ABSTRACT

Title of Dissertation: PRINCIPAL SUPERVISORS' IMPLEMENTATION OF THE SYSTEMS ADMINISTRATOR MANAGER (SAM) PROCESS TO INCREASE INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP IN AN URBAN SCHOOL DISTRICT: A CASE STUDY

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This descriptive case study using mixed methods examined principal supervisors' experience implementing the School Administration Manager (SAM) process designed to increase their focus on instructional leadership in an urban school district in the mid-Atlantic area. The research was framed around principal supervisors using the Constructivist Theory to build new ideas and concepts through their implementation of the essential components of the SAM process. The essential components include an increase of instructional purpose for principal supervisors, opportunities for principal supervisors to reflect on their day, and opportunities for principal supervisors to improve their practice. The literature at the foundation of the research was divided into three categories: historical role of the superintendent and the growth of principal supervisors, the principal supervisors' redesign to emphasize instructional practices, and the Systems Administration Manager (SAM) professional development process. The data gathered during this case study included both qualitative and quantitative. Qualitative data involved interviews conducted with principal supervisors around their experience implementing the SAM professional development process. Quantitative data

involved the researcher gathering data from the SAM calendar that displayed each principal supervisor's time in relation to their goal, time spent with individuals or groups, and actions with each individual or group. The findings show that principal supervisors viewed SAM as a beneficial process that helped them focus on instructional leadership although most principal supervisors did not meet their predetermined goals around the amount of time they would spend on instructional leadership, who they would spend time with, and what actions they would undertake. Principal supervisors were able to clearly articulate barriers that still need to be navigated for them to continue increasing time on instructional leadership.

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by

Daryl Kennedy

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Background

The role of principal is a major contributing factor to the success of schools and students (Anderson, Leithwood, Louis, & Wahlstrom, 2004). Research suggests that leadership is second only to classroom instruction among all school-related factors that contribute to what students learn at school (Anderson et al., 2004). Over the last four centuries, school leadership has been represented in different forms as seen in formal westernized schooling in the United States. During the beginning of formal schooling in the 1700s, school leaders from this Eurocentric model were religious scholars or politicians in the local community who were not stationed at the school for the entire day. The needs of students and families were met through the one schoolhouse system. As the education system matured in our country, the school leadership role developed into being the principal stationed at the school whose responsibility has changed based on the historical time.

In 1983, the National Commission on Excellence in Education published a report entitled *A Nation at Risk* that stated students in the United States were not prepared to be competitive in a global society. This initial report caused our nation to reassess education and led to the reauthorization of the Elementary Secondary Education Act of 1965 (that is commonly known as the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001), which focused on increasing student academic performance; holding schools accountable for student test scores; and increasing graduation requirements with special attention being paid to historically disenfranchised students (Kowalski, 2005). The goal of school was solely to prepare students to prosper as adults.

NCLB was viewed as effective by many in education focusing on student achievement in traditionally underperforming student groups. The lack of support provided to principals,

however, was a communicated flaw (Lohman, 2010). The next wave of education reform came in the form of Race to the Top (RTTT) grants beginning in 2009, which built on previous reforms of student and school accountability in NCLB.

RTTT emphasized the development and adoption of common standards of student learning and principal effectiveness and leadership (Bjork, Browne-Ferrigno, & Kowalski, 2014). While No Child Left Behind mandated schools to change, Race to the Top provided incentives for schools to change with principal leadership being a key access point to the change (Lohman, 2010). Race to the Top continued the work initiated in the District of Columbia and Tennessee to provide greater feedback and accountability to principals through the evaluation system designed to reward individuals whose schools had outstanding performance, and to sever ties with individuals at schools with poor performance ("SAM Process," 2017).

To support principals with increased accountability and expectations designed to improve school performance, RTTT grants called on districts to provide individuals whose responsibility would be to support principals in the areas of leadership and effectiveness. In many districts, these individuals are known as principal supervisors ("SAM Process," 2017). Based on this new support system, the principal supervisors' role was to "provide high quality support to principals and help them improve and refine their skills as instructional leaders" (Council of Chief State Schools Officers [CCSSO], 2015). Soon, districts provided greater training for principals in leading their schools and emphasized an increased focus on teaching and learning using actions such as participation in leadership and teacher meetings, instructional walks, and strategic resource discussion (Casserly, 2013). In many districts, an increased number of principal supervisors have been hired to lead principals and support this emphasis on instructional leadership. Although individuals have been hired for this important work to

comply with RTTT grants, principal supervisors currently spend most of their time focusing on management and operational issues rather than instruction (Casserly, 2013). The writer examines the principal supervisors' experience implementing the School Administration Management (SAM) process designed to improve their focus on instructional leadership in an urban school district in the mid-Atlantic area. For the purposes of the dissertation and to hide its identity, this school district will be called the Smith School District.

From Principals to Principal Supervisors—A History

The non-existent principal (1700–1800).

During the inception of schools in the 1700s, the local community shaped school instruction. Community members identified schools as an extension of the church with the primary purpose of ensuring that biblical scriptures and doctrines were learned by students (Hansot & Tyack, 1982). Schools were to stress civic and moral values that they thought could only be maintained through public education. The local communities believed and communicated to students that if you worked hard and were morally pure, you would be successful (Hansot & Tyack, 1982).

Leaders in the community assigned to oversee this process were mostly clergy members. The clergy saw this opportunity to lead schools as a calling, like a preacher being called to minister a church (Hansot & Tyack, 1982). Most of the teachers hired by local leaders during this time had educational levels that were no higher than elementary school. The interactions between the local community and the teachers were dependent on relationships and personalities, and less on the qualities of individuals.

The principal teacher (1800–1900).

As the 1700s concluded, communities began to acknowledge that clergy did not necessarily have the knowledge base to make informed judgements about teacher effectiveness. Supervisory committees began to replace individual clergy in supervising and monitoring schools. These committees began to place more emphasis on observing and tracking the quality of instruction. They were given the authority to set parameters around curriculum, decide what would be taught, and hire and fire teachers (Frontier, Livingston, & Marzano, 2011). This new approach, led by the growing industrial base and common schooling movement, was designed to improve teaching and learning with better qualified faculty.

In large schools and districts, teachers on supervisory committees with knowledge and expertise in specific content areas and subjects were viewed more favorably. One expert teacher from the committee within a building was often selected to assume administrative duties. The “principal” teacher role designation ultimately cultivated into the role of the building principal. This individual had ultimate authority in the school building. This trend towards specialized roles that began in large urban districts soon spread to small cities and rural areas (Frontier et al., 2011).

In areas where a “principal teacher” was not present in the building, a principal teacher would be shared between towns and cities. In this scenario, the principal teacher traveled from community to community and visited schools communicating about the need for better instruction while continuing to practice religious doctrine (Frontier et al., 2011). Beginning in the late 1800s, the principals’ role became more defined. These individuals were usually men who acted more as father figures in an authoritarian nature and became the unquestioned leaders of the school.

During this time, African-American students were educated in different settings than their white peers. Three court rulings in the mid-1800s consolidated this rationale. In 1850, Roberts vs. Boston Massachusetts ruled African-American students could be educated in separate settings. This was further solidified in the 1857 Supreme Court's Dred Scott decision in which the court stated, "African Americans had no rights which the white man was bound to respect," and further asserted that, "African Americans had never been and could never be citizens of the United States" (Davis, 2018). These decisions made clear to states that African American citizens and students did not have rights. Using the Dred Scott and Boston school decisions as precedence, the United States Supreme Court ruled in the 1896 Plessy vs. Ferguson decision that "separate but equal" was to be considered when dealing with African-American and white citizens. This ruling gave states the right to have racially separate establishments such as school systems, requiring them only to be equal (Davis, 2018). Although separate but equal was the requirement, schools that educated African Americans did not have the same resources as white schools.

The bureaucratic principal (1900–1960).

At the turn of the 20th century, leadership in public education had gravitated from the part-time educational evangelist who had created the common school system (1700s) and a principal teacher who had expertise in a certain area (1800s), to a new breed of professional manager called principal who made education a lifelong career reshaping schools in a new way (Hansot & Tyack, 1982). The principal did not teach, but managed schools in a hierarchal system with internal and external factors influencing decisions.

In the beginning of the 1900s, politics from the broader world such as Eastern Europe, and the ideologies of dictators such as Mussolini, Hitler, and Stalin, along with changes in our

nation's economy, had an impact on principals' thinking of educating students. From this external and internal view, two different ideologies developed in the United States—democracy and scientific management. John Dewey and the Democracy Movement believed and pushed democracy as the ideology that would improve the United States as a country to be a world power through good citizenship and relationships (Frontier et al., 2011). Frederick Taylor and the Scientific Management Movement countered with development and creativity by believing that the best and brightest would propel the United States into world power status (Frontier et al., 2011). As the 1900s progressed, there was continued tension and emphasis on principals to focus their schools on education that included a greater dependency on standardized tests and the approach that focused on social development and democratic values.

In 1954, the Supreme Court overturned previous court decisions such as Boston, Massachusetts, Dred Scott, and Plessy vs. Ferguson. The Brown vs. Board of Education decision ruled that "separate but equal is inherently unequal" (Ivers, 2018). This decision reversed more than a century of decisions which directly contributed to African American students receiving an education that was less superior than their white peers. This ruling paved the way for integration in the United States and led to more challenges of segregated policies (Ivers, 2018).

The instructional principal (1960–2009).

During the mid-1960s, schooling in America moved toward focusing on building the instructional capacities of its teachers through support, coaching, and nurturing by principals. Developed in the late 1950s and enacted in detail in the late 1960s and early 1970s, the five-step clinical supervisory model and the seven-step lesson plan model spread quickly as a method for teachers to be evaluated by principals. These models were the first step at creating

clear focus for both teachers and principals as to how to plan and evaluate effective teaching and learning (Reavis, 1978).

During this period, educating all students became a priority. By the late 1960s, it became clear that educating students in urban communities would have to be different than in non-urban settings. In many urban communities, schools began to be seen not only as a place where students can think about prosperity, but for students to experience a sense of stability and security through reforms (Peck, 2017). In 1975, President Gerald Ford signed the Education for All Handicapped Children Act. This act, which later changed its name to the Individuals with Disabilities Act or IDEA, provided for greater inclusion and accountability in the United States School System (Cai, Danielson, Edmiston, Edmonds, Gray, Jackson, Murphy, Overton, Shaewitz, Westbrook, & Yin, 2015). Educators began to look at instructing and ensuring all students learn as their responsibility.

Amid the conversations about the approaches to supervision in the 1980s, the RAND group, a nonprofit, nonpartisan research organization that helps improve policy and decision making through research and analysis, produced a study sponsored by the National Institute of Education. The purpose of this study was to determine the types of supervision and evaluation practice that were occurring in school districts across the Unites States (Bernstein, Darling-Hammond, McLaughlin, & Wise, 1984). Four consistent problems were identified in the study. The first problem was a feeling that principals lacked sufficient resolve and competence to evaluate accurately. The second problem was that teachers were resistant to feedback. The third problem was a lack of a uniform evaluation practices. The final problem was a lack of training for evaluators. The conclusion of the RAND report indicated that principals needed

continued professional development and support around instructional leadership (Bernstein et al., 1984).

As the 21st century began, principals were expected to be the instructional leader in their building. Based on reports such as RAND and reauthorization of the updated Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) known as No Child Left Behind (2001) and Race to the Top (RTTT) Grants (Klein, 2015), principals were expected to provide and ensure leadership structures were in place and accountable for the results that they produced via student achievement test results. An issue that became immediately apparent was that principals needed support in instructional leadership.

The principal supervisor (2009–present).

Instructional leadership as a concept appeared in the 1980s from research that found successful schools had principals who emphasized the importance of growth in student learning by focusing on actions taken place by principals (Jenkins, 2009). Instructional leadership continued to gain prominence and became increasingly important with heightened school accountability through the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) of 2001, and with academic standards and principal accountability through the Race to the Top Act (RTTT) of 2009 (Jenkins, 2009). Although first introduced as a concept at the school level, instructional leadership has been expanded to other leaders as well, including central office leaders and support teams responsible for ensuring that instructional matters that affect classroom instruction and student achievement were emphasized and supported through principal supervisors (CCSSO, 2015).

Historically, principal supervisors focused on making sure that principals complied with local policies and state regulations. Today, principal supervisors are tasked with focusing on more comprehensive instructional leadership actions to support principals growing as

instructional leaders and the district with improving teaching and learning and thus classroom instruction (CCSSO, 2015).

The Issue

While the evidence is clear that principals have a huge impact on instruction, the Rand Study and federal actions such as No Child Left Behind and Race to the Top suggest that principal development is needed. There is still much training that needs to be provided for principals to improve their instructional leadership.

Recently, districts have begun supporting principals in instructional leadership through the introduction of new personnel, such as principal supervisor. Although principal supervisors in many districts provide management oversight over areas such as compliance, emergency issues, and parental concerns, the primary role of the principal supervisor is focused on providing principals with support in improving their instructional leadership skills so that they in turn can increase their expertise to lead principals and schools, thus improving the performance of schools (CCSSO, 2015).

Many principal supervisors in a variety of school districts continue to lack the time required to focus on their primary responsibility as management, and operational issues continue to consume most of their time (Durkin & Saphier, 2011). A solution that some urban school districts across the country are using to address this issue is to focus on time using the Systems Administrator Manager (SAM) Process. The SAM professional development process is designed to support principal supervisors by increasing their time on instructional leadership actions ("SAM Process," 2017) such as:

- School level leadership team meetings
- School level content team meetings

- School level staff meetings
- School level instructional learning walks in classrooms
- School level short visits and conversations
- School level data meetings
- School level parent, teacher, student meetings
- District/School level professional development preparation and implementation
- District level instructional meetings
- Instructional preparation work

Purpose of the Study

This case study examined the principal supervisors' experience with the implementation of the School Administration Manager (SAM) process in the Smith School District using mixed methods. The SAM system is a professional development process designed for an individual to increase time on tasks for instructional actions and decrease time on tasks for management actions. The quantitative data provided by the SAM daily time track calendar, and the qualitative data collected by the researcher through interviews and focus groups.

Conceptual Framework

Design and the Theory of Action of the SAM Process

An analysis over the last 35 years consistently shows that principals and principal supervisors spend minimal amounts of time on instructional leadership activities (Blissett, Goldring, Grissom, Murphy, Neumerski, & Porter, 2015). The National SAM Innovation Project (NSIP) introduced the invention of the SAM process to address this challenge of increasing principal and principal supervisors' time focused on instructional leadership tasks (Blissett et al., 2015).

The overarching goal of the SAM process is for a principal and principal supervisor to increase his or her time on instructional leadership and decrease time on management. The focus for this case study is on principal supervisors. One tool that is provided to principal supervisors is the use of a time track calendar designed to record daily activities and code as instructional, managerial, or personal. Within instructional and managerial time categories are subcategories to input actions and names of individuals to specify time use (Blissett et al., 2015). The NSIP theory of action is based on the belief that principal supervisors' focus on instructional leadership will increase through reflection and change in time use. This increase in principal supervisors' instructional leadership time will then provide a data set where they can be more reflective and deliberate on whether that time spent makes a difference in terms of school and principal practice (Blissett et al., 2015).

While some principal supervisors believe attainment has occurred once they have increased their instructional time, this is only the first step in the SAM Process. The next step is determining if a reasonable case can be made that increased instructional time is making a positive difference for schools based on instructional leadership actions and with whom time is spent. The third step is making the fundamental changes in the principal supervisors' use of time based on that reflection (Blissett et al., 2015).

Essential Components of the SAM Process

Step 1 of the SAM process is designed to increase the principal supervisors' instructional time, instructional interactions, and leadership actions. To increase the amount of instructional time for principal supervisors, the SAM process has developed certain elements. The first element is called first responder. A first responder is a staff member or staff member(s) who have been selected as those who can respond first to management issues that come up, thus

allowing the principal supervisor to focus on instructional leadership. For example, at the school level, an assistant principal or business secretary may become a first responder when a parent calls with a bus concern. At the district level, an employee in the student support office may be a first responder when a parent calls wanting to transfer a son or daughter to another school because of a bullying situation.

In addition to the first responder system, the use of time track calendar with support of a SAM coach is designed to also allow principals and principal supervisors to increase their instructional time. The role of the SAM coach is to support and provide feedback to the principal supervisor as they reflect on how they are spending their day. The SAM coach meets with the principal supervisor each day during a SAM daily meeting to ensure recording, reconciling, and analyzing the amount of time spent on instruction and management using the time track calendar is done. The time track calendar system enables principal supervisors and SAM coaches to follow and manage how the principal supervisors' time is spent during each day, and to compare that data with the time-use goals set by the team. The process requires that principal supervisors be very attentive about planning their day through daily coding of their time spent on instruction and management. By recording time daily, the principal supervisor can evaluate his or her actual time spend on instruction and make changes accordingly. An example of Time Track Calendars can be found in Appendices A, B, and C.

Step 2 of the process is designed to provide an opportunity for principal supervisors to reflect on their day. The daily interaction between the principal supervisor and the SAM coach consists of inspecting and reflecting on the time track data, as well as discussing how the principal's instructional time is being used. The SAM and principal supervisor consider whether the principal supervisors' time appropriation is helping to change the school and principal

practice towards instructional leadership in a positive way. Based on the answers to these questions, the principal supervisor can then figure out how to change his or her time use to further improve these outcomes.

Step 3 of the process provides an opportunity for principal supervisors to improve their practice. The reflection on the time track data then enables the principal supervisor to think through how to improve the use of his or her time on instruction. At this stage, the principal supervisor reflects on whether time spent on a specific leadership action or with a specific person is getting its optimal results. The process of tying the reflection part to strategic next steps is ongoing. Once the principal supervisor attempts to improve the use of his or her time, he or she returns to reflecting with the SAM on whether and how it is working.

