The Impact of Federal Mandates on Principals’ Leadership Styles: Is It Real?

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Mandates of federal education laws dictate most aspects of public school life for principals as well as teachers. These mandates are the criteria for schools to receive federal funds. This article provides insight into the leadership styles of principals serving a rural county in Tennessee. The study identified leadership traits and/or behaviors demonstrating the principal’s preferred leadership style and then identified changes directly attributed to the mandates of NCLB. The study showed that not only were changes invoked, but the resulting leadership styles seem to define a new leadership definition for the 21st century principal.

INTRODUCTION

Technology has changed society dramatically in the last forty years. Homes now have microwaves, sub-zero refrigerators, monitored security systems, and flat-screen televisions. Cars provide seats that heat or cool the passenger, navigation systems to aid the driver, and entertainment choices for young and old alike. Phones have left the house and now go wherever the user goes, doing far more than just voice communications.

As society has changed, it has demanded changes in public education. These demands, in turn, have changed teacher education programs. These changes invoked changes in leadership styles. Yet, not all changes in education resulted from technology. Some of the most dramatic changes resulted from federal mandates, such as the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB).

Mandates often affect leadership decisions, actions, and reactions through requirements on school leadership, specifically the principal, under penalty for non-compliance. By virtue of their position—and personality—principals are leaders. As such, a principal naturally gravitates toward a leadership style that best suits his/her personality and brings about the school culture he/she desires for the school.

Principals are employees and as such, they are expected to follow federal and state educational laws as well as local district policies. It is likely that mandates, such as NCLB, move principals away from their preferred leadership style. If so, it may be because principals are held accountable professionally, and to some degree, personally, for the obtainment of the standards set forth in the mandate by the assigned school (Office of the Under Secretary, 2002).

This case study, completed in 2010, provides insight into the leadership styles of principals serving a rural county in the midsouth. The study identified leadership traits and/or behaviors demonstrating the principal’s preferred leadership style and then identified changes directly attributed to the mandates of NCLB.
The study showed that not only were changes invoked, but the resulting leadership styles seem to define a new leadership definition for the 21st century principal.

BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

The purpose of the NCLB act was to “improve student achievement and to change the culture of America’s schools” (U.S. Department of Education, 2004, p. ix). According to NCLB, state-level Boards of Education were mandated to demonstrate compliance with the act following the end of each school year. State-level Boards of Education looked to local school districts for verification of compliance. School districts looked to principals to demonstrate compliance at the school level. Principals became responsible to their school districts for ensuring that their respective schools meet federally-mandated benchmarks in more than 30 pre-established categories, which together demonstrated that schools had complied with the required “adequate yearly progress” (U.S. Department of Education, 2009) or “AYP”. Compliance by schools and in turn, districts, ensured the continuing receipt of federal funds by a state.

NCLB recognized that quality teachers, additional programs, and district accountability for the progress of its schools aided principals in bringing about the expected progress noted in the act. To that end, school districts and principals were required to ensure through the interview and hiring process that they hired “highly qualified” teachers proficient in the assigned subject matter (Office of the Under Secretary, 2002). Because NCLB focused on language and mathematics for its standardized accountability testing, principals, in addition to choosing “highly qualified” teachers, were challenged to pay special attention to the pedagogy selected by teachers in those subject areas.

Prior to NCLB, some school districts merely assigned teachers and therefore, principals were not involved in the hiring process. NCLB changed that for many districts. Principals became involved in the hiring process. Because of the amount of time that special programs take a child out of the classroom, principals, and school districts had to consider hiring speech, occupational and physical therapists, and guidance counselors who also had the requisite training to include academics in their respective training or counseling sessions (Whitney, 2009). Again, this had a substantial impact on how the principal used his or her time and collective skillset by, among other things, imposing many more budget considerations.

Change, however, did not only affect the hiring of teachers. It also affected the hiring of principals (Rammer, 2007). School districts realized that leading schools to success as measured by NCLB required principals to have a different skill set than in years past. An extensive study at the University of Michigan noted that principals needed to be able to invoke change, handle increased demands for documentation, be experts in current best practices in curriculum and instruction, and “provide learning opportunities for all staff” (Abernathy, 2010, p. 97). Because of the emphasis on “no child”, principals also gained increased visibility as they became responsible for ensuring that any student’s special needs were identified and met, that parents’ requests were heard and met within the guidelines, that student reading levels were reached and maintained, and that all students
in their respective schools show AYP on the annual, state-mandated standardized test (Johnson, n.d.).

