 for each statement, change “agree” to “prepared”, i.e. significantly prepared, prepared, somewhat prepared)
   - Enhance teacher’s instructional capacity
   - Promote instruction that maximizes student learning
   - Promote robust and meaningful curricula and assessment programs
   - Promote the development of an inclusive school climate characterized by supportive relationships and a personalized culture of care.
   - Promote professionally normed communities for teachers and other professional staff.
   - Ensure effective and efficient management of the school or district to promote student social and academic learning.
   - Adhere to ethical principles and professional norms.
   - Ensure the development of an equitable and culturally responsive school.
   - Ensure the development of a culture of continuous school improvement.
   - Ensure the development, articulation, implementation, and stewardship of a child-centered vision of quality schooling that is shared by all members of the school community.

20. How is most instruction delivered in your program?
   - All online
   - Most online
   - Evenly blended online and in person
21. If you have online courses, how are they organized?
   - All courses are asynchronous (offered online with no set meeting time, students complete course at own pace)
   - Most courses are asynchronous with a few synchronous (offered online and meeting times are set, entire class meets at the same time in a virtual setting) sessions
   - Evenly blended between asynchronous and synchronous
   - Some asynchronous, but most are synchronous
   - All synchronous

22. To what extent are these practices part of your coursework? (1-7 scale, but change “agree” to “often”, i.e. very often, often, somewhat often, etc.)
   - Lectures
   - Participation in small group work
   - Analysis and discussion of case studies
   - Field-based projects in which students apply ideas in the field
   - Use of problem-based learning approaches
   - Research or inquiry projects
   - Journal writing of experiences
   - Portfolio demonstrating learning and competencies

23. Indicate to what extent you agree with the following statements (1-7 scale)
   - My coursework is comprehensive and provides a coherent learning experience
   - The program provides opportunities for self-assessment as a leader
   - I am asked to reflect on practice and analyze how to improve it
   - The program provides assessments of my skill development and leadership competencies
   - The program integrates theory and practice
   - The faculty provides opportunities to evaluate the program

**Internship**

24. How many weeks is your internship? (Drop down menu)
25. Are you a part time or a full time intern?
   - Part-time
   - Full-time
26. How many hours per week do you spend on internship activities?
27. In which county are you currently interning? (box for comment)
28. At what level do you intern? Select all that apply.
   - Elementary School
   - Middle School
   - High School
   - Other
   - Traditional Public School
   - Charter School
   - Private School
29. If you are a part-time intern, is your internship in the same school where you are teaching or working?
   o Yes, I intern in the school where I work.
   o No, but I intern in a school where I previously worked.
   o No, I intern somewhere different from where I work or have previously worked.

30. If you are a part-time intern, what is your primary job responsibility?
   o Teacher
   o Counselor
   o Testing Coordinator
   o Assistant Principal
   o Dean
   o Other (box to type)

31. If you are a part-time intern, how are you managing your internship experience? Select all that apply.
   o I have some release time from my teaching to carry out the internship.
   o I am carrying a full workload and do my internship during non-teaching time.
   o I am doing my internship during the summer
   o Other (specify)

32. Do you have a mentor at your internship?
   o No, I do not have a mentor.
   o Yes, the principal is my mentor.
   o Yes, someone other than the principal is my mentor.

33. Indicate the level to which the following statements are true (1-7)
   o There are linkages between coursework and my internship.
   o I am closely supervised and assisted by knowledgeable school leaders.
   o My internship achievements are regularly evaluated by program faculty.
   o I have responsibilities for leading, facilitating, and making decisions typical of an educational leader.
   o I am able to develop an educational leader’s perspective on school improvement.
   o My internship is an excellent learning experience for becoming a principal.

Relationship with local districts
34. During your first year in the program, did you interact with current school administrators?
   o Yes
   o No

35. If yes, how often?

36. In your opinion, is your program tailored to suit the current needs of schools and districts?
   o Yes, the program adjusts frequently to the needs of schools and districts.
   o Yes, the program content adjusts somewhat based on the needs of schools and districts.
   o No, the program does not change, but it is appropriate for all schools and districts.
   o No, the program does not suit the current needs of schools and districts.
   o Not sure.
37. Would you prefer to have more interaction or engagements with local districts and leaders?
   - Yes, I would like more interaction and engagement with local districts and leaders.
   - No, the current level of interaction and engagement is appropriate.
   - No, I would like less interaction and engagement with local districts and leaders.
   - There is not currently any interaction or engagement with local districts and leaders.

Final Questions
38. What advice would you give to your current principal preparation program director and instructors? (comment box)
39. Do you wish to be contacted in order to provide more information?
40. If so, what is your contact information?