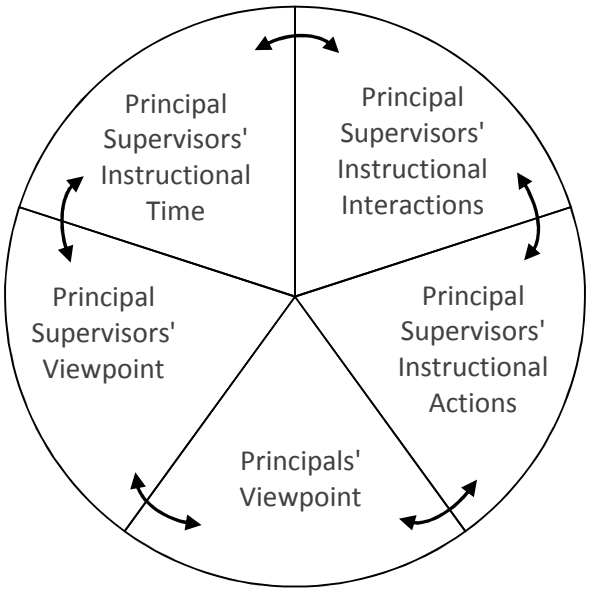

Figure 1. Conceptual framework—principal supervisors' experience implementing SAM

The figure above represents the principal supervisors' experience in the implementation of SAM. The principal supervisors' instructional time, instructional interactions, and leadership

actions will be examined from a quantitative lens. The principals' and principal supervisors' viewpoint will be examined from a qualitative lens.

Theoretical Foundation

An analysis over the last 35 years consistently shows that principals and principal supervisors spend minimal amounts of time on instructional leadership activities (Blissett et al., 2015). Using the Constructivist Theory, the dissertation examines principal supervisors in the Smith School District's focus of improving their time on instructional leadership through the School Administration Manager (SAM) professional development process. The researcher's use of constructivism refers to the belief that knowledge is constructed in the mind of the learner. It is based on the theory that individuals actively and continuously build or construct their own meanings and understandings of reality, and the world in which they live (Lynch, 2016). Current information discusses the issues of principal supervisors related to the lack of time focused on instruction due to non-instructional competing priorities and the need for improvement without providing a research-based solution to this problem (Clark, Goldring, Grissom, Neel, Rogers, & Rubin, 2018).

The researcher has decided to use the constructivist theory as the lens for the dissertation because this theory allows for an individual to build meanings and understandings for themselves as he or she learns (Lynch, 2016). In education, a guiding principle of constructivist thinking is learning is a social activity: our learning is intimately associated with our connection with human beings, our teachers, our peers, our family as well as casual acquaintances, including people before us or next to us at the exhibit (Hein, 1991). As principal supervisors, coaching principals in an effective manner is a major part of the job. In order to effectively coach principals, a trusting relationship must be established and nurtured (Rainey &

Wunderlich, 2015). A second guiding principle of constructivist thinking is learning is contextual: we do not learn isolated facts and theories in some abstract ethereal land of the mind separate from the rest of our lives: we learn in relationship to what else we know, what we believe, our prejudices and our fears (Hein, 1991). Principal supervisors experience decision-making and coaching principals through a variety of factors. Often decisions can be made that fit one scenario but not another. An example of principal supervisors coaching principals with having conversations with staff after an instructional learning walk. Conversations vary based on the experience of the principal, staff, and performance of the school (Rainey & Wunderlich, 2015).

Further guiding principles of the constructivist theory include (Hein, 1991):

- Learning is an active process in which the learner uses sensory input and constructs meaning of it
- People learn to learn as they learn
- The crucial action of constructing meaning is mental
- One needs knowledge to learn
- It takes time to learn: Learning is not instantaneous
- Motivation is a key component in learning

The major theme inherent to constructivism is that individuals learn by building new ideas and concepts and interpreting them through comparison with prior understanding (Hein, 1991). People attribute meaning to new ideas, and this action amounts to new learning. This implies that learning is not about simply being susceptible to new knowledge, but is a vital process whereby learners inspect, code, decode, and explain new concepts and ideas. In the dissertation, the principal supervisors were in control of their own process and how meanings

were constructed with the ultimate goal being to increase their instructional leadership time. The SAM professional development process provides the opportunity to assist principal supervisors with increasing their time spent on instructional leadership. By applying the constructivist theory to the reflective process, principal supervisors were able to gain an understanding of whether this was beneficial or not through their own understanding based on meaning making.

Research Questions

This study is attempting to examine the principal supervisors' experience implementing the School Administration Manager (SAM) process designed to improve their focus on instructional leadership in the Smith School District. The research questions for this study were framed around the SAM model. An overarching question is followed by sub questions.

How do principal supervisors in the Smith School District experience implementing the School Administration Manager Process (SAM) process designed to improve their focus on instructional leadership?

1. What was the experience of the Principal Supervisor implementing the SAM process as it relates to instructional time? How much time was spent on instruction? Did the principal supervisor accomplish their goal? What were the contributing factors to the goals being met or not met by principal supervisors?
2. What were the instructional leadership actions engaged in by principal supervisors? How much time was spent on instructional leadership actions? Did the principal supervisor accomplish their goal? What were the contributing factors to the goals being met or not met by the principal supervisor?

3. With whom did principal supervisors spend their time? How much time was spent with individuals or groups? Did the principal supervisor accomplish their goal? What were the contributing factors to the goals being met or not met by the principal supervisor?
4. What do principal supervisors think about the SAM professional development process as a vehicle to increase their focus on instructional leadership actions?
5. What do principals think about the SAM professional development process as a vehicle to increase their focus on instructional leadership actions?

Significance of the Study

The principal supervisors' experience implementing the School Administration Manager (SAM) process is important for several reasons. Currently, principal supervisors spend a lot of their time dealing with management and operational issues, which prevents them from focusing on building instructional leaders. They are not provided with enough resources to support principals efficiently and are assigned too many schools for them to support/supervise properly (Syed, 2014). The SAM professional development process, according to Bissett et al. (2015), is designed for principal supervisors to focus more of their time on instructional issues and less time on management issues.

Ensuring that principal supervisors increase their time to focus more on instruction is just part of the equation. The next step to be addressed is determining whether the increased instructional time is making a positive difference with regards to improving student performance.

Definition of Terms

Baseline Data Collection is a one-week shadowing process provided by an employee associated with the National SAM Innovation Project designed to determine current time use (instruction, management, personal, unscheduled).

Daily Time Track Meeting consists of a SAM coach or team of staff members who meet with the principal supervisor each day to schedule instructional leadership time, reflection on the work that has currently been done, and develop a plan to improve principal and/or teacher practice.

District Change of Practice/Sustainability and Scale allows for the district to analyze the status of district progress in the work.

Educational Leadership involves educators working with and guiding teachers toward improving educational processes in elementary, secondary, and postsecondary institutions.

First Responders are staff members who should be the first to try to handle management issues instead of immediately pulling the principal/central office person from instructional work.

Instructional Leadership Actions refers to activities taken place by education leaders directly focused on improving teaching and learning.

Management Actions refers to activities taken place by education leaders that are not directly focused on instruction.

Monthly Time Change Coaching is analysis/feedback by an employee (from National SAM Innovation Project) based on data. This is also time for the individual to review his or her data for analysis and reflection.

Readiness Meeting is an orientation meeting provided by the National SAM Innovation Project that is designed to introduce all individuals involved in the SAM process.

School Administration Manager (SAM) Coach is a person or team of staff members who meets with the principal supervisor each day to schedule instructional leadership time, reflect on impact and develop a first responder structure in the school.

School Administration Manager (SAM) Process is a professional development process using a set of tools to change or maximize a leader's focus from management tasks to instructional leadership activities directly connected to teaching and learning.

Time Tracker is a cloud-based calendar that a leader uses like a lesson plan. The calendar tracks time spent with individuals and provides specifics about the work. Time track graphs and charts are used in a daily meeting by the Principal Supervisor and SAM team to determine next steps and track time use.

Urban Education refers to schools in metropolitan communities that typically are diverse, characterized by large enrollments and complexity.

Year Later Data Collection is an analysis and feedback based on the data by an employee from the National SAM Innovation Project.

Limitations/Delimitations

During this research, there are challenges that may affect results of the dissertation. A new superintendent was hired during the 2016–17 school year. Currently, the average length of an urban superintendent is 3.4 years (Will, 2014). With the commencement of any new administration, individuals transitioning in and out at the executive level may change initiatives and projects throughout the organization. This may cause a shift in the priorities during the school year based on expectations from the Board of Commissioners, which may affect principal supervisors focusing on this initiative. Principal supervisors have also been in a position that has experienced tremendous transitions. Over the five-year period that this current principal supervisor structure has been set up, there have been over 30 individuals performing the job. The author of this research paper has been employed by this urban district for five years. During these five years, the researcher has served as a principal supervisor and supervisor of principal

supervisors. The researcher has an interest in this initiative because of a desire to do a better job of supervising principals in a strategic manner.

Declaration of Author's Bias

The writer is an African American male that is an employee in the Smith School District. The writer has an interest in this initiative. Since the writer has been a principal supervisor, ensuring that time is spent supporting instruction is something that is imperative. The writer is also a former supervisor and current colleague of the principal supervisors. In these various roles, the writer has built a collaborative relationship with colleagues. The writer's positions may have an impact on the data. The writer grew up in a middle-class home in Prince George's County, Maryland. The writer's parents have always communicated the importance of volunteering and supporting individuals who are less fortunate. This was seen through church affiliation, participation in the Boys and Girls Club, and giving donations to school-sponsored activities such as the Saint Jude's Research Center and the Heart Foundation.

Summary

The evolution and history of principal and principal supervision in the United States education system has changed over time. The supervision of educational institutions began in the 1700s with clergy in the community supporting biblical teachings and developed to today's focus on supporting principals' ability to improve teaching and learning. Areas of focus include ensuring principal supervisors have the time to support principals and providing professional development to principal supervisors. Historically, principal supervisors have been tasked with providing operational and managerial support. Recently, however, there has been a focus on the development of the principal supervisors' role to increase the evolution of the principal position and thus improve teacher development and student performance.

This study is attempting to examine the principal supervisors' experience implementing the School Administration Manager (SAM) process designed to improve their focus on instructional leadership in an urban school district in the mid-Atlantic area. To ensure that principal supervisors focus on instructional practices, principal supervisors in the district of study have implemented the School Administration Manager (SAM) professional development process. This process is designed to increase a supervisor's focus on instructional practices. It is also designed to support what the principal supervisors are doing to improve the performance of schools.

Chapter Two will be an analysis and synthesis of the previous research related to the history of principal supervisors and the new job redesign focused on instructional leadership. Chapter Three will be the Research Design and Methodology section. It will detail the structure and plan to address the research question.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

This study is focused on examining the principal supervisors' experience implementing the School Administration Management (SAM) process designed to improve their focus on instructional leadership in an urban school district in the mid-Atlantic area. After completing a preliminary search regarding information pertaining to the topic of instructional leadership, three categories emerged. The first category examines the historical role of the superintendent and the growth of principal supervisors. The second category examines the principal supervisor redesign to emphasize instructional practices and minimize management practices. The third category examines the Systems Administrative Manager (SAM) professional development process, which focuses on a strategic initiative designed to increase the amount of time supervisors spend on instructional actions.

History of Superintendent and the Growth of Principal Supervisors

At the inception of formal schooling in the 1700s, the United States economy was based on agriculture. As the nation's economy moved from agricultural to industrial, people moved in large numbers from rural farming communities and small towns to urban cities. With this shift, the purpose of schooling changed from ensuring that students were literate to providing students with an understanding of American society and establishing values and beliefs (Bjork et al., 2014). This period, known as the common school movement, was intended to teach students the American culture by having public schools deliver a set of uniform subjects and courses through centralized control and standardization. During this change in American history, the position of superintendent was created in 1830 and became popular by 1850. The primary focus of initial superintendents was to ensure state curriculum was implemented through teacher supervision (Kowalski, 2005).

As the nation continued to evolve and the economic, social, political, and technological needs developed, the Superintendent's role in American schools continued to change. During the early 1900s, the complexity of school districts exceeded the capacity of school board members to provide direct oversight of school district affairs (Bjork et al., 2014). The role of the superintendent became more focused on management through budget development and administration, standardization of operation, personnel management, and facility management (Kowalski, 2005).

After World War II ended, the superintendent's role shifted to one primarily centered on political leadership along with continued educational leadership. During this time, the superintendent's role navigated between promoting students to be good citizens and being an advocate as to what is good in America, along with being tasked to implement the original Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) of 1965. This act proposed inclusion of all citizens through desegregation and equal rights for African Americans, women, and students with disabilities, along with the expansion of science and math (Bjork et al., 2014). To keep up with the political aspects, some districts have shifted the title from superintendent to CEO to emphasize the focus on the business aspects and less on bureaucracy (Bjork, Collier, & Hoyle, 2005). The average tenure for superintendents in an urban setting as of 2014 was 3.2 years. This is an increase from 2.8 years in 2003 (Will, 2014).

Beginning in the 1980s, the nation's poor economy, rising deficits, and low levels of student achievement created what became known as the *excellence agenda* (The Hunt Institute, 2016). The excellence agenda was based on the belief that an increased focus on rigor in schools across the United States would serve as the high leverage point to improve the academic performance of all students and increase our nation's economy (The Hunt Institute,

2016). In 1983, the National Commission on Excellence in Education linked the success of public schools to the well-being of the country through a report looking at the American school system entitled *A Nation at Risk*. This report sounded an alarm that public schools were not preparing students to be competitive in a global society and that there was no accountability for that failure (Kowalski, 2005). Based on the report, calls for increasing student academic performance, holding schools accountable for student test scores and increasing graduation requirements pushed Congress to pass the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act in 2001, which was a reauthorization and expansion of ESEA (The Hunt Institute, 2016). NCLB required states to hold schools and districts accountable for not meeting required academic progress in math and reading for students and student groups such as low-income, students with disabilities, and students from major racial and ethnic groups through federally prescribed correction sanctions (Remer, 2017).

Although the passage of No Child Left Behind met its goal of increasing expectations and accountability for all students, concern at the federal level became apparent from its unequal implementation across states and local districts (The Hunt Institute, 2016). To address this concern, in 2009 the federal government used funds from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act to provide Race to the Top (RTTT) grants (Remer, 2017). Under the RTTT grants, the development of principal effectiveness was emphasized and prioritized (Remer, 2017, p. 4). With this new focus dealing with improving principal effectiveness, superintendents realized that they could not directly supervise, and coach principals as required in the grant, and that more focused, dedicated individuals were needed to support them in this role. These new roles required that the people in them know what successful instructional leaders do, interact clearly the expectations to make that happen, observe these expectations in action, and coach

their principals toward consistent effective practice as instructional leaders (Durkin & Saphier, 2011). This new role became known as the principal supervisor.

Principal Supervisor Redesign

Change in Process (2002 through Today)

Prior to the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB), principals were not consistently held accountable for the results of student and school progress. For this reason, individuals who managed principals had traditionally focused on ensuring that school leaders and the schools that they oversaw complied with local policies and state guidelines, and handled problems as they arose. NCLB provided the expectation that all students in all schools would achieve academic success through yearly testing and achievement data (The Hunt Institute, 2016). In 2009, RTTT built upon the expectation that all students would achieve academic success by aligning principal accountability and support through competitive grants that states agreed to (The Hunt Institute, 2016). Since these competitive grants mandated principals be supported and accountable for school results, the role of the principal and the principal supervisor has been emphasized and under review.

Research suggests that principal supervisors can absolutely affect student results by helping principals grow as instructional leaders (CCSSO, 2015, p. 3). Prior to the No Child Left Behind Act and immediately following its passage, there was nothing in place to measure the success of individuals supervising principals and whether they were influencing the effect of principals on school performance. Building on the passage of RTTT grants, the Council of Chief State School Officers released the first ever standards for principal supervisors in December 2015 as crafted by a team of educators from across the nation. The Principal Supervisor Standards provided a clear definition of what principal supervisors should know and be able to

do, shifting the focus of the job from bureaucratic compliance to helping principals improve instruction (Saltzman, 2016, p. 1). The Principal Supervisor Performance Standards (CCSSO, 2015, p. 5) state that principal supervisors should do the following:

- Spend their time to help principals grow as instructional leaders
- Work one on one with principals
- Lead principal networks or communities of practice
- Collect and use evidence to differentiate their work with principals
- Use the formal evaluation process to support principal learning
- Engage with the rest of the central office

While research has long shown that school principals influence student achievement, there is not a lot of research on the work of principal supervisors. Having principal supervisors spend significant time in schools coaching principals is a relatively new concept for most school districts. As a result, most districts do not yet have the required structures in place to support that type of work. It will take some time for districts to redesign the role of principal supervisors, so they are spending most of their time building principal's capacity (Superville, 2015, p. 3).

There are some large school districts that have begun to look at the responsibilities of principal supervisors to focus their work. School districts in Omaha, Nebraska, Tulsa, Oklahoma, Washington DC, and New York City are working to retool the job descriptions of principal supervisors to align themselves with these new expectations (Superville, 2015, p. 3).

The New Role of Principal Supervisors

Under the old system, many principal supervisors rarely visited schools more than once every few months and did not have the time to work directly with principals. Increasingly, principal supervisors are being asked to be instructional leaders and to provide support to their principals by participating in actions such as visiting classrooms, interpreting and reviewing performance data, and providing professional development on a regular basis (Casserly, 2013, p. 5). Instructional leadership action refers to activities taken place by education leaders directly focused on improving teaching and learning (Casserly, 2013). There are still several issues and challenges that prevent principal supervisors from being able to fully implement the new asks based on their new responsibilities. According to Casserly (2013), surveys and data pointed to a few challenges as their roles were being redefined. Among the challenges, many respondents indicated that they were under enormous time constraints because of overlapping meetings and clarity about their duties and responsibilities.

In the new role and job description as principal supervisor, coaching and modeling has been emphasized to strengthen principal and/or leadership team capacity by engaging in instructional leadership. School districts such as Oakland Unified and Denver Public Schools have established leadership coaching departments. While most of the departments are designed for coaching principals and teacher leaders, district coaching models provide the structure for principal supervisors use while supporting principals. Areas of focus on coaching models center around instructional leadership, shared or distributed leadership, quality teaching and learning, and community and family engagement (Aguilar, Goldwasser, & Tank-Crestetto, 2011). Research shows that principal supervisors should participate in specific actions that are designed to increase principal performance.