The various reports that principals were required to gather and submit, and in some cases, analyze the data, also increased in number because of NCLB (Lecker, 2005, Section I). Further, principals did not have the luxury of doing the collection and analysis in their own style. The act required each school district to create and implement a plan for reporting its testing data to the state. The plan documented how data would be gathered, formatted, and provided. Principals, in turn, were required to master and implement them.

Should a school be notified that it did not meet its AYP goals, the principal was required to create and formalize a plan detailing ways for improvement (Lecker, 2005, Section III). This plan was to include motivation techniques for the faculty. Its focus was to be on improving test scores. Included were to be academic achievement goals, and specific instructional strategies that aligned with the benchmarks for particular subject areas. The goals were to be measurable goals. The benchmarks were to indicate clearly that improvement was taking place (Office of the Under Secretary, 2002).

In addition to the requirements of NCLB, the role of the principal was affected by decreasing revenues at the local and state levels. These decreases often resulted in fewer teachers and thereby, larger class sizes, less technology, and fewer teaching resources. Principals dealt with such situations even before NCLB, but after NCLB, they dealt with them more intensely in order to assure that their school showed the requisite AYP.

Changes were prevalent throughout the curriculum because of NCLB. “NCLB forces schools to teach the test” (Fitzgerald, 2009, para. 5). Principals often had to deal with disgruntled teachers and textbooks that failed to support new curricula (Fitzgerald, 2009).

NCLB was not only forcing curricula changes, but changes in budget expenditures. To be successful in a NCLB school, principals needed to bring finance skills to the job. Budget issues faced by the principal include aging facilities, aged technology, and out-of-date textbooks (IES, 2005). Other issues affecting budget decisions included increased program requirements, community requests, and parent demands. With each budget decision, principals often felt pressured to explain how expenditures directly benefitted students or program materials contributed to the school’s AYP (Johnson, n.d.).

A 2005 study performed by the Teacher Quality Research Organization found that NCLB limited principal choices in teacher hiring and teacher assignments. The formal report indicated that principals in times past looked for teachers that shared the direction and priorities of the principal, but since NCLB, principals focused on “the demographic and skills mix of teachers, rather than on shared school-level ideals” (Harris, Rutledge, Ingle, Thompson, 2007. p. 39). Lacking a shared direction and with little time to build rapport, principals found that teachers no longer feel appreciated because their requests for change were seemingly ignored. The lack of time for principals to be classrooms or hallways also lowered morale. Often these negative feelings carried into the overall school culture. When they did, the principal or some other administrator faced the need to motivate staff much the same way that teachers were required by NCLB to motivate less-motivated students toward their own AYP (Whitaker, 2003).

Principals risked losing their job if they were not perceived as “effective leaders.” NCLB forced an “effective leader” to be defined as a leader that ensured a school met or exceeded guidelines and mandates resulting in the school showing AYP. When a school
did not meet AYP, school districts looked first at the principal. Principals, feeling frustrated by the low performance, sometimes chose to leave their position, increasing turnover at the principal level.

Principals were the primary decision-makers in a school. As such, their decisions, and the attitudes and behaviors associated with those decisions, defined their leadership styles (Abernathy, 2010). State and federal mandates directly affected a principal’s leadership decisions, attitudes, and behavior. Little to no research previously reported considered the possibility that these mandates on a principal’s preferred leadership style altered that style to the point that another leadership theory offered a better definition.

NATURE OF THE STUDY

This study focused on the leadership style of principals and sought to determine if the principal’s choice of leadership style was changed by requirements of federal mandates, particularly NCLB. If change was reported, the study sought to identify the reasons and the manner of the change at the individual level. Looking across all interviews as a single case study, the researcher sought to determine commonalities and anomalies in theme and impact.

A case study allowed an investigator to look in-depth at a particular area of interest not defined by quantitative statistical methods. Because of society’s reliance on technology and NCLB’s support of the use of technology in the classroom, the area of technology was selected as the focus for the interviews, should a specific focus be needed to guide the responses. Discussing technology was intended to cover areas such as finances, school plant, teacher education and training, and student learning providing a broad spectrum of topics to the principal in the area of leadership.