Option C Survey: MSA Graduates
1. Name (optional)(will not be shared with program nor in any other public recording)
2. Graduation date (select month and year)
3. Program (drop down menu of all 13 MSA programs and other option)
4. Why did you get your MSA degree?
   - I wanted to be a principal.
   - I wanted to be as assistant principal.
   - I wanted to work as a district-level administrator (i.e. central office).
   - I wanted to work in another administrator role in a school.
   - Other (box to elaborate)
5. Years of teaching experience when you started the MSA (drop down, 1-30)
6. Years of non-teaching school leadership experience when you started the MSA (dean, AP, principal). (drop down, 1-30)
7. Were you a Principal Fellow?
   - Yes.
   - No.
   - I don’t know what that is.
8. Were you a DPI Administrative Intern?
   - Yes.
   - No.
   - I don’t know what that is.
9. If you answered no to both the Principal Fellow and Administrative Intern questions, please explain why you did not participating in those programs. (comment box)
10. In which counties did you teach prior to returning to graduate school for the MSA? (type responses)
11. Were you referred by your district to pursue the MSA degree?
   - Yes, I was formally referred or nominated.
   - Yes, someone informally suggested I pursue the degree.
   - No, I chose to receive the degree on my own.
12. How did you pay for your degree?
   - I had scholarships that cover 100% of my tuition.
   - I paid for it all myself without loans.
   - I paid for it all myself with some loans.
   - I paid for it all myself using loans for the entire cost.
   - I paid for part of it myself, and the other part was paid for by someone else. (box for whom)
   - Someone besides me paid 100% of my tuition (not a scholarship).

Admissions information
13. How did you hear about the MSA program where you enrolled? Check all that apply.
   - From my principal
   - From another administrator at my school
   - From a teacher at my school
   - Advertisement in print
   - Advertisement online
   - Information session at my school
   - Information session on campus
   - Information session somewhere else
   - Directly from a recruiter from the program
   - Not sure

14. When you applied to your MSA program, what did you have to submit? (list, select all that apply)
   - An online application
   - Undergraduate transcripts
   - Resume
   - Writing Sample
   - Essay
   - References
   - Principal recommendation
   - Problem solving activity
   - GRE or MAT scores
   - Teaching evaluation
   - Interview
   - Other

15. Indicate the level to which you agree with the following statements:(1-7 scale)
   - The MSA program I graduate from had strict admission standards.
   - The MSA program I graduated from was rigorous.

16. To how many programs did you apply? (Drop down, 1-12)

Program information
17. To what extent were the following true of your principal preparation program? (scale of 1-7 for each statement)
   - I was in a student cohort - a defined group of individuals who began the program together and stayed together throughout their courses.
   - Practicing school/district administrators taught in the program.
Faculty members were very knowledgeable about their subject matter.

18. To what extent were the following qualities true of your principal preparation program? (scale of 1-7 for each statement)
   - The program emphasized strategic leadership
   - The program emphasized instructional leadership
   - The program emphasized cultural leadership
   - The program emphasized human resource leadership
   - The program emphasized managerial leadership
   - The program emphasized external development leadership
   - The program emphasized micro-political leadership

19. Indicate the level at which you felt prepared to perform the following upon graduating from the program: (scale of 1-7 for each statement)
   - Enhance instructional capacity
   - Promote instruction that maximizes student learning
   - Promote robust and meaningful curricula and assessment programs
   - Promote the development of an inclusive school climate characterized by supportive relationships and a personalized culture of care.
   - Promote professionally normed communities for teachers and other professional staff.
   - Ensure effective and efficient management of the school or district to promote student social and academic learning.
   - Adhere to ethical principles and professional norms.
   - Ensure the development of an equitable and culturally responsive school.
   - Ensure the development of a culture of continuous school improvement.
   - Ensure the development, articulation, implementation, and stewardship of a child-centered vision of quality schooling that is shared by all members of the school community.

20. How was most instruction delivered in your program?
   - All online
   - Most online
   - Evenly blended online and in person
   - Some online, but most in person
   - All in person

21. If you had online courses, how were they organized?
   - All courses are asynchronous
   - Most courses are asynchronous with a few synchronous sessions
   - Evenly blended between asynchronous and synchronous
   - Some asynchronous, but most are synchronous
   - All synchronous

22. To what extent were these practices part of your coursework? (1-7 scale)
   - Lectures
   - Participation in small group work
   - Analysis and discussion of case studies
   - Field-based projects in which students applied ideas in the field
   - Use of problem-based learning approaches
   - Research or inquiry projects
Journal writing of experiences
Portfolio demonstrating learning and competencies