Research suggests that principal supervisors should show up for the following (Rainey & Wunderlich, 2015):

a. Leadership team meetings and operating agreements
b. Ensuring high-functioning meetings of teams that share content
c. Student by student accountability meetings
d. Building based PD planning and implementation
e. Arranging public teaching and peer observation
f. Supporting student groups
g. Doing walkthroughs and learning walks
h. Formal teacher evaluations, observations, and write ups
i. Conducting planning conferences
j. Doing frequent short visits and having conversations
k. Planning and leading faculty meetings
l. Facilitating the work of coaches/instructional specialists

Research also suggests that principal supervisors can use school visits and monthly principal meetings to improve principal skills (Durkin & Saphier, 2011). These two instructional leadership actions provide the venue for principals to experience important aspects of their work. School visits should be scheduled every six weeks to include principal supervisors and principals working side by side with each other visiting classes and attending teacher meetings (Durkin & Saphier, 2011). Monthly principal meetings enable principal supervisors to help principals improve teaching and learning in their schools as around professional development input (Durkin & Saphier, 2011).

Examples of Districts with New Structures in Principal Supervision

In the fall of 2012, the Council of Chief State School Officers launched a two-part study of the ways principal supervisors are selected, supported, and evaluated in major districts across the country (Casserly, Corcoran, Hall, Price-Baugh, Simon, & Walston, 2013, p. 2). Those districts include Prince George's County Public Schools, New York City Public Schools, Charlotte Mecklenburg Schools, Denver Public Schools, Gwinnett County Schools, and Hillsboro County Schools. The report concludes that districts should:

a. Define and clearly communicate throughout the organization the role and required competencies of principal supervisors.
b. Narrow principal supervisor responsibilities and span of control.
c. Strategically select and deploy principal supervisors, matching skills and expertise to the needs of schools.
d. Provide principal supervisors with the professional development and training they need to assume new instructional leadership roles.
e. Establish information-sharing policies or procedures to ensure clear lines of communication and collaboration between principal supervisors and central office staff.
f. Provide early and sustained support to new principals in the form of coaches.
g. Hold principals and principal supervisors accountable for the progress of their schools and ensure alignment in the processes and measures used to assess teacher, principal, and principal supervisor performance.
h. Provide clear, timely, and actionable evaluation data to principals.
i. Commit district resources and engage external partners in the process of developing future school and district leaders.

Since the new phase of principal supervisors has taken affect, districts have discussed the need to select principal supervisors according to a wider assessment of their effectiveness as school leaders in advancing student progress, along with various other leadership skills. The top five tasks that principal supervisors reported performing in 2012 were visiting schools; convening principals to discuss instructional issues; evaluating principals; coaching principals; and conducting professional development with principals. Despite the job description or intended instructional role of principal supervisors in a given district, site visits and interviews revealed that principal supervisors often play multiple roles and must juggle competing demands for the first time. These competing demands lead to a clear gap between the aspirational and the actual uses of time for those serving in this position (Casserly et al., 2013, p. 3).

SAM Professional Development Process

Evolution of SAM

Research performed over the past 35 years consistently reveals that most principals spend minimal amounts of time on instructional leadership activities (Blissett et al., 2015). The Systems Administrative Manager (SAM) Process was originally developed and implemented in 2002 by Mark Shellinger to address this challenge. Originally developed by the Victor Elementary School District in the 1990s, the SAM position was originally created as an alternative to hiring an educator for an Assistant Principal position in elementary schools. Around the year 2000, the district hired several coaches who worked with a select number of principals encouraging them to use their time differently by delegating responsibilities and focusing on instruction (Arcaira, Coleman, Haslam, Riley, Sinclair, & Turnbull, 2009). In 2002, the Wallace Foundation provided financial assistance to a project called the Alternative School

Administration Study (ASAS) in Louisville, Kentucky, intended to investigate the use of principals' time and the conditions that prevented school leaders from making instructional leadership their priority. Mark Shellinger met with the superintendent in Victor Elementary School District and worked out an agreement where select principals would use Mark's time track calendar and analysis with the SAM coach. This project came together and led to a process referred to as School Administration Manager (SAM), intended to support principals to work more effectively by prioritizing their work day and spending more time directly with teachers and students on instructional issues (Blissett et al., 2015).

As Mr. Shellinger began to interact with district leadership, he became increasingly aware of the complex work and importance of principal supervisors and extended the SAM process to this position with the goal being to increase the amount of instructional time principal supervisors are engaged in instructional actions (Blissett et al., 2015). Although information such as Model Principal Supervisor Standards was created to provide a blueprint of how a principal supervisor should spend their time to maximize instructional leadership actions, there was no way of monitoring how much actual time was spent on instruction (CCSSO, 2015). The SAM process was able to provide this monitoring. The overarching goal of the SAM process is to enable the principal supervisor to increase instructional time and decrease management time. Various tools are used to facilitate this shift for principal supervisor including a time track calendar with which to record daily activities and code them as instructional, managerial, or personal. The SAM process is designed to help the principal supervisor be reflective of how to best work with others to improve teaching and learning.

SAM Process

The SAM process consists of a variety of strategic actions taken that are designed to shift the principal supervisors' time spent from management actions to instruction leadership actions. The process begins with a readiness meeting that occurs with all principal supervisors who have volunteered to use the SAM professional development process. During the readiness meeting, consultants from the National SAM Innovation Project (NSIP) speak about the process, the benefits, the goals, and the commitment.

Next, baseline data collection occurs that involves an individual participating in the SAM process being shadowed for five days. During this time, an employee from the National SAM Innovation Project (NSIP) follows the principal supervisor to determine the amount of time he/she is spending on instruction, management, personal, and other actions. At the end of the shadowing process, the principal supervisor participating in the SAM process sets an individual personal growth goal that communicates the amount of time that he or she will spend on instruction for each month until the end of the year.

The third step in the SAM process is to participate in a daily time track meeting. During this step, the principal and SAM coach meet daily to discuss aspects of the work. This includes identifying who the participant is spending time with, what they are doing, and follow up next steps. The SAM coach asks probing and thought-provoking questions designed for the participant to be reflective of his or her work.

The fourth step in the process is to participate in a monthly time-change coaching session. During this step, a coach sponsored by NSIP provides analysis/feedback to the participant and SAM based on data for the month. The feedback that is provided by the coach

allows the participant to adjust targeted aspects of his or her work with the goal of increasing the amount of instructional leadership time with strategic actions.

The fifth step of the process is the year-later data collection. During this step, an employee from NSIP meets with the principal supervisor and SAM coach, and through the SAM data results, they evaluate progress towards the growth goal and collaboratively determine next steps based on the instructional, management, personal, and other time spent for the principal supervisor. A new growth goal is then established (Blissett et al., 2015, p. 2).

SAM Daily Components

A SAM coach is a person or team of staff members who meet with the principal supervisor each day to schedule instructional leadership actions, reflect on the impacts made, and develop a plan to improve the principal supervisors' plan. The SAM uses a time track calendar as the vehicle to manage the process. The time tracker is a cloud-based calendar that the principal supervisor uses to manage his or her time. The calendar tracks time spent with individuals and provides specifics about the work. The time track graphs and charts are used in a daily meeting with the principal supervisor and SAM coach to determine next steps and track use. The SAM coach also uses first responders to support the principal supervisor as staff members who should be the first to try to deal with management issues instead of immediately pulling the principal supervisor from instructional work (Blissett et al., 2015, p. 3).

Common Themes Across Categories

After researching articles in this study, two consistent themes emerge across the categories of the history of superintendents and the emergence of principal supervisor—the changing role of principal supervisor from a focus on management to instruction, and the SAM professional development process. The first theme centers around societal influences at the

local, state, and federal level and its role on education. The second theme is the notion of student performance and achievement being the measure of success in education.

Societal Influences at the Local, State, and Federal Level and its Role in Education

The history of education in the United States has been influenced by society. Beginning at the inception of formal schooling in the United States during the 1700s through current day, the local, state, and federal policies, and happenings, all influence how schools are set up, governed, and monitored along with the teaching and learning that occurs in schools. Beginning with the inception of schools in the 1700s, religious teachings and student literacy through a Eurocentric lens were a priority based on the interest of the community in America ("Common School," 2002). As our nation developed in the 1800s and cities grew, the desire for local and state agencies to control its citizens led to the development of a prescribed curriculum for all students to learn within a system of schools. This began to gain momentum through the common school movement (Bjork et al., 2014). The United States' venture into a more global society in the 1900s led local, state, and federal education agencies to focus on math and science (Kowalski, 2005). During the early part of 2000 through today, society's focus at the local, state, and federal level brought in the accountability era for students through testing, and teachers and principals through their evaluations (Kowalski, 2005). Currently, society's focus on principal and teacher accountability has led to the redesign of the principal supervisor role and an increase on coaching and support. Society's influence on education has led our nation through preacher/community leaders, visiting principals, principals, visiting superintendents, and superintendents.

Improving Student Performance

Improving student performance and achievement was also seen as a common theme and the number one priority in education. This was seen throughout history although it is displayed in different ways. In the beginning of our education system in the United States, improving student performance meant ensuring that individuals had the morals and values necessary to be productive citizens through an understanding and reading of biblical versus (Frontier et al., 2011). As the era of education became more inclusive and sophisticated, the meaning of education evolved. During the 19th century, ensuring students gained skills to prosper in the growing manufacturing economy became important. As the 20th century began, ensuring students supported and understood the "American way" was important. And finally, the 21st century is attempting to provide opportunities for students to prosper in a global economy where technology has become more prevalent (Bjork et al., 2014). The importance of instructional leadership as a vehicle to improving student performance was also discussed. Research stated that successful schools had principals who emphasized growth in student learning (Jenkins, 2009). Instructional leadership is an action taken by educators at any level directly focused on improving teaching and learning and thus, attaining student achievement (CCSSO, 2015).

Further Discussion

Although the research that was completed was focused on much of the writer's dissertation topic, further research is needed to gain a better understanding of the dynamics in preparing students for postsecondary education for them to prepare future employment. For example, the strategic actions principal supervisors have on school and student performance need to be advanced. Questions such as, "what high leverage actions are required by principal

supervisors to support principals and lead to an increase in quantitative or qualitative school data," would provide the answer as to whether principal supervisors' actions are making a difference in school/student performance.

Summary

The research above acknowledges that the supervision of schools has and will be an evolving yet vital part to the development of schools through leaders in the school. The evolution of this process is seen through the changes of schooling in the United States. The research discusses a variety of strategies that have been used recently to improve principal support and supervision using principal supervisors. This research also communicates that principal supervisors need continued professional development and a stable job description so that consistency can be developed. This research discusses the need to consistently focus on supporting and monitoring principal supervisors while attempting to gain consistency of what works.

Chapter 3: Research Design Methodology

Introduction

In this chapter, the research design presented includes a description of the urban school district, as well as, participants and their characteristics. The research design and data collection instruments are described and included in the appendix. The chapter ends with the research questions and summary.

Participants

The System Administrator Manager (SAM) Process is a professional development measure using a set of tools to change or maximize a leader's actions from management tasks to instructional leadership tasks. In this case, this study is about examining the principal supervisors' experience implementing the SAM process designed to increase their focus on instructional leadership in the Smith School District. Traditionally, principal supervisors have focused their time on solving crisis issues as they arise and ensuring that school leaders comply with local policies and state regulations. The role of the principal supervisor in major urban school districts has changed over the last fifteen years as research suggests that principal supervisors can positively affect student results by helping principals grow as instructional leaders (CCSSO, 2015). Prior to 2009, the Smith School District was led by principal supervisors who functioned as area superintendents. These individuals operated with a staff that reported to them and supported principals with management and operational issues. In 2009, the Smith School District initiated reforms that allowed for bounded autonomy to occur as a form of school improvement. Bounded autonomy is a belief that schools, not central office, know best how to educate schools in their given community. Principals were given freedom to institute initiatives that were best for their schools. The Smith School District hired fourteen principal

supervisors to help coach principals, provide feedback, and hold principals accountable for academic results of students in their schools. Currently, there are 11 principal supervisors assigned to support approximately 177 schools and programs in geographic regions. As supervisors over geographical areas, these principal supervisors manage areas in the same manner as an area or assistant superintendent, who are responsible for overall school functions such as academic achievement, management, and operations. Principal supervisors are expected to acquire a deep knowledge of the schools they supervise and become thought partners with principals while developing, supporting, and holding principals accountable for academic results. The geographical areas are based on sections divided in the northern, southern, eastern, and western part of the city. Schools that are in the same geographical area have similar characteristics and resources that can be shared and collaborated with each other. Principal supervisors provide leadership to elementary and secondary schools in their respective geographic areas.

There are eight principal supervisors in the school district who have volunteered to participate in the SAM professional development process research project. All eight principal supervisors who volunteered to participate in this project were not required to do so as part of their job. Table 1 shows the list of principal supervisors along with background information. Although there is a range of experiences, the requirement for all principal supervisors in this urban district is principal experience and documented success in moving student achievement. Principal supervisors have been given fictitious names to protect their identity.

Table 1

Principal Supervisors Participating in the SAM Research Project

	Years as ILED	Gender	Years Teaching	Years as Principal	Years in Baltimore	Teacher Certification	Teaching Level	Experience in Other Districts
Pam Sullivan	4.5	F	18	12	20	Elementary Education	Elementary (K-6)	Yes
Phoebe Sims	6.0	F	10	5	18	Elementary Education	Elementary (K-6)	No
Piper Stewart	2.0	F	6	5	15	Elementary Education	Elementary (K-6)	Yes
Phil Sanders	4.5	M	5	4	4	K-8 English	Middle School (English/SS)	Yes
Patricia Simpson	6.0	F	8	4	21	Elementary Education	Elementary (K-6)	No
Pamela Scott	2.0	M	8	5	2	English	English (9-12)	No
Patrick Spencer	2.0	F	5	11	21	Biology	Secondary (Biology)	Yes
Paige Smith	1.5	F		9		Biology	Secondary (Biology)	Yes

Context

The Smith School District that the writer's research is based on is in a large urban community in the United States. The 2016–17 student enrollment totaled 82,354 students in grades pre-kindergarten–12. The total student enrollment in this school system has declined over the past couple of years. Most students in this school system are African American with slight numbers of Hispanic/Latino and white students. Most students in Smith School District qualify for free and reduced meal programs (FARMS). In 2014–15, the Smith School District joined the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Community Eligibility Provision (CEP), under which all students would be eligible for free meals. The CEP is a non-pricing meal service option for schools and school districts in low-income areas. CEP allows the nation's highest poverty schools and districts to serve breakfast and lunch at no cost to all enrolled students without collecting household applications. Instead, schools that adopt CEP are reimbursed using a formula based on the percentage of students categorically eligible for free meals based on their participation in

other specific means-tested programs, such as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF; U.S. Department of Education, 2015). This school system has a portfolio philosophy that consists of supporting a variety of schools including traditional, contract, conversion, and public charter schools from which families can choose for their children. Unique to this district is that State Charter Law identifies the Local Education Agency (LEA) as the sole authorizer for contract, conversion, and charter schools. The 2017–18 budget for this school system is $1.31 billion. In 2007, the Smith School District began to allow schools to have bounded autonomy when deciding what was best for each school. Below are Tables 2–4 which illustrate data pertaining to the large urban school system that is being examined.

Table 2

Student Enrollment

Grade Level	Pre-K to 5	6 to 8	9 to 12
Enrollment	44,082	16,891	21,381

Table 3

Student Demographics

Demographic	African-American	White	Latino/Hispanic
Percentage	80.6%	7.9%	9.4%

Table 4

School Breakdown

Grade Level	Pre-K	Elementary	Elementary/ Middle	Middle	Middle/ High	High	Elementary/ Middle/High	Programs
Number of Schools	1	49	75	7	14	24	1	6

Methods (Research Design)

Design

A descriptive case study research using mixed methods was conducted to examine the principal supervisors' experience implementing the School Administration Management (SAM) process designed to increase their focus on instructional leadership in the Smith School District. Case study research is used when addressing and answering a descriptive question such as, "what happened?" or an explanatory question such as, "how or why something happened" (Shavelson & Towne, 2002). Case study research is also used when researchers want to get first-hand information by collecting data in natural settings (Bromley, 1986). Case studies are designed where researchers can investigate single or multiple cases. A single case study looks at testing existing studies, and a multiple case study looks at replicating a study (Yin, 2004, p. 5). This inquiry investigates principal supervisors in a large urban school district implementing a professional development process. The researcher designed a single case study to develop a deeper understanding of the SAM process implementation.

Based on the study and research questions, the researcher attempted to examine the principal supervisors' experience implementing the School Administrator Manager (SAM) process designed to increase their focus on instructional leadership in an urban school district in the mid-Atlantic area. In answering this question, the single case descriptive case study method allowed the researcher to explain the data that was gathered (Hale, 2011, p. 1). By describing both quantitative and qualitative data, the case study helped better explain the data that is being observed (Tellis, 1997, p. 2). Quantitative data was collected and analyzed illustrating how much time principal supervisors spend on instructional, management, and personal actions

while they are at work. Data was also collected and analyzed to show the specific actions principal supervisors are involved in and with whom they are spending time.

Qualitative data looked at thoughts from principal supervisors and principals that may not have been captured through the data. Principal supervisors and principals had the opportunity to provide feedback on the SAM process with a focus on how the professional development process impacted their work.

As part of the principal supervisors volunteering to implement the SAM professional development process, National SAM Innovation Project (NSIP) employees met with principal supervisors and their SAM coach once a month to review data regarding the following:

a. percent of time in relation to their goal
b. time spent with individuals and groups
c. descriptors/actions stating what is being done with each individual and group

These actions were discussed during principal supervisor meetings and are a regular part of the professional development NSIP employees provided to principal supervisors in the Smith District throughout the year. NSIP employees provided feedback to principal supervisors and their SAM coach based on the three data points from above and answered any questions principal supervisors or their SAM coach had.

Based on the descriptive case study research questions that the researcher attempted to answer, the researcher spent time collecting and analyzing data to examine the impact of principal supervisors focus on increasing their time on instructional actions and decreasing their time on management actions.

Procedures

The Smith School District has agreed to follow the SAM professional development process which consists of a seven-step framework. The seven-step framework includes the following (Blissett et al., 2015, p. 3):

Step 1: All principal supervisors chose an individual whose responsibility is to meet with them daily. Most of the principal supervisors chose their secretary, while others chose a staff member that works with them to provide academic support to schools in their networks. These individuals are called "SAM coach," and their purpose is to support the principal supervisor in maximizing their time daily on instructional issues. These individuals are thought partners and help the principal supervisor reflect upon goals and actions of his/her day and set goals for the following day.

Step 2: The principal supervisor and SAM coach participated in a readiness meeting hosted by the Smith District and the CEO of the National SAM Innovation Project (NSIP). The readiness meeting amounts to an orientation of the SAM process with the goal of gaining a commitment from principal supervisors and their SAM to participate in this initiative.