Hundreds of hits on the Internet, many published by state Boards or Departments of Education, blogs, and published dissertations, were outspoken in their claim that NCLB affected every area of education through often unwanted change. According to change experts such as Everett Rogers and his work, Diffusion of Innovation (2003), change permeated an environment when an innovation was injected. The change resulted from the response to the innovation offered by the persons in that environment or culture (Rogers, 2003). An innovation was described simply as “new stuff that is made useful” (McKeown, 2008, p. 14). Accepting NCLB as “new stuff made useful”, the innovation was diffused by the Federal Government through states and down to students. A dominate group on which the innovation was thrust was school principals.

Few would argue that NCLB had no effect on school morale, teacher behavior and principal attitudes. The argument, instead, would debate whether the effect was positive or negative (McKenzie, 2006). Determining the outcome of that argument, if a simple positive or negative response was satisfactory, was available through quantitative survey research. Understanding the effects of the change and whether the effects were currently in place or projected were best gained through a qualitative study and a case study, in particular.
THEORIES OF LEADERSHIP

Effective leaders are able to lead their staff by motivating them, transforming them, and effectively making the changes that are needed. Two dominant theories of leadership embraced by principals are transformational leadership and transactional leadership. Less well-known, but often practiced is environmental leadership.

In 1978, James Burns theorized that transformational leadership allowed a leader to guide some group toward a plan of change that implemented a new strategy focused on accomplishing a goal or mission (Pounder, 2008). According to Pounder (2008), “Burns’ idea was based on the premise that transforming leadership raises both leaders’ and subordinates’ level of motivation and morale” (p. 778).

Transformational leadership identifies a leader that develops a positive rapport with his/her subordinates while showing willingness to make the changes necessary to work as a team with them. Yet, leadership is “not at all about personality; it’s about practice” (Kouzes & Posner, 2002, p. 13). The transformational leader is willing to transform his/her team positively and in an environment that allowed all parties involved to feel that their ideas matter, increasing morale within the group.

Bernard Bass developed transactional leadership in 1981. This leadership style was often portrayed in the literature as the “traditional form of leadership” (Hsu, Bell, & Cheng, 2002). This leadership theory was described as a reward and punishment leadership style. The transactional leader rewarded good or desired behaviors, and punished bad or undesirable behaviors.

Transactional leadership was a leadership style that recognized team members as followers of the leader and expected team members to perform according to what was agreed upon. Under transactional leadership, it was typical for the leader and the team to determine the goals at hand, agree on a plan, and then to carry out only that plan.

The transactional-transformational leadership model became prominent in the 1970s. Acknowledging that these leadership styles were very similar in many ways, the model sought to combine the strengths of each into a single model. Significant mutual strengths included the leadership of a group toward a common goal and the willingness to implement change at either the task level or the performance level. Significant differences also existed. The transformational leader was motivating, enthusiastic, and supportive. In contrast, the transactional leader was task-focused with a plan for execution without regard for how a team member felt or interest in influencing the team member positively.

The marriage of transformational leadership and transactional leadership worked for many in business as reported on the websites of established companies such as Xerox, IBM, and Johnson & Johnson. Extensive research into human capital management by IBM found that this resulting leadership style was task-focused, but with interest in the feelings and contributions of team members. This combination enhanced the leader’s rapport with team members by encouraging team members to further develop skills and exceed expectations.

Environmental leadership grew out of a need for leading workers that were diverse in backgrounds and cultures due to increased outsourcing and extensive global commerce. This relatively new style of leadership focused on creating a positive work culture through motivation. Arthur F. Carmazzi, an international change leadership
expert and author of *The 6 Dimensions of Top Achievers*, developed this leadership model in the early 2000s in response to “the growing global market where leaders and followers are as diverse as the countries they hail from” (Carmazzi, 2009, para. 6).

While this diversity was not necessarily the case in public education, this leadership style offered an awareness of the leadership challenges that resulted from a diverse group of students. This awareness easily transferred to the diverse faculty and staff a principal may work with daily. Environmental leadership was concerned with all of the environments of workers, not just the single environment of work. According to Carmazzi, workers needed their emotional needs met and were turning to social networking, and the fast, easy interactions and information transfer offered through the Internet to meet those needs because the work environment did not.