23. Indicate to what extent you agree with the following statements (1-7 scale)
(1)
○ My course work was comprehensive and provided a coherent learning experience
○ The program provided opportunities for self-assessment as a leader
○ I was asked to reflect on practice and analyze how to improve it
○ The program provided assessments of my skill development and leadership competencies
○ The program integrated theory and practice
○ The faculty provided opportunities to evaluate the program

Internship
24. How many weeks was your internship? (Drop down menu)
25. Were you a part-time or a full-time intern?
   ○ Part-time
   ○ Full-time
26. In which county did you intern? (box)
27. At what level did you intern? Select all that apply.
   ○ Elementary School
   ○ Middle School
   ○ High School
   ○ Other
   ○ Public
   ○ Charter
   ○ Private
28. If you were a part-time intern, was your internship in the same school where you were teaching or working?
   ○ Yes, I interned in the school where I worked.
   ○ No, but I interned in a school where I had previously worked.
   ○ No, I interned somewhere different than where I worked or had previously worked.
29. If you were a part-time intern, what was your primary job responsibility?
   ○ Teacher
   ○ Counselor
   ○ Testing Coordinator
   ○ Assistant Principal
   ○ Dean
   ○ Other
30. If you were a part-time intern, how did you manage your internship experience? Select all that apply.
   ○ I had some release time from my teaching to carry out the internship.
   ○ I was carrying a full workload and do my internship during non-teaching time.
   ○ I was doing my internship during the summer
   ○ Other (specify)
31. Did you have a mentor at your internship?
o No, I did not have a mentor.
o Yes, the principal was my mentor.
o Yes, someone besides the principal was my mentor.

32. Indicate the level to which the following statements are true (1-7)
o I interned in a school that served students with a variety of socioeconomic backgrounds.
o There were linkages between coursework and my internship.
o I was closely supervised and assisted by knowledgeable school leaders.
o My internship achievements were regularly evaluated by program faculty.
o I had responsibilities for leading, facilitating, and making decisions typical of an educational leader.
o I was able to develop an educational leader’s perspective on school improvement.
o My internship was an excellent learning experience for becoming a principal.

Relationship with local districts
33. During the program, did you interact with acting school administrators?
o Yes
o No
34. If yes, how often?
35. In your opinion, was your program tailored to suit the current needs your internship school or district?
o Yes, the program adjusted frequently to the needs of schools and districts.
o Yes, the program content adjusted somewhat based on the needs of schools and districts.
o No, the program did not change, but it was appropriate for my school and district.
o No, the program did not suit the current needs of schools and districts.
o Not sure.
36. Would you have preferred to have more interaction or engagements with local districts and leaders?
o Yes, I would have liked more interaction and engagement with local districts and leaders.
o No, the level of interaction and engagement was appropriate.
o There was not any interaction or engagements with districts and leaders.

After Completing the Program
37. How effectively did your program prepare you to do the following (1-7 scale)?
o Understand how different students learn and how to teach them successfully.
o Create a coherent educational program across the school.
o Evaluate curriculum materials for their usefulness in supporting learning.
o Design professional development that builds teachers knowledge and skills.
o Evaluate teachers and provide instructional feedback to support their improvement.
o Handle discipline and support services.
o Develop broad agreement among staff about the school’s mission.
o Create a collaborative learning organization.
- Find and allocate resources to pursue important school goals
- Analyze budgets and reallocate resources to achieve critical objectives
- Manage facilities and their maintenance
- Mobilize the school staff to foster social justice in serving all students
- Work with parents to support student learning
- Use data to monitor school progress, identify problems, and propose solutions
- Lead a well-informed, planned change process for a school
- Engage in planning for school improvement
- Use effective written and oral communication skills, particularly in public forums
- Collaborate with other outside school for assistance and partnership
- Engage in self-improvement and continuous learning
- Develop a clear set of ethical principles to guide decision making

38. What is your current position?
   - Superintendent
   - Principal
   - Assistant principal
   - School-level administrator or leader (not principal, AP, or teacher)
   - Teacher
   - Counselor
   - District-level staff
   - State-level staff
   - No longer working in education
   - Other

39. If you had the opportunity to do it over again, would you choose the same program?
   - Definitely yes
   - Probably yes
   - Not sure
   - Probably not
   - Definitely not

40. What advice would you give to your former principal preparation program director and instructors? (comment box)

41. Do you wish to be contacted in order to provide more information?

42. If so, what is your contact information?

Option D Survey:
“Thank you for participating in this survey. The purpose of this survey is to collect information regarding the experience of current and former students who graduated in 2008 or late. I appreciate your willingness to participate, but your feedback is not requested at this time.”