Step 3: Each principal supervisor participated in a baseline data collection activity. This step comprised of a coach from the National SAM Innovation Project (NSIP) shadowing the principal supervisor for five days to monitor his or her actions every five minutes. The calculations consisted of the SAM coach determining and documenting whether actions participated by the principal supervisor was instructional, managerial, or personal in nature, and what was happening during that time. After the week ended, the principal supervisor was provided with baseline data based on the five-minute documentation that provided a percentage of time they were engaged in instructional, management, and/or personal tasks.

Step 4: The principal supervisor and their SAM coach set up their daily calendar. This comprised of norming when meetings will take place and agreement of their actions which are known as descriptors.

Step 5: The principal supervisor and their SAM coach participated in their daily time track meeting. This was the actual step of having conversations around instructional goals and what specifically is being done with individuals.

Step 6: The principal supervisor and SAM coach received monthly coaching analysis and feedback from a coach from an NSIP employee.

Step 7: A one-year feedback and analysis process conducted by an NSIP employee.

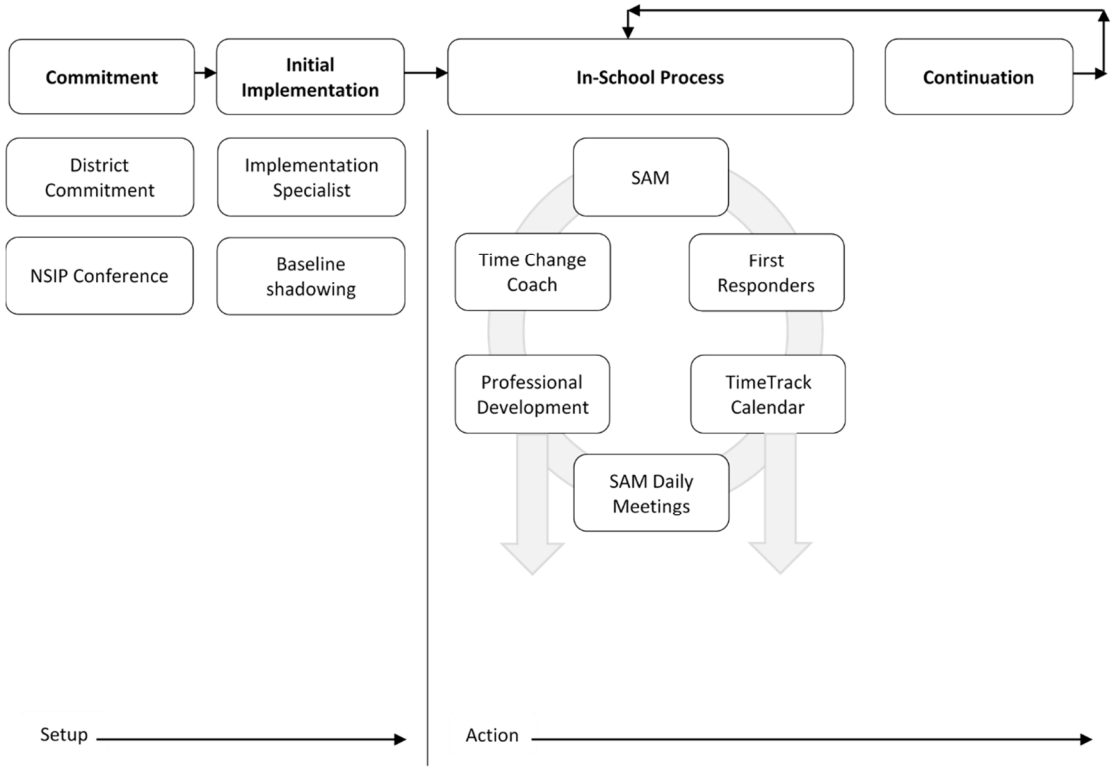

Figure 2. SAM Process Implementation

During this seven-step process, principal supervisors were provided with various professional development opportunities designed to engage them with an understanding of the

SAM initiative and how this can improve their work. These professional development opportunities include representatives from NSIP working with principal supervisors to understand their data consistency. The representatives from NSIP also discussed the relationships between the principal supervisor and SAM coach and provided feedback around the daily meetings. Finally, professional development from NSIP focused on data analysis. Each month, one principal supervisor meeting was dedicated to support the SAM professional development process.

Instruments

There was one instrument, data reports from the SAM Time Track Calendar, that was implemented for this case study project. The data reports were used to display each principal supervisor's time in the Smith School District from October 2016 until March 2017 to show the following:

- percent of time in relation to their goal
- time spent with individuals and groups
- descriptors/actions stating what is being done with each individual and group

During March 2016, principal supervisors were provided with baseline data through five days of monitoring regarding the amount of their time dedicated to instructional leadership. In September 2016, all principal supervisors were trained on the implementation and norming of descriptors/actions as it aligns to their work. Principal supervisors participated in this initiative from October 2016 until March 2017.

A data-capturing sheet was used to show principal supervisor baseline instructional time gathered in March 2015, instructional time goals set by each principal supervisor in October 2016, and actual instructional time from October 2016–March 2017. Another data-capturing

sheet showed with whom principal supervisors spent their time. This sheet also showed how much time principal supervisors spent with these individuals/groups. The data in Figure 3 was from October 2016–March 2017. The final data-capturing sheet showed the actions principal supervisors spent in their jobs. The sheet also showed how much time principal supervisors spent on each action. These data sheets span from October 2016–March 2017. These documents are included in appendix section.

Research Question

This study attempted to examine the principal supervisors' experience implementing the School Administration Manager (SAM) process designed to improve their focus on instructional leadership in the Smith School District. The research questions for this study were framed around the SAM model. An overarching question is followed by sub questions.

How do principal supervisors in the Smith School District experience implementing the School Administration Manager Process (SAM) process designed to improve their focus on instructional leadership?

1. What was the experience of the Principal Supervisor implementing the SAM process as it relates to instructional time? How much time was spent on instruction? Did the principal supervisor accomplish their goal? What were the contributing factors to the goals being met or not met by principal supervisors?
2. What were the instructional leadership actions engaged in by principal supervisors? How much time was spent on instructional leadership actions? Did the principal supervisor accomplish their goal? What were the contributing factors to the goals being met or not met by the principal supervisor?

3. With whom did principal supervisors spend their time? How much time was spent with individuals or groups? Did the principal supervisor accomplish their goal? What were the contributing factors to the goals being met or not met by the principal supervisor?
4. What do principal supervisors think about the SAM professional development process as a vehicle to increase their focus on instructional leadership actions?
5. What do principals think about the SAM professional development process as a vehicle to increase their focus on instructional leadership actions?

Summary

Chapter 3 provided an overview of the research design for this study, which consisted of a descriptive case study using mixed methods. The description of the district and participants who have volunteered for this study is an important component. Further details were provided regarding the data collection methods and interview process.

Chapter 4: Results

Chapter four presents the results as related to the research questions based on principal supervisors' interviews and data from the School Administration Manager (SAM) calendar for each participant. SAM is a professional development process using a set of tools to change or maximize a leader's focus from management tasks to instructional leadership activities directly connected to teaching and learning (Blissett et al., 2015). This study is attempting to examine the principal supervisors' experiences implementing the SAM process designed to improve their focus on instructional leadership in the Smith School District. The research questions for this study were framed around the SAM model. An overarching question is followed by sub questions.

How do principal supervisors in the Smith School District experience implementing the SAM process designed to improve their focus on instructional leadership?

1. What was the principal supervisor experience implementing the SAM process as it relates to instructional leadership time? How much time was spent on instruction? Did the principal supervisor accomplish their goal? What were the contributing factors to the goals being met or not met by the principal supervisor?
2. What was the principal supervisor experience implementing the SAM process as it relates to instructional leadership actions? How much time was spent on instructional leadership actions? Did the principal supervisor accomplish their goal? What were the contributing factors to the goals being met or not met by the principal supervisor?
3. With whom did principal supervisors spend their time? How much time was spent with individuals or groups? Did the principal supervisor accomplish their goal? What were the contributing factors to the goals being met or not met by the principal supervisor?

4. What do principal supervisors think about the SAM professional development process as a vehicle to increase their focus on instructional leadership actions?
5. What do principals think about the SAM professional development process as a vehicle to increase their focus on instructional leadership actions?

This chapter begins with the role of the principal supervisor. In this section, the researcher describes the job responsibilities of the principal supervisor in the Smith School District. The second part of this chapter provides a description of a day in the life of a principal supervisor. The researcher provides readers with an opportunity to experience actions of principal supervisors in the Smith School District. As the researcher is currently employed as a principal supervisor, he has unique access to the role. This information will be based on a composite of his knowledge and experience along with interactions and information from his peers. The third part of this chapter will entail the researcher describing and analyzing qualitative and quantitative data. These data points were gathered through interviews with principal supervisors centered around their implementation of the SAM process, along with actual data that was input in the SAM calendar. The final section of this chapter describes a principal supervisor who experienced success with reaching goals that she set before implementation of the SAM process. The researcher discusses the principal supervisor's accomplishment with her and if there was something that she did that allowed her to accomplish her goals.

Description of the District

The Smith School District is a large urban school district in the mid-Atlantic region of the United States. The 2016–17 student enrollment totaled 82,354 students in grades pre-kindergarten–12 across 177 schools and programs. A breakdown of students shows 44,082

(grades pk–8), 16,891 (grades 6–8), and 21,381 (grades 9–12). There are eleven principal supervisors assigned to support schools and programs in the Smith School District. As supervisors over geographical areas, these principal supervisors manage areas in the same manner as an area or assistant superintendent and are responsible for overall school functions such as academic achievement, management, and operations. Principal supervisors are expected to acquire a deep knowledge of the schools they supervise and become thought partners with principals while developing, supporting, and holding principals accountable for academic results. The geographical areas are based on sections divided in the northern, southern, eastern, and western part of the city. Schools that are in the same geographical area have similar characteristics and resources that can be shared and collaborated with one another. There are eight principal supervisors in the Smith School District who have volunteered to participate in the SAM professional development process research project.

In the Smith School District, the chief executive officer (CEO) leads the performance and provides direction for the district. The CEO reports to the board of school commissioners. The CEO has seven direct reports to include the chief of staff (COS), chief academic officer (CAO), chief of school (COSch), chief achievement and accountability officer (CAAO), chief finance officer (CFO), chief human capital officer (CHCO), and chief information and technology officer (CITO). The principal supervisors report to the chief of schools (COSch). Principal supervisors work in collaboration with managers of school support who provide non-instructional assistance to principals in areas such as budget and maintenance. Principal supervisors also supervise literacy and math resource teachers who assist literacy and math school leads with improving teaching and learning in their schools. A sample of the Smith School District organization chart can be found in Appendix D.

The Role of the Principal Supervisor

The principal supervisor's official title in the Smith School District is called Instructional Leadership Executive Director (ILED). The principal supervisor has the day-to-day responsibilities of supervising 10–14 elementary, middle, or high schools, and prioritizes instruction and leadership in those schools. The goal of the principal supervisor is to improve the overall performance of each school in their respective network. To do this, principal supervisors must understand the school's performance, diagnose and prioritize areas for improvement, and then ultimately coach principals towards needed changes. Additionally, principal supervisors must be district leaders and serve as a liaison between the schools they supervise and the district offices that hold these principal supervisors accountable. This description leads to the following four standards that summarize the principal supervisor's responsibilities in the Smith School District (Davis, 2018):

Standard 1: Growing the principal's practice: Principal supervisors coach, support, and direct principals to expand their instructional leadership skills. This standard consists of principal supervisors focusing on principal actions. Principal supervisors are expected to spend time monthly with each principal reviewing the instruction in each school, but the lens is on the principals' actions. This standard can also include non-instructional actions of the principal, but only to lead a school so that instruction sits as the most important priority. Principal supervisors overwhelmingly communicated that SAM focused them on spending time with principals. One principal supervisor stated, "Before SAM, I really did not track who I was spending my time with. When I used SAM, I was able to strategically see how my time was being used."

Standard 2: Growing the school's overall performance: Principal supervisors monitor and review the performance of individual schools to determine necessary areas of

improvement, and work with the principal to create a better educational environment for students with improved outcomes. This standard speaks directly to the overall goal of improving each school's performance. This standard ensures that it is not enough to coach and improve the performance of one principal but speaks to the principal supervisor improving the performance of all schools in a network as measured by overall growth of a school—quantitative and qualitative—and the actions that the principal supervisor must take towards real improvement. Most principal supervisors did not discuss the academic performance of schools in relation to SAM. However, one principal supervisor stated, "The actions that I performed as indicated through the SAM process had a direct relationship to the increase in performance of schools in my network specifically in the areas of attendance and student promotion rates."

Standard 3: Growing the district's performance: Principal supervisors advocate for resources that will directly lead to better supported schools and improved learning. This standard is an acknowledgment that the collective experience and analysis of schools both live with principal supervisors and should be a part of the decision-making process on the district level as changes are discussed and priorities created. Principal supervisors are expected to advocate for their schools with authority and humility, aligned with recommendations of district priorities and changes. The principal supervisor that is effective in this standard is adept at analyzing the needs of schools, presenting a compelling rationale, and ultimately pushing the district towards improved student outcomes. Principal supervisors spoke of their interactions with various departments at the central office that they interact with as examples in this standard. One principal supervisor stated, "The SAM process helped me strategically determine what meetings with central office colleagues he should attend that would be beneficial to helping his schools."

Standard 4: Growing and modeling their own leadership: Principal supervisors model senior leadership qualities while engaging in their own development that ultimately leads to more effective principals. This standard recognizes that the principal supervisor is often the face of the district and must model senior leadership qualities such as trust and credibility through their communications and actions. The principal supervisor must continue to develop their critical thinking and instructional leadership skills. Principal supervisors spoke consistently about the SAM process growing as a leader. One principal supervisor stated, "I think SAM is a good professional development tool for me because it helped me think about what I was doing, and whether that action was making a difference."

While it is important to detail each standard into specific actions, there are two specific qualities that must live in each standard. First, the principal supervisor must lead with an equity lens – both in terms of what occurs inside each school, but just as important, how the district provides access to equitable resources. Second, the principal supervisor must also engage in strategic and collaborative change through each standard of performance. These two qualities are shown as behaviors and competencies that can be represented through all four standards via character, personal capability, drive for results, interpersonal skills, and leading organizational change (Folkman & Zenger, 2009), and CCSSO model principal supervisor professional standards (2015, p. 9). A complete job description of the principal supervisor in the Smith School District can be found in Appendix E.

A Day in the Life of a Principal Supervisor

In the Smith School District, the principal supervisor's office is located at the District's central office in the middle of a large urban city. Each principal supervisor has an office that is shared with a second principal supervisor. The office is located on the third of four floors. Each

principal supervisor is responsible for approximately 10–14 schools that are in different parts of the City. Three principal supervisors manage schools located in the northern section of the district. The average distance between the principal supervisors' office and schools in the northern section of the city is seven miles. Three principal supervisors manage schools located in the eastern section of the district. Two of those principal supervisors manage elementary schools, and one principal supervisor manages secondary schools. The secondary principal supervisor also manages schools in the northern section of the district. The average distance between the principal supervisors' offices and schools in the eastern section of the city is three miles. Two principal supervisors manage schools in the western section of the district. One principal supervisor manages elementary schools and one principal supervisor manages secondary schools. The average distance between the principal supervisors' offices and schools in the western section of the city is three miles. Two principal supervisors manage schools in the southern section of the district. One principal supervisor manages elementary schools and one principal supervisor manages secondary schools. The secondary principal supervisor also manages schools in the western section of the district. The average distance between the principal supervisors' offices and schools in the southern section of the city is eight miles.

To protect the identity of participants, pseudonyms will be used to identify principal supervisors. Below are the names of those individuals.

A complete list of their information is provided in Table 1.

- Principal Supervisor #1: Pam Sullivan
- Principal Supervisor #2: Phoebe Sims
- Principal Supervisor #3: Piper Steward
- Principal Supervisor #4: Phil Sanders

- Principal Supervisor #5: Patricia Simpson
- Principal Supervisor #6: Pamela Scott
- Principal Supervisor #7: Patrick Spencer
- Principal Supervisor #8: Paige Smith

Principal Supervisor Leadership Actions

This section identifies and details the actions principal supervisors in the Smith School District engage in daily. The information in this section comes from the writer's experience as a principal supervisor in the Smith School District and communications with other principal supervisors in the district at weekly department meetings and interviews. The actions that are described below are aligned with the job description of a principal supervisor in the Smith School District, and are centered around the categories of school visits, district office meetings, professional development, and general office work preparation.

School Visits

Instructional learning walk.

The number one action of a principal supervisor is to be present in the schools. Principal supervisors' primary purpose in visiting schools is to support and ensure that a high level of teaching and learning is occurring. The principal supervisor in the Smith School District supports this action in a variety of ways. Principal supervisors frequently visit classrooms with the principal focusing on a teacher's ability to deliver instruction and a student's ability to learn. During instructional classroom visits, the principal supervisor and principal take notes and debrief after each classroom visit or overall school visit on what was observed. The principal supervisor frequently acts as a coach during this process by asking questions that allow for the principal to create his or her own vision for what occurred and next steps. The average principal

supervisor spent 11% of his or her time participating in instructional learning walks. An example of an instructional learning walk visit agenda in the Smith School District can be found in the Appendix F.

Meeting focus.

A second type of school visit that principal supervisors are engaged in involves attending various meetings at the school. Examples of meetings attended by principal supervisors include instructional leadership teams, grade level teams, content level teams, and data teams. During these meetings, the principal supervisor listens and provides feedback to the group when needed and to the principal. School level team meeting discussions center around preparing teachers to implement a lesson with the goal of understanding upcoming curriculum and how they will teach to meet student needs. School level team meetings also assess whether students are learning. Enrichment opportunities for students mastering content and intervention opportunities for students not mastering the content are discussed. During these meetings, action items are developed for the next meeting. An example of a grade level and content level team meeting in the Smith School District can be found in Appendix G.

Check-in.

A third type of principal supervisor visit to schools occurs when there are outstanding issues that need to be discussed and resolved. As a principal supervisor, the job responsibility includes being the face of the district and serving as a liaison between the school and central office. If there is an issue that may affect the daily operations of a school or distracts from teaching and learning, the principal supervisor is responsible for trouble-shooting and serving as a problem solver. These are usually issues that are sensitive or complex in nature. Other topics that are discussed during these visits involve students, parents, staff, or general well-being. The

average principal supervisor spent 3% of his or her time participating in check-ins with the principal.