Leadership guided people to support change and increase morale so that the environment was one in which others would want to work together toward the vision set by the leader. “Leaders were possibility thinkers, not probability thinkers” (Kouzes & Posner, 2002, p. 124). Leaders were people that could see the big picture. They effectively led a team by transforming team members into positive, willing, and motivated people. Principals were leaders in society’s schools and thereby had influence over the leaders of the future.

Just as leadership was personal, so was the study of leadership. Leadership style was a personal choice of the leader. If the leader was task-oriented, the leadership choice was likely to be transactional. If the leader was people-oriented, the leadership choice was likely to be transformational. If the leader was holistic, carrying about people and their environments, the leadership choice was likely to be environmental. In some situations, the leader chose a combination of leadership styles.

Case study research allowed the personal aspect of leadership to be perused and examined. It brought out the “how” and the “why” of a particular situation. In the integration of the NCLB and schools, the school principal chose his or her leadership style for the situation. This selected style, however, was not always his or her preferred leadership style.

**DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS**

This study sought to determine how, if at all, NCLB impacted the leadership styles of school principals and if so, to what extent. The findings of the current research study were based on personal interviews completed with principals in a rural school district in Tennessee. All schools in the district actively participated in the mandates and requirements of NCLB affording each school access to federal funding provided by the act.

By selecting the interview approach, the researcher was able to gain the information firsthand. During the interview process, the researcher also observed body language and voice modulation, probed for additional information based on the responses of the interviewees, and ensured that any underlying issues brought up in the responses were fully investigated.

The low income of the county affected its ability to attract and keep school leadership. Of the 3 female and 3 male principals participating in the study, one principal
had a doctorate degree, two had master’s degrees and the remaining three had bachelor degrees. All had been principals for 5 years or more.

The answers offered to the research questions by the six principals indicated different perceived leadership styles, but with many similarities. In four interviews, principals saw themselves as either transactional leaders or transformational leaders. The remaining principals used “a marriage” and “modeling” as the descriptor.

Throughout the interviews, it was evident that the interviewees had great respect for the position of principal as well as the decision-making responsibilities of the position. Each principal expressed that their first responsibility was to students and student needs. Each principal clearly indicated that mandates did not impact their leadership styles as each attested to confidence in being able to adapt or flex to situation at hand. Writing grants to get monies needed for students was one example provided of that flexibility.

Three principals explained that changes in their individual leadership styles resulted from some “force” or outside pressure acting on them or on the situation and thereby affecting their leadership style and/or decision-making processes. There was some discussion, indirectly, about technology in schools. This was done in the context of student needs as well as test-taking.

The participating principals were adamant that showing AYP was a focus throughout the year. While none noted that AYP was a “force” that impacted principals’ leadership styles, the transcripts indicated that such was the case. Occasionally, AYP was used by the principals to segue into a discussion on tests and their impact on students as well as on a principal’s career should test scores fall below expectations.

RESULTS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The research study began out of the interest of the researcher in the changes she noted as a teacher in her school principal. Although the school in which she taught was not a public school, it had recently undertaken the tenants of NCLB. Having been with the school for five years, the researcher noted that the leadership style of her principal changed substantially during the initial two years of the school’s implementation of NCLB. The researcher noted that her own leadership style changed over time in response to the changed style of her principal. Wondering if there was a correlation between the implementation of the federal mandate and the change in leadership style, the researcher proposed a study to look for a possible correlation. Realizing that an impersonal quantitative study would not provide the insight desired, a qualitative research study was selected with the following research questions:

R$_1$ Is a principal’s leadership style changed by outside forces such as federal mandates?

R$_2$ Why is a principal’s leadership style affected by outside forces such as federal mandates?

R$_3$ How is a principal’s leadership style affected by outside forces such as federal mandates, particularly, Title II of NCLB?
As the study began, the initial interviews proposed a very different outcome to Research Question 1 than expected. The principals were adamant that the mandates of NCLB did not change their leadership style. Each one explained that as the head figure in the school, principals were free to lead as they saw fit and each indicated that they did just that.

Two of the principals defined their leadership style as transactional, while two others described their leadership style as transformational. The principals who considered themselves to be transactional leaders talked much about AYP and accomplishing expectations set forth by NCLB. They often referred to their faculties and staffs as a group. These two principals also noted that if their schools failed to achieve AYP, there would be some fallout. On the other hand, they explained, if the schools met AYP, there were grants and monies that would become available to their faculties and staffs.

The principals who considered themselves transformational leaders discussed NCLB very little, instead choosing to explain that they were very interested in helping their staff and faculty become focused on each other, to help each other, to encourage each other. These two principals expected that their faculties would celebrate the organization and through their leadership, each teacher would be inspired to better themselves and in turn, be better, more effective teachers. This, in turn, would ensure that the school reached AYP as teachers would be encouraged and inspired to be more and to do more.

A third model of leadership noted by a principal was that of leadership being like a marriage. This principal spoke less about the law and mandates and more about the school’s staff and faculty much like the transformational principals. The fourth model of leadership described was that of modeling. This principal focused his description on inspiring faculty and staff, but placed great emphasis on the mandates or tasks that needed to be done. As a former teacher, he/she felt that modeling the tasks that teachers needed to complete was the best form of leadership for his/her school. This principal explained that he/she used lunch times to model presentations and hallways to model proper student interactions.

When preparing the transcripts of the interviews, the researcher was perplexed that it seemed to the principals that no impact was made on his or her leadership style by NCLB. Each one assured the researcher, according to the transcripts, that the embraced leadership style and the complementary decision-making process was clearly his or her own, not shaped by outside forces such as federal mandates, state laws, or district expectations.

While coding the transcripts, however, the researcher noted that in each interview, the principals spoke to “needing to get the job done” or to the tasks “thrown on principals by NCLB”. There was mention of increasing demands on a principal’s time to create and pass reports to the district and ultimately to state and federal agencies. The principals noted that they spend less time in the hallways interacting with the students because there was “more paperwork than ever before”. This was even spoken by the principal who chose to lead by modeling.

All principals spoke of increased requirements in the hiring process, more programs that needed to have both financial and performance oversight, and technology requirements that often lacked funding or if funded, the school plant was challenged to include it for safe and effective use by students. Several principals noted that they have
less time to interact with teachers, to counsel with parents, to mentor staff, or even oversee their training and self-improvement efforts.

A review of the categories and coded items led the researcher to realize that the overarching theme throughout the interviews was accountability. Accountability was at the very heart of NCLB as demonstrated easily by the U. S. Department of Education’s website which houses an entire section titled NCLB Accountability. Accountability also proved to be the answer to “why” in Research Question 2.

Mandates placed demands on principals, but it was the point at which the mandate took control of the situation that the principal’s leadership style, perhaps, even his or her own personality was changed. The mandate took control at the point that a principal determined or realized that his or her fate was determined by the mandate.

![Diagram](image)

As demonstrated in Figure 1, NCLB was a federal law with established precepts (Farmer, 2005) that held federal agencies accountable for supporting student progress through funding and other resources. The Federal Government held each state accountable for the progress of their students against the identified mandates. Each state, in turn, held its districts accountable for the progress of their students. Each districts, then, held its schools, through the school principals, accountable for the progress of their students. Principals were required to work within programs approved by NCLB legislation to achieve AYP. Student progress (or lack thereof), financial, expenditures, teacher and student attendance, and other such aspects of school life were reported through the districts and states to the Federal overseers of the legislation, thereby providing the desired accountability of the law.

Realizing this accountability chain or hierarchy, the researcher reasoned that the principals in this research study may have been experiencing classic cognitive dissonance.
as first described by Leon Festinger in his 1957 work, *A Theory of Cognitive Dissonance*. Cognitive dissonance was explained on the American Psychological Association website as being the mental and behavioral conflict induced when a person holds two contradictory beliefs, or when a belief is incongruent with an action that the person had chosen freely to perform. Because this situation produced feelings of discomfort, the individual strove to change at least one of the beliefs or behaviors in order to avoid being inconsistent. (O’Leary, 2010, para.1). Festinger (1957) theorized that humans have an inner need to have their mind consistent with their attitudes and behaviors; they want to have agreement and unification between thought and action. His research at Stanford University found that small incentives were more likely to bring about a permanent behavior change than large incentives which served to entice a person into a behavioral change, but only until the incentive was provided. Once the large incentive was possessed or owned, according to Festinger’s findings, the person tended to revert to the earlier, preferred behavior (Barker, 2003; Cherry, 2010).