District Office Meetings

Weekly department meetings.

Principal supervisors are expected to attend various central office meetings to understand and support continued success as a district. One type of meeting that principal supervisors must attend is their weekly department meetings. Principal supervisor meetings are held every Tuesday and last for six hours. During these meetings, a variety of topics are discussed including instructional issues and non-instructional issues. Principal supervisors are frequently the liaison between the school and central office and discuss topics that various departments from central office solicit input on before they are communicated to schools. This allows central office departments to hear constructive feedback as to the positive and negative impacts for schools. Principal supervisor weekly meetings can also be an opportunity for professional development or growth to occur. An example of a professional growth opportunity for principal supervisors comes from reading relevant articles and discussing the impact on the work. The average principal supervisor spent 7% of his or her time participating in weekly department meetings. An example of a principal supervisor meeting agenda in the Smith School District can be found in Appendix H.

Principal supervisor meetings with employees in other district offices.

A second type of principal supervisor meeting at the district office involves partnering with a department to serve as a liaison. In this role, principal supervisors bring their expertise of schools to departments as they discuss various topics to improve the district. Principal supervisors serve as department liaisons for Teaching and Learning (English and math), College

and Career Readiness, Special Education, Data and Research, Athletics, Human Resources, and Operations. The average principal supervisor spent 4% of his or her time in meetings with employees from other district offices. Examples of items for discussion include:

- Teaching and Learning: Discussion on communication to schools that a new curriculum will be implemented the following year
- College and Career Readiness: Discussion on communication to schools the upcoming year scheduling dates
- Special Education: Discussion on communication to schools regarding mandatory training to school leaders regarding implementing standards based IEP's

Executive meetings.

A third type of principal supervisor meeting at the district level is an executive meeting. During these meetings, the superintendent of schools or a senior executive member calls a mandatory meeting. These meetings may require all, some, or one principal supervisor to attend. Topics that may be discussed during these executive meetings may affect the entire organization or an individual school. The times of the meetings vary and usually depend on the availability of the executive or chief calling the meeting. The average principal supervisor spent 1% of his or her time in executive meetings.

Community learning network support team meetings.

A fourth type of principal supervisor meeting at the district level is community learning network support team meetings. This meeting consists of the principal supervisor meeting with a team of individuals assigned to central office who all have the responsibility to support schools in a variety of ways. Each community learning network is assigned two academic resource professionals (math and English), a manager of school operations and two special education

professionals, one budget analyst, and one human capital specialist. These seven individuals, along with the principal supervisor, make up the network support team. The principal supervisor schedules and facilitates meetings twice a month to ensure that communication is maximized, and individuals are aware of each team member's actions focused on maximizing teaching and learning at the school level. Each professional has an opportunity to share the current status of his or her work with schools. Team members are provided the opportunity to give feedback and, when possible, collaborate projects with one another. Principal supervisors allow approximately 20 minutes per professional to report out updates that are occurring in their department. Action items are agreed upon and followed up at the next meeting. The average principal supervisor spent 4% of his or her time in community learning network support team meetings. An example of a Community Learning Network support team meeting agenda in the Smith School District can be found in Appendix I.

Professional development.

Principal supervisors participate in the delivery of professional development every month to principals and key leadership personnel at their respective schools. The professional development is received by principals during their Community Learning Network and Citywide principal meetings. Community Learning Network principal meetings occur once a month. The focus of this meeting is to ensure principals understand the math and English curriculum that teachers will be delivering to students for the upcoming month through a leadership pacing guide with examples of what should be seen and heard during class visits. This meeting also allows principals the opportunity to discuss how to monitor, support, and provide feedback to teachers through coaching regarding the curriculum, with a focus of ensuring high level teaching and learning is occurring in classrooms. Community Learning Network principal meetings also

provide an opportunity for each principal supervisor to spend time leading professional development on a topic that needs further discussion in just one network based on their focus, such as improving special education compliance or increasing student attendance. Community Learning Network principal meetings are facilitated by the principal supervisor and his network support team with just the principals in that network coming together. An example of a Community Leaning Network Principal Meeting Agenda in the Smith School District can be found in Appendix J.

The citywide principal meeting provides the same opportunity for principals to discuss math and English topics with the addition of having a curriculum director from central office lead the discussion. It is the responsibility of the principal supervisor to be familiar with the material that will be delivered and support the facilitation of the session with the principal. The citywide principal meeting is also an opportunity for the executive staff members to discuss items of importance with principals. Citywide principal meetings are facilitated by central office curriculum directors and their central office support team with principals from across the district coming together. The average principal supervisor spent 10% of his or her time in professional development activities. An example of a Citywide Principal Meeting Agenda in the Smith School District can be found in Appendix K.

Office prep work.

The principal supervisor uses office work time for approving budget items, writing evaluations/finishing reports, returning phone calls to parents and preparing for upcoming professional development opportunities. When approving budget items, principal supervisors are responsible for making sure that the requested actions align with school and district priorities. This may include financial decisions related to staffing and purchasing of items to

support students. When writing evaluations, principal supervisors take the information gathered through school visits and district office meetings and transfer it to final evaluations. Phone calls back to parents may come from parents who have concerns around grade issues or student conduct. Finally, in preparing for professional development opportunities, prep time is needed. The average principal supervisor spent 8% of his or her time participating in office prep work.

Presentation of the Data

Characteristics of Principal Supervisors During the Interview Process

During the interview process, the principal supervisors displayed various actions and mannerisms that suggested their level of engagement during the whole process. Each principal supervisor was interviewed a minimum of two times except for Phoebe Sims and Pamela Smith. Phoebe Sims was interviewed once due to her unavailability, and Pamela Scott was interviewed three times due to her being an outlier principal supervisor.

The first interview that the researcher conducted was with Phil Sanders. The interview took place in Phil's office. Phil was on time for his scheduled interview. During the interview, Phil was engaged while answering each question as evident by the pause he took between questions to think about his answers. Each question was answered after that pause in a thoughtful manner. Phil's body language also suggested that he was engaged during the interview. Phil always provided eye contact to the researcher and sat at the front of his chair. When the interview finished, Phil sincerely showed his gratitude to the researcher for conducting the interview by thanking him.

The second interview that the researcher conducted was with Piper Stewart. The interviews with Ms. Stewart took place in her office. She was on time for both of her interviews.

Ms. Stewart appeared to be slightly distracted during her interviews as evidence by her lack of eye contact with the researcher. Ms. Stewart looked away a couple of times during questioning but would quickly refocus with eye contact during follow-up questions. Ms. Stewart answered all questions asked of her but initially the answers were short in length. The researcher had to follow-up with her so that she could elaborate on her answers and ensure they were complete. Each interview question was answered. During the second conversation with the interview, Piper answered questions in a much more engaging manner.

The third interview that the researcher conducted was with Pam Sullivan. The interview with Pam took place in her office. Pam was on time for her interview. During Pam's initial interview, she appeared to be unfocused as evident by how quickly she answered her questions. Follow-up questions were asked by the researcher to obtain answers that were more intriguing. The researcher's initial follow-up questions were unsuccessful in obtaining complete answers. Continued follow-up questions were asked to ensure there was a completeness to her thoughts.

The fourth interview that the researcher conducted was with Phoebe Sims. The interview with Ms. Sims took place in her office at district headquarters. During the interview, Ms. Sims was very engaged in the interview process as evident by her eye contact and her detailed answers. Ms. Sims paused after each question and provided insight into all answers. A follow-up interview with Ms. Sims was unable to occur due to her unavailability.

The fifth interview that the researcher conducted was with Patricia Simpson. The interview with Ms. Simpson took place in her office at district headquarters. Ms. Simpson was fully engaged during the interview process as evident by eye contact, positive body language, and a willingness to paraphrase each of her answers to ensure the researcher had the correct information. After each interview session was complete, Ms. Simpson asked the researcher if

she did a good job. Ms. Simpson was willing to answer all questions in a complete manner that was asked of her.

The sixth interview that the researcher conducted was with Pamela Scott. The interview with Ms. Scott took place in her office at district headquarters. During the interview process, Ms. Scott was very engaged and thoughtful while answering questions. She paused after each question was asked and during the interview at various times. Ms. Scott provided eye contact to the researcher throughout the interview process. Her body language, which included hand gestures, suggested an engagement during the interview process.

The seventh interview that the researcher conducted was with Paige Smith. The interview with Ms. Smith took place at her office at district headquarters. Ms. Smith was engaged during her interview process, but follow-up questions had to be asked to ensure her answers were communicated in a thorough manner. Ms. Smith provided eye contact to the researcher during the entire interview process.

The eighth interview that the researcher conducted was with Patrick Spencer. The interview with Mr. Spencer took place at his office at district headquarters. During the interview process, Mr. Spencer was very engaged in his feedback as evident by his eye contact, body language, and facial expressions. Mr. Spencer smiled during sections of the interview process where he enjoyed the SAM process and did not smile when talking about portions of the SAM process that he did not find helpful. During the entire interview, Mr. Spencer looked at me and answered questions in a complete manner.

Principal Supervisor Questions

In the second part of this chapter, the researcher provides the data of principal supervisors in the Smith School District from their SAM calendar and their answers to the

question, “How do principal supervisors in the Smith School District experience implementing the School Administration Manager (SAM) Process designed to improve their focus on instructional leadership?” The section begins by the researcher briefly discussing the SAM process and presenting the questions that principal supervisors were asked. The researcher next provides answers from the principal supervisors for each question in a quantitative and qualitative format. The chapter ends with a summary.

The SAM process began with SAM corporate employee shadowing principal supervisors for four days to determine how much time they spent on instructional leadership actions. During the debriefing that occurred after the fourth day, each principal supervisor set an individual time goal. The first research question centered around data gathered at the end of the SAM principal supervisor process to determine whether principal supervisors met their time goal. The second research question centered around with whom principal supervisors spent their time. At the beginning of the SAM process, principal supervisors communicated who they thought most of their time would be spent with that would enhance their focus on instructional leadership. Principal supervisors could choose between the following individuals or groups:

- Principals
- School Based Instructional Leadership Team Members
- Parents
- Principal Supervisor Colleagues
- Community Learning Network Support team members
- District Office Personnel

The third research question centered around what principal supervisors were doing with their time. At the beginning of the SAM process, principal supervisors communicated what action

they believed most of their time would be spent doing as it related to instructional leadership. Principal supervisors could choose between the following instructional leadership actions:

- Decision-making Activities at Schools
- Modeling/Teaching at Schools
- Professional Development (participating with schools)
- Planning
- Office Work
- District Office Meetings

The fourth research question centered around the principal supervisors' experience with SAM. This open-ended question allowed the principal supervisors to provide their thoughts on the SAM process. The fifth research question centered around the principals' experience of the SAM process by the principal supervisor. Principal supervisors were asked this open-ended question which allowed them to think of how they thought their principals viewed them implementing the SAM professional development process. What follows is a summary of each principal supervisor's answers to the research question asked of them.

Pam Sullivan.

Principal supervisor's experience implementing SAM as it relates to the instructional time.

Ms. Sullivan set a goal of spending 54% of her time on instructional leadership. She felt that she met her time goal because "I kept track of my objectives on a weekly basis and anytime I wasn't nearing it, I made adjustments so that I would meet the weekly goal." Ms. Sullivan did express concern that during the school year, "Additional schools were added due to a personnel issue, which increased the number of schools I supervised, and this change impacted my

implementation of the SAM process." Ms. Sullivan's final numbers show 55% of her time was spent on instruction with 45% of her time spent on non-instructional actions. Ms. Sullivan's instructional leadership time by month showed a downward trajectory beginning in October (69%) and ending in March (24%). Ms. Sullivan did meet her time goal.

Principal supervisor's experience implementing SAM as it relates to interacting with people.

Ms. Sullivan set a goal of spending most of her time with principals. She then felt that spending time with parents and school-based instructional leadership team members would follow principals in the category of with whom she would spend time. Ms. Sullivan felt that the SAM process "helped me to look at whether my priority for the day was appropriate." Most of her time was spent with principals (134 hours), followed by CLN support team members (130 hours) and principal supervisor colleagues (108 hours). Ms. Sullivan met her goal regarding with whom she was spending time.

Principal supervisor's experience implementing SAM as it relates to instructional leadership actions.

Ms. Sullivan set a goal of spending most of her instructional leadership actions participating in decision-making activities at the school level. This included "participating in short and long-term analysis of data with school level personnel from a beginning point to a projected end point." She also discussed analyzing climate initiatives and their impact on instructional goals. Ms. Sullivan indicated that spending her time on professional development activities and district office meetings would follow decision-making activities in what instructional actions she would spend her time doing. Ms. Sullivan did not meet her principal supervisor instructional actions goal. Most of Ms. Sullivan's instructional actions were spent on

professional development (14% of her time), followed by planning (11% of her time) and decision-making (9% of her time).

Principal supervisor's overall experience implementing SAM.

Ms. Sullivan had a positive experience with SAM. She felt as if it was beneficial. Ms. Sullivan communicated benefits of using the SAM process as being more effective, lowering her stress level, and saving time by not performing unnecessary tasks. She communicated that having an inconsistent SAM coach had a negative impact on her experience. Ms. Sullivan communicated that "I would say instructionally I felt like I was better supporting my principals when I could clearly analyze my actions."

Principal's overall experience with SAM implementation by the principal supervisor.

Ms. Sullivan indicated that she did not talk with all of her principals about SAM. "I don't think they would feel like they heard enough about it from me because it wasn't something that I was talking with them about except for the two principals in my network." She is not sure if they would think this process made her a better principal supervisor.

Phoebe Sims

Principal supervisor's experience implementing SAM as it relates to the instructional time.

Ms. Sims set a goal of spending 75% of her time on instructional leadership. She was not able to communicate whether she met her goals or not due to her being unavailable. Ms. Sims stated that she focused on spending time with principal supervisors and that the SAM process provided her an opportunity to reflect on how she was spending her day. Ms. Sims did communicate that a challenge of implementing the SAM process was navigating between two calendars. Her final numbers showed 38% of her time was spent on instruction and 62% of her

time was spent on non-instructional actions. Ms. Sims' instructional leadership time by month showed a downward trajectory beginning in October (75%) to March (9%). Ms. Sims did not meet her time goal.

Principal supervisor's experience implementing SAM as it relates to interacting with people.

Ms. Sims set a goal of spending most of her time with principals. She then predicted that principal supervisor colleagues and district office personnel would follow principals with whom she would spend her time. Ms. Sims felt that using the SAM language "translated to all of her principals and CLN support team members." She did express concern that her "lack of having a consistent SAM coach with good training contributed to debriefing conferences not being optimal." Ms. Sims did not meet her principal supervisor time spent with people/group goal. Most of her time was spent with CLN support team members (174 hours), followed by principal supervisor colleagues (61 hours) and principals (40 hours).

Principal supervisor's experience implementing SAM as it relates to instructional leadership actions.

Ms. Sims set a goal of spending most of her instructional actions participating in decision-making activities. During this time period, Ms. Sims began to think about not only how she was spending her time, but also how her CLN support team members were spending their time. The principal supervisor did not meet her principal supervisor instructional actions goal. The majority of the principal supervisor's instructional actions was spent on professional development (12% of her time), followed by modeling (10% of her time) and planning (4% of her time).

Principal supervisor's overall experience implementing SAM.

Ms. Sims had a positive experience implementing the SAM process. Her experience centered around how she was spending time during the day. The SAM process allowed her to see that she was spending too much time on non-instructional actions, and she needed to shift her thinking in a way to maximize her instructional time. Ms. Sims communicated, "one of the biggest reflections that I had was, um, I was spending a lot of time with my CLN support team members instead of principals."

Principal's overall experience with SAM implementation by the principal supervisor.

Ms. Sims did not talk with all of her principals about the SAM process. She is unclear as to whether her principals would think that she is a more effective principal supervisor. Ms. Sims stated that "my language changed and how I spend time with my principals changed, and I guard that time."

Piper Stewart

Principal supervisor's experience implementing SAM as it relates to the instructional time.

Ms. Stewart set a goal of spending 66% of her time on instructional leadership. She felt that her time goal was met because of how "conscious I was to know what was on my calendar." Ms. Stewart planned for multiple learning walks to happen during the school day. She did express concern that priorities such as budget or evaluations interfered with her focus on instructional leadership. Ms. Stewart's final numbers showed 62% of her time was spent on instruction and 38% of her time was spent on non-instructional actions. Ms. Stewart's instructional leadership time by month showed a downward trajectory beginning in October (76%) to March (35%). Ms. Stewart did not meet her time goal.

Principal supervisor's experience implementing SAM as it relates to interacting with people.

Ms. Stewart set a goal of spending most of her time with principals. She then felt that principal supervisor colleagues and district office personnel would follow principals with whom she was spending the majority of her time. Ms. Stewart felt that putting time on the calendar to spend time with two to three principals each day contributed to her maximizing instructional time. Ms. Stewart felt that consistently reviewing her goals would also help. She did not meet her principal supervisor time spent with people/group goal. The majority of Ms. Stewart's time was spent with principal supervisor colleagues (131 hours), followed by CLN support team members (94 hours) and principals (72 hours).

Principal supervisor's experience implementing SAM as it relates to instructional leadership actions.

Ms. Stewart set a goal of spending most of her instructional actions participating on professional development activities. Ms. Stewart felt that the SAM process provided her the opportunity to become more organized with her calendar and allowed her to plan ahead. She communicated that "I would lock in two to three-hour blocks at a school" which became sacred times for her and her principal. Ms. Stewart did not meet her principal supervisor instructional actions goal. The majority of her instructional actions was spent on decision-making (13% of her time), followed by professional development (13% of her time) and district office meetings (9% of her time).

Principal supervisor's overall experience implementing SAM.

Ms. Stewart had had a lukewarm experience with the SAM process. She communicated that goal setting and having someone to follow-up on (SAM coach) was beneficial for her. Ms.

Stewart communicated the lack of having a consistent SAM coach and not being in the office daily contributed to her problems with the SAM process. "I think the process um you know is a really strong process for goal setting and accountability." She did mention that she felt the SAM process was more beneficial for principals than principal supervisors.

Principal's overall experience with SAM implementation by the principal supervisor.