It might be said that the authors of NCLB actually sought to build cognitive dissonance at many levels. This would serve as a means to renew America’s education as educators sought relief from the dissonance brought on by the legislation. NCLB forced principals into areas such as hiring when perhaps the districts formerly were responsible for hiring and assigning staff and faculty. NCLB required grants to be written to compete for certain funds and programs. This often required the principal to do the writing, especially in smaller, rural schools such as the ones in this study. Principals might not have recognized that their leadership style was changed by NCLB, yet, the demands that caused them to reallocate their time, efforts and energies to areas once handled by others, or to perform tasks that before were non-existent may have provided cognitive dissonance that was best remedied by the change. This provided a response to the “how” in Research Question 3.

The analysis of the findings agreed with the literature that there were several influencing factors that caused a leader to modify, reshape, or even abandon a preferred leadership style. In this study, the change in leadership style appeared to come subtly and be reported as a result of situations such as faculty changes and increased report requirements. In fact, the federal mandates of NCLB did impact principals to the extent that principals resorted to changing their leadership style in order to meet the requirements of the law.

Without federal mandates such as NCLB, the world of educational leadership might be very different. As Festinger (1957) suggested, the incentives with NCLB, which these principals saw as continued employment, for example, may be so large that the principals may be striving to maintain their preferred leadership style, while reacting on a daily basis to situations that demand a leadership style other than the one preferred.

Some reviewers suggested that this research study would have been a more worthy effort had it looked at a larger sample of schools. While, in research, increased numbers approaching the identified total population were ideal, the findings of this research brought forth a notion not yet found in the literature of educational leadership—that is, the cognitive dissonance brought on by federal mandates such as NCLB as experienced by principals, and the attempts by principals to reconcile this dissonance.

The principals in this study took pride in their roles as principals who supported the classroom teacher and interacted with students. As NCLB demanded more of the
principals’ time, the activities that brought a sense of pride to the principals diminished. As cognitive dissonance set in between what should be and what was, principals began to modify both their leadership approaches and their decision-making skills to meet the requirements imposed on their time and energies by NCLB with the particular intent of reducing cognitive dissonance. At the same time that principals were experiencing the demands on their time and focus, it was reasonable to expect that teachers were also experiencing cognitive dissonance. Teachers were now being told through the federal mandates what to teach, when to teach it, what to use when teaching, and even how to measure the effectiveness of their teaching. Simultaneously, they were noticing that the principal was less available, more restricted, and perhaps, even less focused on them and their classrooms—all due to the demands of accountability required by NCLB.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Based on the findings in this study, the following recommendations for future research with particular emphasis in the areas of educational administrators and cognitive dissonance, and principals and leadership style are suggested. Using quantitative research through survey or observation or a mixed study research format by adding interviews or on-site observations are suggested for answering the following questions:

1. Is cognitive dissonance in educational administrators, such as principals, brought on by outside forces such as federal mandates?
2. Do the traits of the leadership styles of principals in today’s schools identify a new or modified leadership style when compared with the traits found in the descriptions of documented leadership styles?
3. Are “transformational” principals actually “transactional” in leadership and if so, why?
4. Is there a relationship between a principal’s leadership style and his or her political stance?
5. Does a school principal’s leadership style affect the use of technology in support of federal mandates such as those in NCLB?
6. In what ways could higher education training be improved in order to prepare principals for effective and satisfying implementation of federal mandates such as AYP?
7. In light of the aspects of transformational, transactional and environmental leadership styles, would a hybrid model such as “transformental” be a more appropriate leadership style for principals serving under federal and state mandates?

SUMMARY

This study demonstrated that external mandates such as NCLB do impact the leadership styles as well as the decision-making process of principals to some degree. The changes resulted from outside forces rather than cognitive choice. Principals indicated that they felt removed from making decisions that were best for students and instead, forced to conform to what government says was best.
The interviews indicated that district, state, and federal directions or mandates often force school principals into decisions that were not their preference. For example, principals were limited in their ability to hire a teacher lacking a “highly qualified” notation, even if the teacher was not a “best fit” for the school culture or principal’s leadership style. This continued practice may well bring the “dysfunctional family” syndrome to school faculties and staffs.

Although this research study was not of sufficient size for making generalizations to larger target populations, it would be reasonable to generalize the passion presented by these principals for students and the learning process as being shared by many principals. The findings of the study did identify areas for future study that, when completed, could add substantial insight into leadership styles and the impact of federal mandates on the role of principals and ultimately the daily educational process under their leadership.

REFERENCES