Ms. Stewart stated that she talked with all of her principals about the SAM process. She did indicate that her principals would think that she is more focused on instruction. This includes her two principals outside of the SAM process. The principal supervisor stated, "I think all of my principals would say that I spend most of my time forcing them to think about instruction. I don't know if they would know to attribute that to SAM."

Phil Sanders

Principal supervisor's experience implementing SAM as it relates to the instructional time.

Mr. Sanders set a goal of spending 65% of his time on instructional leadership. He felt that he did not meet his time goal. Mr. Sanders felt that the SAM process allowed him to be "more reflective on instructional vs. non-instructional actions." He felt that this allowed him to be "more purposeful in my visits." Although Mr. Sanders felt that he was consistent in implementing the process at the beginning, the lack of a consistent SAM coach caused him to "focus more on operational and non-instructional actions," and he was "never able to get back on track." Mr. Sanders' final numbers showed 50% of his time was spent on instructional actions and 50% of his time was spent on non-instructional actions. His instructional leadership time by month showed a downward trajectory beginning in October (70%) to March (10%). Mr. Sanders did not meet his time goal.

Principal supervisor's experience implementing SAM as it relates to interacting with people.

Mr. Sanders set a goal of spending most of his time with principals. He then felt that principal supervisor colleagues and district office personnel would follow principals with whom he would be spending the majority of his time. Mr. Sanders felt his most important work was spending time with his principals "strategically and specifically." "One of the things that I did a lot of when I had SAM was spend time walking from classroom to classroom, asking the principal if they could identify the standard students were trying to master." Mr. Sanders did not meet his principal supervisor time spent with people/group goal. The majority of his time was spent with CLN support team members (207 hours), followed by principal supervisor colleagues (148 hours) and principals (70 hours).

Principal supervisor's experience implementing SAM as it relates to instructional leadership actions.

Mr. Sanders set a goal of spending most of his instructional actions participating in decision-making activities. He met with principals and would ask "a bunch of questions about their work and help them arrive at a conclusion" through coaching as opposed to telling them directly what he wanted them to see. Mr. Sanders set up a focus to limit the amount of directed feedback he was giving to principals. Mr. Sanders did not meet his principal supervisor instructional action goal. Most of his instructional actions were spent on professional development (13% of his time), followed by planning (11% of his time) and district office meetings (6% of her time).

Principal supervisor's overall experience implementing SAM.

Mr. Sanders had a positive experience implementing the SAM process. He communicated that the benefits of the SAM process included being a resource to principals and principal supervisors and the strengthening of their skills. Mr. Sanders communicated that the SAM process needs to be "tweaked for principal supervisors, including coding, to make it more aligned for principal supervisors." Mr. Sanders communicated that "the key is to have a person we call SAM coach to kind of both follow-up as well as help you think better by asking you a lot of follow-up questions. I would recommend it to anyone. I would use the SAM process again if I get the opportunity."

Principal's overall experience with SAM implementation by the principal supervisor.

Mr. Sanders did not talk with all of his principals about SAM. He did indicate that they would think he is a more effective principal supervisor as evident by the type of feedback given to principals. Mr. Sanders believes they would be able to say that he is less directive. The principals would say that the type of feedback that he provides is aligned to SAM and the purpose/frequency that he visits makes sense.

Patricia Simpson

Principal supervisor's experience implementing SAM as it relates to the instructional time.

Ms. Simpson did not set a time goal. She felt that the SAM process "increased her focus on instructional leadership time because it held her more accountable for going into schools and making her focus more than just operational pieces." Ms. Simpson did express concern that "managing two calendars was time consuming." She did not input data during this process.

Principal supervisor's experience implementing SAM as it relates to interacting with people.

There is no data for Ms. Simpson.

Principal supervisor's experience implementing SAM as it relates to instructional leadership actions.

Ms. Simpson did not set a goal in this category. She did communicate that "there were certain individuals that I was spending time with and certain actions that I was doing more with others," which allowed her to be more reflective. Ms. Simpson did not input data.

Principal supervisor's overall experience implementing SAM.

Ms. Simpson had a lukewarm experience implementing the SAM process. She communicated that the SAM process overall was a great experience and something she would recommend to others. She did not enter data on a consistent basis. Ms. Simpson communicated that "the only reason that I did not input data was because it was not mandatory and managing two calendars made it too difficult." Although Ms. Simpson was part of the conversations taking place during the year, her lack of inputting the data was a hinderance in determining her effectiveness.

Principal's overall experience with SAM implementation by the principal supervisor.

Ms. Simpson indicated that she did talk with her principals about SAM. She did say that it made her more effective. Ms. Simpson stated the principals "would probably say that I am more reflective and focused on outcomes. They would say that I communicate with them more and follow-up visits are more meaningful."

Pamela Scott

Principal supervisor's experience implementing SAM as it relates to the instructional time.

Ms. Scott set a goal of spending 60% of her time on instructional leadership. She felt that she was going to meet her time goal because the SAM process afforded her the opportunity

to “reflect on her day” and support the question of whether she was “really having an impact on student performance.” Ms. Scott also communicated that the SAM calendar allowed her to see how much time she was spending on instructional vs. non-instructional actions in schools. She felt SAM was very beneficial in allowing her to focus on instructional time. Ms. Scott’s final numbers showed 72% of her time was spent on instructional leadership actions and 28% of her time was spent on non-instructional actions. Ms. Scott did meet her time goal.

Principal supervisor’s experience implementing SAM as it relates to interacting with people.

The principal supervisor set a goal of spending most of her time with CLN support team members. She then felt that principals and district office personnel would follow CLN support team members with whom she would spend most of her time. Ms. Scott felt that spending more time with her CLN team would allow them to focus on strategic planning and working together as much as possible. “We spent a lot of time focusing on instruction, but we did it as a team as well as we were doing it individually.” Ms. Scott did meet her principal supervisor time spent with people/group goal. Most of the principal supervisor’s time was spent with CLN support team members (207 hours), followed by principal supervisor Colleagues (148 hours) and Principals (70 hours).

Principal supervisor’s experience implementing SAM as it relates to instructional leadership actions.

Ms. Scott set a goal of spending most of her instructional actions participating in decision-making activities. She communicated the importance of having discussions around instruction constantly. Ms. Scott communicated that providing feedback and modeling what should be seen in the principal supervisor also communicated the importance of everyone being

on the same page. Ms. Scott did meet her principal supervisor instructional actions goal. Most of her instructional actions were spent on decision-making (18% of his time), followed by planning (15% of his time) and professional development (11% of her time).

Principal supervisor's overall experience implementing SAM.

Ms. Scott had an overall positive experience implementing the SAM process. She communicated how this process was very beneficial in focusing on instruction. Ms. Scott did mention that she had to switch her SAM coach during the year from her secretary to a member of her CLN support team which contributed to a lack of cohesion. She communicated that having to input data into two calendars contributed to issues. Ms. Scott stated, "when you have the person that can put the information in, I think SAM is a phenomenal process that really helps you focus on instruction."

Principal's overall experience with SAM implementation by the principal supervisor. Ms. Scott indicated that she did talk with her principals about SAM. She did indicate that they would think that it made her a better principal supervisor. Ms. Scott stated, "I don't know if they had a view. I mean they knew about SAM because the SAM person that follows or tracks you did the initial shadow day when all of my principals were together."

Patrick Spencer

Principal supervisor's experience implementing SAM as it relates to the instructional time.

Mr. Spencer set a goal of spending 65% of his time on instructional leadership. He felt that he was going to meet his time goal because he felt that the SAM process supported him spending more time in school. Mr. Spencer's focus on his goal allowed him to reflect on it weekly which contributed to his time on instructional leadership actions. Mr. Spencer's final

numbers showed that 78% of his time was spent on instructional leadership actions and 22% of his time was spent on non-instructional actions. He did meet his time goal.

Principal supervisor's experience implementing SAM as it relates to interacting with people.

Mr. Spencer set a goal of spending most of his time with principals. He then felt that district office personnel and principal supervisor colleagues followed principals with whom he would spend the majority of his time. Mr. Spencer felt most of his time was spent in the lowest performing schools in his network. He stated that "five schools received most of his time." Mr. Spencer did not meet his principal supervisor time spent with people/group goal. The majority of his time was spent with CLN support team members (343 hours), followed by principal supervisors (218 hours) district office personnel (207 hours).

Principal supervisor's experience implementing SAM as it relates to instructional leadership actions.

Mr. Spencer set a goal of spending most of his instructional actions participating in professional development activities. He discussed the importance of having conversations with principals around instructional learning walks with a focus on "instructional techniques or things that the principal could actually do to change what's going on in the school." Mr. Spencer did not meet his principal supervisor instructional actions goal. Most of his instructional actions were spent on district meetings (32% of his time), followed by office work prep (12% of his time) and decision-making (11% of her time).

Principal supervisor's overall experience implementing SAM.

Mr. Spencer had a very good experience implementing the SAM process. He felt that the strategic tools for principal supervisors allowed for thinking about what they were doing and

why they were doing it. Mr. Spencer did communicate that inputting data into the outlook and SAM calendar and not having a consistent SAM coach contributed to problems with consistent inputting and fidelity of the program. Mr. Spencer stated, “We had a secretary who functioned as a SAM. When that was taken away, you didn't have a thought partner, which forced you to be on your own.”

Principal’s overall experience with SAM implementation by the principal supervisor.

Mr. Spencer stated that most of his principals did not know he was implementing the SAM process because he did not tell them. The principal supervisor stated, “My principals knew that I was coming to the school for a specific reason. Many of my principals did not know that I was using SAM as a strategic professional development process. The ones that did know were part of the program.”

Paige Smith

Principal supervisor’s experience implementing SAM as it relates to the instructional time.

Ms. Smith set a goal of spending 60% of her time on instructional leadership. She felt that her time goal was unrealistic, and she would not meet it. After beginning the SAM process, Ms. Smith felt that she was participating in too many meetings that were not instructionally-based. This allowed her to reflect and spend more time on instructional meetings, but she also realized some of the non-instructional actions would need to continue to occur. Ms. Smith’s final numbers showed that 42% of her time was spent on instructional leadership actions and 58% of his time was spent on non-instructional actions. Ms. Smith did not meet her time goal.

Principal supervisor’s experience implementing SAM as it relates to interacting with people.

Ms. Smith set a goal of spending most of her time with principals. She then felt that CLN support team members and principal supervisor colleagues followed principals with whom she would spend the majority of her time. Ms. Smith felt most of her time was spent "with principals that I had on performance improvement plans or were either ineffective or struggling for some reason." She focused spending time with struggling and ineffective principals in her network. Ms. Smith did not meet her principal supervisor time spent with people/group goal. The majority of her time was spent with CLN support team members (73 hours), followed by principals (53 hours) principal supervisor colleagues (40 hours).

Principal supervisor's experience implementing SAM as it relates to instructional leadership actions.

Ms. Smith set a goal of spending most of his instructional actions participating in professional development activities. She discussed the importance of "seeing what is happening in classrooms." Ms. Smith did not meet her principal supervisor instructional actions goal. Most of her instructional actions were spent on decision-making (10% of his time), followed by office work prep (9% of his time) and professional development (8% of her time).

Principal supervisor's overall experience implementing SAM.

Ms. Smith had a positive experience implementing the SAM process. She communicated that her focus on instructional actions increased as a result of this process. Ms. Smith did communicate that keeping up with two calendars and not having a consistent SAM coach (she changed from the office secretary to a member of her CLN support team) led to some challenges. Ms. Smith stated that "I went from having the special ed liaison to the manager as my SAM coach, but it was very difficult for them to be my SAM coach because of their work."

Principal's overall experience with SAM implementation by the principal supervisor.

Ms. Smith did not indicate to all of her principals that she was using the SAM process. There was no indication of its effectiveness. "I wasn't saying that I spent X amount of time. I did not discuss the process except for principals in the SAM program."

Principal Supervisor Comparison

Principal supervisors' experience implementing SAM as it relates to the instructional time.

The principal supervisors' data related to their time spent on instruction show that one principal supervisor set a goal between 50–59%, five principal supervisors set a goal between 60-69%, and one principal supervisor set her goal between 70–79%. Three out of eight principal supervisors met their time goal. One of the principal supervisors manage principals at the K–8 level and two of the principal supervisors manage principals at the 9–12 level. Two of the principal supervisors who did not meet their goal were within 5%. Three of the principal supervisors who did not meet their goal were outside of 5%. One principal supervisor did not set a goal.

Table 5

Principal Supervisors' Time Goal

Principal Supervisor	Percent of Time Spent on Instructional Leadership (goal)	Percent of Time Spent on Instructional Leadership (actual)
1	54%	55%
2	75%	38%
3	66%	62%
4	65%	50%
5	No goal set	No data gathered
6	60%	72%
7	65%	78%
8	60%	42%

Principal supervisors' experience implementing SAM as it relates to interacting with people.

At the beginning of the study, six out of seven principal supervisors communicated that they wanted to spend most of their time with principals. One principal supervisor communicated that she wanted to spend most of her time with her CLN support team members. The principal supervisors' data related to their time spent with people/group show that two principal supervisors met their time spent with people goal. One of the principal supervisors set her goal of spending more time with principals and met the goal. One principal supervisor set her goal of spending time with her CLN support team and met the goal. Four principal supervisors set spending more time with principals as their people/group goal but spent more time with their CLN support team than any other group. One principal supervisor set spending time with principals as her people/group goal but spent more time with her principal supervisor colleagues. One principal supervisor did not set a goal.

Table 6

Principal Supervisors' Time Spent with People/Group Goal

Principal Supervisor	Top 3 Time Spent with People/Group (Goal)	Top 3 Time Spent with People/Group (Actual)
1	1. Principals 2. Parents 3. Instructional leadership team members	1. Principals 2. CLN support team members 3. Principal supervisor colleagues
2	1. Principals 2. Principal supervisor colleagues 3. District office personnel	1. CLN support team members 2. Principal supervisor colleagues 3. Principals
3	1. Principals 2. Principal supervisor colleagues 3. District office personnel	1. Principal supervisor colleagues 2. CLN support team members 3. Principals
4	1. Principals 2. Principal supervisor colleagues 3. District office personnel	1. CLN support team members 2. Principal supervisor colleagues 3. Principals
5	No data was inputted	No data was inputted

6	1. CLN support team members 2. Principals 3. District office personnel	1. CLN support team members 2. Principal supervisor colleagues 3. District office personnel
7	1. Principals 2. District office personnel 3. Principal supervisor colleagues	1. CLN Support team members 2. Principal supervisor colleagues 3. District office personnel
8	1. Principals 2. CLN support team members 3. Principal supervisor colleagues	1. CLN support team members 2. Principals 3. Principal supervisor colleagues

Principal supervisors' experience implementing SAM as it relates to instructional leadership actions.

At the beginning of the study, four out of seven principal supervisors communicated that they wanted to spend most of their actions in decision-making. Three out of seven principal supervisors communicated that they wanted to spend the majority of their actions in professional development. The principal supervisors' data related to their time spent on instructional actions. Two principal supervisors met their instructional leadership action goal. Both principal supervisors who met their goal set decision-making activities as their leadership action goal. Two principal supervisors set decision-making activities as their leadership action goal but spent more time on professional development. Three principal supervisors set professional development as their leadership action goal and they actually spent more time on decision-making activities. One principal supervisor did not set a goal.

Table 7

Principal Supervisors' Instructional Leadership Action Goal

Principal Supervisor	Top 3 Instructional Actions (Goal)	Top 3 Instructional Actions (Actual)
1	1. Decision-making 2. Professional development 3. District office	1. Professional development 2. Planning 3. Decision-making
2	1. Decision-making 2. Professional development 3. District office	1. Decision-making 2. Modeling/teaching 3. Planning

3	1. Professional development 2. District meetings 3. Decision-making	1. Decision-making 2. Professional development 3. District meetings
4	1. Decision-making 2. District office meeting 3. Planning	1. Professional development 2. Planning 3. District office meeting
5	No data was inputted	No data was inputted
6	1. Decision-making 2. Professional development 3. District office meeting	1. Decision-making 2. Professional development 3. Planning
7	1. Professional development 2. Decision-making 3. District office meeting	1. District office meeting 2. Office work prep 3. Decision-making
8	1. Professional development 2. Decision-making 3. Office work prep	1. Decision-making 2. Planning 3. Professional development

Principal supervisors' overall experience implementing SAM.

The data show that six out of eight principal supervisors had a positive experience implementing the SAM process. Comments that crossed over several principal supervisors included a focus on instruction through reflection on questions posed by the SAM coach. Comments that principal supervisors also expressed centered around the support on strategic planning that was afforded through the SAM calendar. Finally, principal supervisors agreed that the SAM process afforded principal supervisors the opportunity to coach principals in a strategic manner through direct and indirect feedback. Two of the eight principal supervisors had a lukewarm experience implementing the SAM process. There were two major topics that those principal supervisors stated that created this lukewarm process. One topic was the stress caused by having to input data into two calendars. The outlook calendar that is used in the school system by principal supervisors was not aligned with the SAM calendar. This caused principal supervisors to have to input data twice. The other topic that principal supervisors had an issue with included the lack of having a consistent SAM coach. Many of the principal

supervisors' original SAM coaches were reassigned to other positions during this process. Principal supervisors expressed that this caused them to have multiple coaches which contributed to a lack of consistency. These two comments were communicated in some manner by all principal supervisors.

Principals' overall experience with SAM implementation by the principal supervisor.

The principal supervisors' data show that three of eight principal supervisors communicated to their principals that they were implementing the SAM professional development process and explained it to them. Five out of eight principal supervisors did not communicate to their principals that they were implementing the SAM professional development process. Comments that crossed over several principal supervisors included that principal supervisors are more focused on why they are visiting schools. Principal supervisors have a more instructional focus on their work. Principal supervisors are more thoughtful on the type of questions that they are asking and helping principals think through things in a non-directive manner as opposed to being directive. Principal supervisors' language has changed and is more purposeful.

The data collected from five questions provide a comprehensive frame around the implementation of the SAM professional development process. Based on the data collected, three principal supervisors did not accomplish any goals. Two principal supervisors accomplished one goal. One principal supervisor accomplished two goals. One principal supervisor accomplished all three goals. One principal supervisor did not set any goals during this process. The next section explores the principal supervisor who accomplished all three of her goals.

Table 8

Principal Supervisors' Overall Goal Accomplishments

Principal Supervisor Goal Accomplished (0 out of 3)	Principal Supervisor Goal Accomplished (1 out of 3)	Principal Supervisor Goal Accomplished (2 out of 3)	Principal Supervisor Goal Accomplished (3 out of 3)
Piper Stewart Phil Sims Paige Smith	Phoebe Sims Patrick Spencer	Pam Sullivan	Pamela Scott

The Outlier Principal Supervisor

After interviewing and reviewing the data of principal supervisors in Smith School District, one individual stood out. Pamela Scott was the only principal supervisor to accomplish all three of her goals that she set before the SAM professional development implementation began. With Ms. Scott being the only principal supervisor to accomplish all the goals that she set out, the research followed up to determine if there was anything different in her behavior or actions to assist other principal supervisors to focus on spending time on instructional leadership.

Goal accomplishments.

In looking at her data, Ms. Scott set a goal of spending 60% of her time devoted to instructional leadership. Ms. Scott's final numbers showed that 72% of her time was spent on instructional leadership actions. Ms. Scott also set a goal of spending most of her time with her CLN support team members. Ms. Scott's final numbers showed that she did spend most of her time (207 hours) with her CLN support team members. Finally, Ms. Scott set a goal of spending most of instructional leadership actions participating in decision-making activities. Her final numbers show that most of her instructional leadership actions were spent on decision-making activities (18%).

In discussions with Ms. Scott, she was adamant that her goals were accomplished due to her focus on achieving them. Ms. Scott stated that she was really deliberate and tried to streamline her goals so that even though they were in three different areas, she would think of them as one so that she was "in schools focused on instruction, working with principals with my team." Ms. Scott went further to say that her CLN support team participated in all instructional learning walks with principals and were able to provide direct feedback and next steps. Ms. Scott strategically scheduled her instructional time with principals to include opportunities for actionable feedback regarding instructional decision-making that included her support team members. All next step decisions were made collectively with principals and support team members at the table so the trio of principal, support team members, and principals often were together.

Ms. Scott also believed that the support she received through her SAM coach helped her accomplish her goal. She specifically mentioned how her SAM coach monitored and checked how she was spending her time daily and with whom along with the fact that what she was doing was very beneficial. She felt that the daily process of "checking in with my SAM coach to review and plan" contributed to her success. Ms. Scott explained that when the SAM process began, her CLN support team sat down with her to determine who would be her SAM coach after having a lengthy discussion around need and fit. Ms. Scott explained that her team would consistently ask her if she had met with her SAM coach and would push her to do so if she had not.

Sacrifice toward accomplishing goals.

As the researcher discussed with Ms. Scott regarding the accomplishments of her goal, conversation centered around sacrifices that had to be made in her professional and personal

life. Ms. Scott communicated that she and her CLN team worked "ridiculous hours in the evening just to make sure non-instructional activities were done so that when schools were open, they could be in schools with principals." This included meeting after 4:30pm daily to have CLN support team daily check-ins and leave the district office at "7:00 or 8:00 in the evening" or talking on the phone "late into the evening, trying to make sure things were in place for our schools and we didn't miss anything else that we were charged to do."

It was clear to the researcher that Ms. Scott feels that preparing and planning is a very important aspect of her job. Based on how she plans her day, Ms. Scott feels that collaborative communication between and with her team is an important aspect of her work. Ms. Scott feels that this collaborative effort makes them feel as if they are a good team even if that means that they are working a lot of hours to which may interfere into their personal time. Ms. Scott communicated that her husband did "research on the SAM professional development process" and thought it was "great." He thought it was a "wonderful way to track my work and meeting my job description."

Implications of accomplishing goals for future principal supervisor actions.

Ms. Scott made clear that she felt the findings of this work had a direct impact on the future work of principal supervisors and their work with principals. Ms. Scott stated that "in the role of principal supervisors, your focus must be on instructional leadership so that the principal's focus can be on instructional leadership." She stated the aspect of time and how a principal supervisor spends that time must be protected while acknowledging that in many situations, principal supervisors are the catch-all, and so "we can't do the best quality job in terms of moving student outcomes if we ae doing some of everything for every other department." Ms. Scott then discussed how research states the importance of the principal in

school achievement. Ms. Scott believes that if the principal does not have support from some type of supervisor, “then what we are doing is saying we are not going to have the best outcome for kids.” She feels the principal cannot be handcuffed.

Summary

After interviewing Ms. Scott and looking and listening to her feedback, it is evident that a work ethic that is focused on instruction, her CLN team members, and principals collaboratively working together and providing feedback to one another is her plan to support schools with improving performance. While these areas may appear separate, Ms. Scott’s view is that they are one, which makes it easy for her to focus her attention towards her overarching goal of improving the performance of schools in her network. Ms. Scott views this as her mission, and one in which sacrifices such as personal and family time loss occur.

The researcher’s perception of Ms. Scott is one of a perfectionist. She is attuned to doing things the right way. This may cause her lost personal time with family and friends. This may also cause her to experience a lack of sleep to ensure tasks are completed. Ms. Scott’s attempt to be perfect has caused her to be viewed with skepticism at times. Her view of completion and ensuring that correct decisions are made has caused her to be at odds with co-workers. Ms. Scott’s background as an individual who always felt like she had to work twice as hard as the next person appears to be built in this quest for excellence. It is this fear of failure that pushes her and everyone around her to sacrifice personal time and professional comfort for her work.

What follows in Chapter 5 will be the results of the data and of an individual who accomplished all three goals. Chapter 5 begins with a brief introduction and overview of the SAM professional development process. Next, the interpretation of results is presented as it

relates to the questions that were asked. Finally, the chapter ends the conclusion that includes a summary, limitations, recommendations, and future research that needs to be explored for this topic.

Chapter 5: Discussion and Conclusion

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to discuss the results of the School Administration Manager (SAM) professional development process. The topics include an overview of the SAM professional development process, interpretation of results, and conclusion, which consists of the summary, limitations, recommendations, and next steps for future research around the topic of increasing principal supervisors' time focusing on instruction leadership to include the SAM professional development process.

Overview of the SAM Professional Development Process

The purpose of this descriptive case study using mixed methods was to examine principal supervisors' experience using the SAM professional development process to increase their time focusing on instructional leadership actions and decreasing their time on management or operational actions in the Smith School District. In many school districts across the United States, principal supervisors lack the necessary time to spend on instructional actions because of management and operational issues (Durkin & Saphier, 2015). The SAM professional development process is being used in some urban school districts across the United States with the purpose of strategically increasing principal supervisors' time on instructional leadership actions ("SAM Process," 2017). This case study is designed to provide the readers with information to determine whether the SAM professional development process is a program that they would like to invest in and determine how principal supervisors in the Smith School District feel about it based on their results and feedback.

The areas of focus for principal supervisors which presented quantitative and qualitative data as to the outcome of the SAM professional development process were:

- principal supervisor experience implementing the SAM professional development process as it relates to time
- principal supervisor experience implementing the SAM professional development process as it relates to people
- principal supervisor experience implementing the SAM professional development process as it relates to instructional actions

Eight principal supervisors agreed to participate in this descriptive case study. The researcher used two data sources. The first data source was collected from the SAM calendar of each principal supervisor. Principal supervisors were asked to fill out their SAM calendar daily for six months (November 2016–April 2017). Before principal supervisors began the SAM process, each was asked to determine goals in the following areas:

- the percent of time they wanted to spend on instruction
- the individual/group they wanted to spend the most time with
- the action they wanted to spend most of their time doing

After the study ended in April 2017, the researcher gathered principal supervisor data that related to the percent of time each spent on instruction, time spent with individuals, and actions taken. Principal supervisors were also asked a series of open-ended questions related to time, people, and actions that allowed them to communicate about their experience during this process. Each interview was audio taped and later transcribed by the researcher. The open-ended questions were created by the researcher and framed around the SAM professional development process. Principal supervisors were asked these questions to capture information that would help explain their overall experience in a way that the data may not capture. The coordinating and conducting of the interviews were done with ease due to the willingness of the participants.

Interpretation of Results

The Need for the SAM Professional Development Process

In the fall of 2014, the Wallace Foundation initiated a principal supervisor initiative (PSI) aimed at building up the quality of instructional leadership. This was an attempt to improve academic achievement in six urban districts across the United States by focusing on principal supervisors as the central component to improving instructional leadership among principals (Arcaira et al., 2009). One of the core components in the principal supervisor initiative from the Wallace Foundation was to reshape the principal supervisor job description to focus on instructional leadership. In 2015, the Smith School District received an invitation from the Wallace Foundation to participate in this initiative with participation in the National SAM Project being included in this project. The National SAM Project is a professional development process designed to change the conditions that prevent principal supervisors from spending more time on instructional leadership actions (Arcaira et al., 2009). During the 2016–17 school year, the Smith School District's CEO agreed to participate in the Wallace Foundation initiative. Led by the chief academic officer, all offices supported the Wallace initiative.

Principal supervisors' experience implementing the SAM professional development process as it relates to time.

Research question #1 focused on the principal supervisors' experience implementing the SAM professional development process and whether they were able to accomplish a goal that they set up related to the amount of time they would spend on instruction. Each principal supervisor was shadowed by an employee of the SAM network for four days at the beginning of this initiative. After the four days, principal supervisors were provided with an average amount of time each was spending on instructional activities. Principal supervisors then set an individual

goal that communicated the average amount of time they would spend on instructional activities. Principal supervisors communicated that the SAM professional development process allowed them to reflect on the amount of time they were spending on instruction by analyzing what they were doing based the calendar. They also communicated that the SAM process empowered them to say no when asked to do things that interfered with something that already had been set up with the principal. The SAM process allowed for the SAM coach to ask questions of the principal supervisor to make sure they were focusing their time on instruction.

In the Smith School District, three out of the seven principal supervisors (43%) reached their time goal. The average amount of time principal supervisors spent on instruction in the Smith School district was 57 percent. I can conclude that there needs to be more support for principal supervisors so that they can focus more time on instruction. The Smith School District needs to ensure that there are individuals assigned that can assist principal supervisors in their work. The SAM professional development process calls these individuals first responders. First responders should be used to help solve issues such as parent or student behaviors. Although this was a part of the SAM process, this was not in fact happening with many of the principal supervisors in the Smith School District. Principal Supervisors in the Smith School District were needed to participate repeatedly in non-instructional issues without having staff that directly reported to them to assist in the process.

More support for principal supervisors in the Smith School District is also needed around coaching. Many principal supervisors in the Smith School District experienced two to three different SAM coaches during the school year. This occurred because of a reorganization of the district office that caused the original SAM coaches of principal supervisors to be reassigned to other positions. When this happened, many principal supervisors were forced to find a new

SAM coach that was not trained in the SAM concept or had to continue the work without a coach. This resulted in inconsistent thought partners and coaches for principal supervisors.

A final recommendation from the researcher to help increase principal supervisors' time on instruction leadership is to ensure that the SAM calendar and the outlook calendar are aligned with each other. Multiple principal supervisors stated that having to input information into two calendars contributed to their lost time on instruction, or not ensuring that their calendar was updated consistently. One calendar for principal supervisors to use will allow for consistency and timeliness of the work.

Pamela Scott had to make enormous sacrifices to ensure the majority of her time was spent on instruction. This included meeting regularly with her CLN support team members after 5:00 most evenings and leaving work after 7:00 most nights. Ms. Scott also worked regularly late into the evenings and on weekends on non-instructional paperwork. Ms. Scott communicated that districts should provide more resources to principal supervisors if their number one priority is to support principals on improving their instructional leadership actions.

Ensuring principal supervisors spend significant time in schools coaching principals is still something that most school districts are trying to improve upon (Superville, 2015, p. 3). According to Casserly (2013), there are still a number of challenges that make principal supervisors spending time focused just on instruction a reality. Principal supervisors play multiple roles and must juggle competing demands while also attempting to focus their time on instruction (Casserly, 2013). In some school districts, there are minimum expectations related to the amount of time principal supervisors are to spend on instruction as a strategy to increase time on instruction. In the Des Moines school district (Iowa), principal supervisors are recommended to spend 70 percent of their time focused on instruction while in Minneapolis

(Minnesota), the recommended time is 80 percent. In other districts such as Broward County (Florida), it is recommended that principal supervisors are not involved in any district office meetings until after 3:00pm (Clark et al., 2018). In the Smith School District, the set amount of time that principal supervisors are expected to focus on instruction is 75%.

Principal supervisors' experience implementing the SAM professional development process as it relates to interacting with people.

Research question #2 focused on the principal supervisors' experience implementing the SAM professional development process and whether they were able to accomplish their goal related to with whom they would spend most of their time. Having principal supervisors spend time focused on instruction is what the overall goal of the SAM professional development process was attempting to accomplish. In the Smith School District, two out of seven (29%) principal supervisors reached their goal regarding with whom they wanted to spend most of their time. One principal supervisor set and met her goal of spending more time with principals. One principal supervisor set and met her goal of spending more time with her CLN support team members. Six out of the seven principal supervisors set a goal to spend most of their time with principals. The researcher can conclude that there needs to be more support for principal supervisors to ensure they are spending more time with individuals with whom they set their goals. As indicated from research and conversations with principal supervisors, more supports need to occur by districts to ensure principal supervisors spend more time with principals. Principal supervisors are encouraged to put principal meetings or interactions first on their calendars to make sure that this time is sacred. This takes a lot of pre-planning and knowing what dates are already blocked off for activities by the district. Principal supervisors also should know what they are doing with principals in advance of the visit. This will allow for principal

supervisors to maximize the amount of time they are spending with principals. Finally, principal supervisors are also encouraged to say no to anything that may get in the way of spending time with principal supervisors.

Pamela Scott was very strategic with ensuring that she spent time with her CLN support team members to support her principals and the work. Ms. Scott met with her team at the beginning of each month and mapped out a calendar of events for school visits. The first activity that was scheduled on everyone's calendar was the date and time spent with principals. Once this activity was locked in calendars, other activities could be scheduled and put on all of her CLN support team members. Ms. Scott and her CLN support team would review their schedules at weekly check-ins to hold themselves accountable to ensure they were spending appropriate amount of time with principals.

In 2009, the federal government provided school districts with Race to the Top (RTTT) grants designed to align principal accountability with school performance. Ensuring that principals had individuals designated to support them became a major part of this process. The first-ever Principal Supervisor Standards provided the expectations of principal supervisors to ensure that principals were focused on instruction (Saltzman, 2016, p. 1). The Principal Supervisor Standards (CCSSO, 2015, p. 5) state that principal supervisors should spend their time to help principals grow as instructional leaders and work one on one with principals. This was put in place to help focus principals away from the non-instructional actions that consume most of their time and focus them on improving school performance. Principal supervisors did work with other individuals besides principals. Districts reported that principal supervisors worked with other school personnel, such as assistant principals, coaches, and teachers (Clark et al., 2018). In the Smith School District, spending time with principals is the number one priority for

principal supervisors. Principal supervisors communicated that the SAM professional development process allowed them to see how much time they were spending with principal supervisors on a weekly and monthly basis. This reflection assisted principal supervisors in determining whether they were spending sufficient time with their principals as they thought they would be doing.

Principal supervisors' experience implementing the SAM professional development process as it relates to instructional leadership actions.

Research question #3 focused on the principal supervisors' experience implementing the SAM professional development process and whether they were able to accomplish their goal related to what they were doing with their time. In the Smith School District, five principal supervisors communicated that supporting and providing decision-making actions would be the areas that they wanted to spend most of their time doing at the beginning of this project. Two principal supervisors chose professional development as their action priority. The data showed that two out of seven principal supervisors (29%) reached their goal regarding what they wanted to spend most of their time doing. In both scenarios, decision-making was the area that was accomplished. When the researcher discussed what decision-making meant for principal supervisors, there was a consensus that they were referring to directive and non-directive feedback with the principal. The SAM professional development process allowed principal supervisors to determine how much time they were providing directive and non-directive feedback to principals. The researcher can conclude that there needs to be more support for principal supervisors to ensure they are spending more time supporting principals in directive and non-directive feedback in their decision-making process. This support also needs to look at consistency among principal supervisors as to how that feedback is delivered and whether there

needs to be a coaching model used by all principal supervisors. Principal supervisors were also able to notice that their feedback to their principals and other members of their CLN team changed to being more non-directive. Principal supervisors were able to state that the SAM process held them accountable to their schedule of planned principal interactions. Principal supervisors communicated that actions became more strategic and purposeful. During principal evaluation conferences, principal supervisors were able to show what actions they performed with principals.

Ms. Scott discussed with her CLN support team members and principals the importance of communication with one another through non-directive feedback so that collaborative decisions can occur. Ms. Scott accomplished her goal of spending most of her time supporting decisions through this process. Whether with principals, her CLN support team members, principal supervisor colleagues, or district office personnel, Ms. Scott ensured conversations were set up to discuss decisions in non-directive fashions.

Principal supervisors spending time focused on instruction is what the overall focus of the SAM professional development process was attempting to accomplish. Research shows that principal supervisors should participate in specific actions when interacting with principals and spend most of their time developing principals' instructional leadership skills (Clark et al., 2018).

According to Rainey and Wunderlich (2015), principal supervisors should attend the following:

- instructional learning walks
- leadership team meetings
- grade level/content team meetings
- student and parent conferences

- professional development meetings
- teacher evaluation conferences
- short visits to have conversations
- faculty meetings
- data meetings

School districts such as Oakland Unified and Denver Public Schools have communicated the expectations that coaching should be the major focus of conversations in visits between the principal supervisor and principal (Aguilar et al., 2011).

Implications of Practice

Superintendents

The research has implications for superintendents in school districts across the United States. Ensuring quality instruction is the focus occurring at schools is a priority for all superintendents. The superintendent is ultimately responsible for ensuring resources are put in place so that appropriate time can be devoted to this priority. Superintendents also help promote what actions should be occurring in districts and schools so that instruction can be a priority. The superintendents' words and actions can help reinforce expectations he or she would like to see in schools.

District Office Personnel

The research has implications for district office personnel in school districts across the United States. The focus on instruction in schools can be a rallying point for everyone in the district. For individuals who may not have a direct impact on instruction, communicating, and thinking through how indirectly their actions help support instruction is valued. District office

personnel should be able to communicate how their actions are strategic and clear so that there is a through-line to instruction.

Principals

The research has implications for principals in school districts across the United States. Ensuring that time with principal supervisors is sacred and fosters the ability for their growth is essential. For principals, ensuring appropriate time is spent on instruction is important in lieu of the management and operational day-to-day activities that occur. Principals should be able to strategically determine who they would like to spend most of their time with and plan for it. This should be implemented in their calendar first, followed by non-instructional items. Also, principals should be able to strategically discuss what they are doing with their time.

Teachers

The research has implications for teachers in school districts across the United States. Ensuring that teachers have time focused on instructional actions is essential to their task. It is also vital that the SAM process provides resources so that teachers can focus more on instruction and less on non-instructional compliance. It is also important for teachers to know what they want to do with their time. The actions of teachers should be very strategic and planned to maximize effectiveness.

Conclusion

The interpretation of the data revealed several themes related to the SAM professional development process. First, principal supervisors viewed SAM as a beneficial process to keep them focused on their number one priority which was spending most of their time on with coaching and providing feedback to principals in an attempt to increase their instructional leadership skills and improve results for schools. Principal supervisors felt that principals knew

there was a difference once they started using the SAM professional development process based on the amount of time they were spending with principals. Many principal supervisors pointed out too that they were more non-directive in their conversations, which led to more coaching opportunities.

Second, principal supervisors communicated that the inconsistency in the level of support received throughout the process contributed to a lack of quality in their work. Interviews conducted with principal supervisors demonstrated that losing their SAM coach during this project negatively affected their perception of their work. Principal supervisors consistently pointed out that the SAM coach pushed them to think about what they were doing and why. They also communicated that this individual allowed them to be reflective in their work and held them accountable for their actions in a non-threatening manner. Principal supervisors commented that the loss of their SAM coach during the research project is an example of a feeling that they need to be provided with adequate resources to do their work. When the project began, principal supervisors would participate in sessions with each other where they would look at their data. This practice discontinued as the SAM process continued.

Third, qualitative interviews with principal supervisors show that there is not a clear understanding of whether instruction or instructional leadership is their priority when working with principals. Some principal supervisors focused on spending time with principals on the pedagogy of instruction while others spent time asking lots of questions. Principal supervisors' conversations around their actions of decision-making differed according to whether their focus was instruction or instructional leadership.

Finally, interviews with the principal supervisors made clear that having principal supervisors maintain two separate calendars contributed to a lack of cohesion of their work.

Inputting information twice contributed to a feeling of overwork and not adhering to some entering their data in consistently. Overall, over 50% of all principal supervisors' time was spent on instruction. Based on this case study, most principal supervisors in the Smith School District felt that the SAM professional development process helped increase their time on instruction but still felt like there are things that can be done to gain greater time.

Limitations

During this research project, there were several challenges that occurred that affected the dissertation. A new chief of schools was appointed to supervise principal supervisors a quarter of the way into this project. The new chief of schools was not as invested in the project and did not provide the opportunities or resources as the previous individual that led this initiative. Although not mandatory, the previous chief of schools pushed for everyone to use this process. The new chief of schools did not have that expectation. With this change in leadership, the SAM coach that was in place for the principal supervisors was reassigned to another position. This led to principal supervisors having to change their SAM coach in the middle of the process or some not having a SAM coach at all. Two other principal supervisors who were involved in this process did not finish. One left in the middle of the year for a position in another county, and one was out for medical leave at the beginning of the process and did not return.

Recommendations

Based on the information that was gathered from this case study, the researcher has the following recommendations centered around the SAM professional development process, and how this can be more beneficial to principal supervisors to increase their time on instruction in the future. First, an entire district needs to believe through words and actions that the primary

role of principal supervisors is to focus on instructional leadership. In the current reality of most urban school districts in the United States, principal supervisors will have to be involved in some non-instructional actions. While this is inevitable, allowing the principal supervisors to have the resources in the form of personnel and alignment from other departments is critical. These individuals need to either work directly for the principal supervisors so that they can guide their support for schools or allow for regular check-ins where support personnel are accountable based on feedback from principal supervisors and principals.

A second recommendation is to ensure principal supervisors' time is spent at schools to the highest extent possible. District offices should ensure that principal supervisors are not meeting with district office personnel until the end of the school day. This directive coming from an executive staff member would ensure the time of principal supervisors is respected. It will also signal to all personnel that this is a priority for the district and schools are the most important entity in the district.

A third recommendation is to ensure that principal supervisors understand whether the priority is instruction or instructional leadership and to clearly define what instructional leadership is and the actions that support it. Having a common definition would allow individuals to work together on a common goal. Currently, this inconsistency leads one individual to think instructional leadership looks as if the priority is teaching principals how to unpack standards, while another individual is coaching and providing feedback.

A fourth recommendation is to ensure principal supervisors' actions are normed into best practices. This would allow for all principal supervisors to agree on what high leverage actions they should be engaged in and share while receiving feedback on best practices to maximize their ability in their work. Originally, the SAM professional development process was

intended for principals. As the instrument is beginning to be used by principal supervisors, more attention is needed around codes that are solely for principal supervisors. Once these codes are created, there needs to be a norming process in an effort to clarify what each code represents. Currently, there are opportunities for interpretation and ambiguity.

A final recommendation is to have consistent follow-up opportunities with principal supervisors around how they are using their time and how they know if they are making a difference. In this format, the chief of schools would hire a coach to work with principal supervisors on continuing to establish and norm their processes. Strategic types of coaching models should be considered so that principal supervisors are normed in their process. During this time, principal supervisors would have a chance to share their data with each other and truly be able to communicate what they are doing and why. This coach would also work with principal supervisors on individual topics such as coaching and providing feedback so that they can continue to strengthen their craft.

Future Research

Future research is needed for further exploration around increased instructional time and its impact on achievement. Principal supervisors are still attempting to determine what are the high leverage actions needed that will support increased achievement. Current research continues to discuss what can be done to increase the time principal supervisors spend on instruction. While this is needed, there is more research needed on what the instructional actions are that would allow for increased student achievement to occur. The researcher also believes that more research is required regarding the benefits of principal supervisors either working in alignment with individuals in other departments to support the overall work of

schools or leading the work in schools currently performed by other departments, assuming additional personnel resources would be provided.

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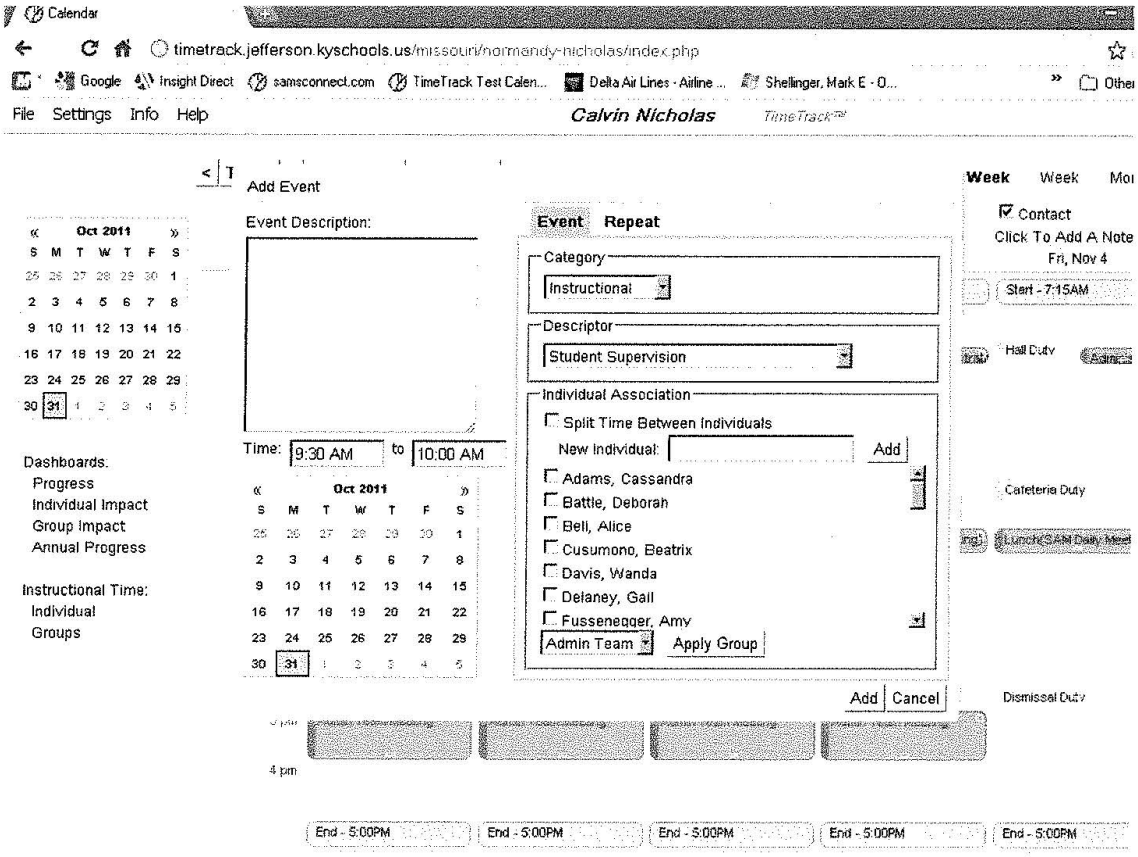
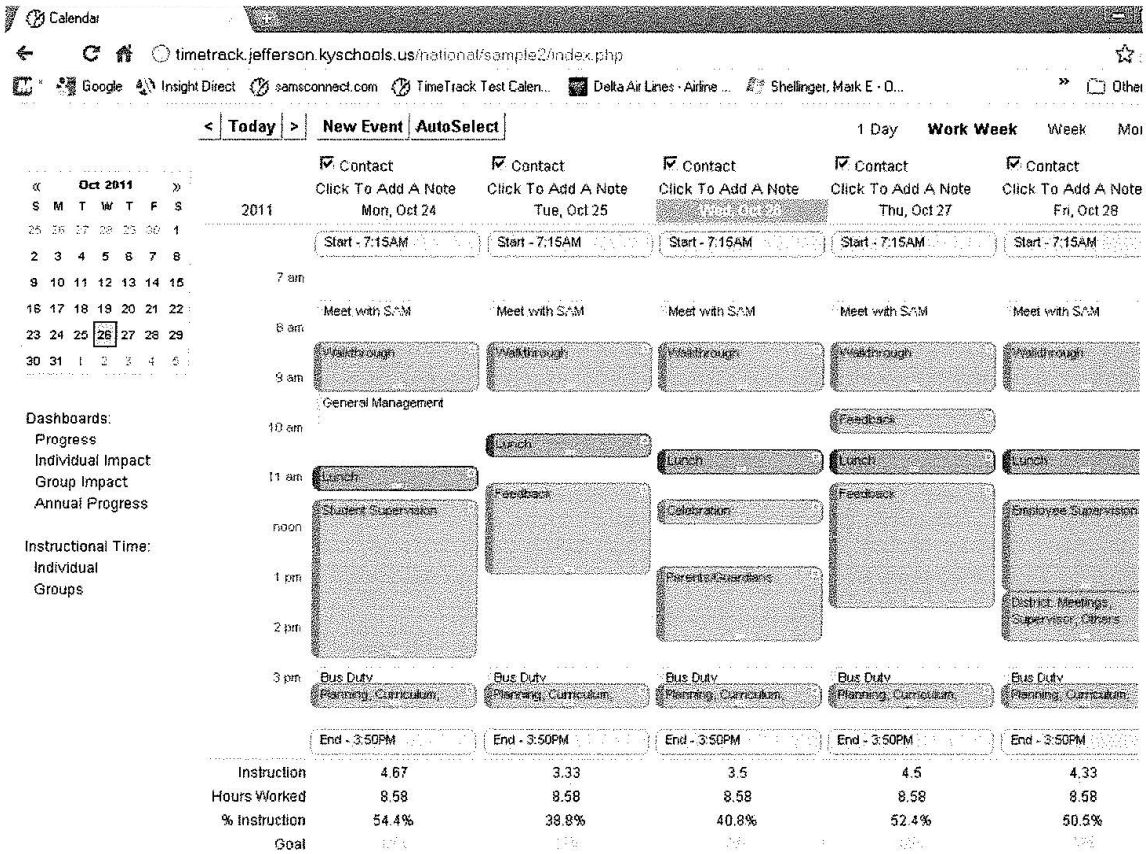
Appendix A: Sample of Time Track Calendar

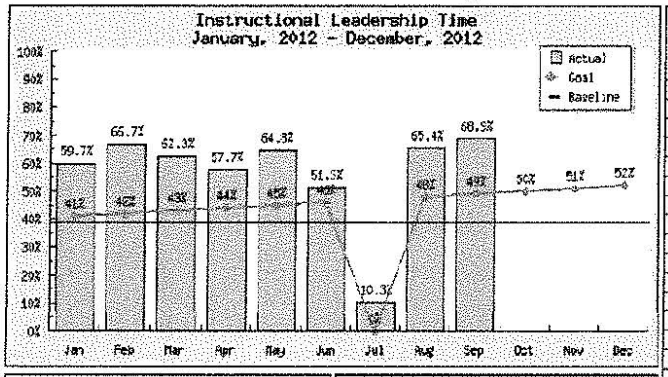


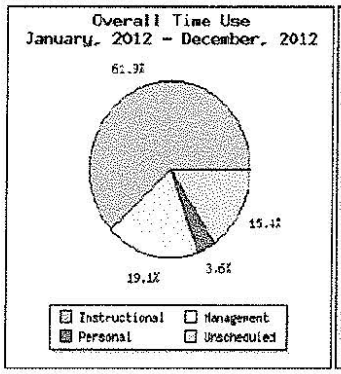
Appendix B: Sample of Time Track Calendar Input

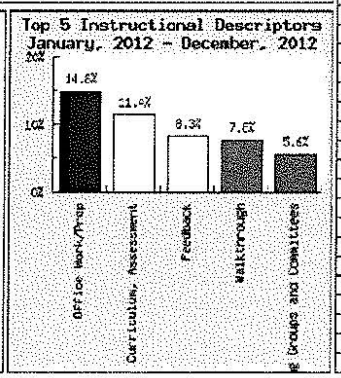


Appendix C: Sample of Time Track Calendar Summary

John LeGrand - Bain ES
Progress Dashboard







Yearly Report (2012-2012)	Total Hours Per Year	% of Year
Hours Worked	1150.08	
Instructional	711.8	61.89%
Management	219.23	19.05%
Personal	41.4	3.6%
Unscheduled	177.65	15.45%
Instructional		
Student Supervision	31.82	2.77%
Work With Student(s)	8.08	0.7%
Employee Supervision	6.27	0.54%
Office Work/Prep	170.58	14.83%
Walkthrough	89.32	7.77%
Feedback	95.35	8.29%
Parents/Guardians	10.65	0.93%
Decision Making Groups and Committees	64.52	5.61%
District Meetings, Supervisor, Others	34.15	2.97%
External: Officials, Others	9.13	0.79%
Modeling/Teaching	1.93	0.17%
Professional Development	2.5	0.22%
Observation	20.92	1.82%
Celebration	35.4	3.08%
Planning, Curriculum, Assessment	131.18	11.41%
Management		
General Management	97.65	8.49%
Student Supervision	80.4	6.99%
Student Discipline	6.03	0.53%
Employee Supervision	5.33	0.46%
Employee Discipline	0	0%
Office Work/Prep	4.05	0.35%
Building Management	8.47	0.74%
Parents/Guardians	4.58	0.4%
Decision Making Groups and Committees	5.5	0.48%
District Meetings, Supervisor, Others	2.09	0.18%
External: Officials, Others	4.92	0.43%
Celebration	0.17	0.01%

Appendix D: District Organizational Chart

Appendix E: Principal Supervisor Job Description

A principal supervisor in Baltimore City Public Schools is an Instructional Leadership Executive Director (ILED). The ILED has the day to day responsibilities of 10-14 schools and prioritizes the instruction and leadership of our schools. The goal of an ILED is to improve the overall performance of each school in the network. To do this, ILEDs must understand the school's performance, diagnose and prioritize areas for improvement, and then ultimately coach principals towards needed changes. Additionally, ILEDs must be district leaders. This description leads to the following four standards:

Standard 1 - Growing the principal's practice: ILEDs coach, support and direct principals to expand each principal's instructional leadership skills. Standard 2 – Growing the school's overall performance: ILEDs monitor and review the performance of individual schools to diagnose necessary areas of improvement, and simultaneous engage the principal for a better educational environment and improved student outcomes. Standard 3 – Growing the district's performance: based on the evidence across schools, ILEDs advocate for resources, changes and priorities that will directly lead to better supported schools and improved student learning. Standard 4 – Growing and modeling their own leadership: ILEDs model senior leadership qualities while engaging in their own development that ultimately lead to more effective principals.

While it is important to detail each standard into specific actions, there are two specific qualities that must live in each standard. First, the ILED must lead with an equity lens – both in terms of what occurs inside each school, but as importantly, how the district provides access to equitable resources. Second, an ILED must also engage in strategic and collaborative change through each standard of performance.

Standard 1
Growing the principal's practice. ILEDs coach, support and direct principals to expand each principal's instructional leadership skills.

While closely linked to the second standard (Growing the school's overall performance), this standard is focused on principal actions. It demands that ILEDs spend time monthly with each principal reviewing the instruction in each school, but the lens is on the principal actions – both the big picture view and the day-to-day actions. This standard can also expand to include non-instructional actions of the principal, but only as it serves to effectively lead a school so that instruction sits at the core.

Actions
ILEDs:
- The highest priority is for ILEDs to spend time in schools and classrooms. Therefore, they must regularly walk the school to observe instruction, understand the principal's view of the instruction and coach them on improvements moving forward.
- Review the supervision and supports for teachers with an emphasis on a teacher's individual performance and their work as team members.

Appendix E: Principal Supervisor Job Description (continued)

- Observe the instructional processes that principals have put in place to improve teacher effectiveness (collaborative planning, ILT meetings, principal-led learning walks, as examples) and then coach principals through collaborative changes to those systems.
- Coach principals on the climate, operational and community engagement aspects of school leadership so that students are emotionally, physically and academically safe to lead and thrive.
- Deliver professional development to the needs of the group of principals with which they engage, while also ensuring that each individual principal has a focused area for improvement.
- Provide written feedback aligned to school leader standards which ultimately lead to timely evaluations.
- Ensure that each school uses their resources (time, people, budget) in an equitable fashion such that student needs are met.

Standard 2

Growing the School's Overall Performance. ILEDs monitor and review the performance of individual schools to diagnose necessary areas of improvement, and simultaneously engage the principal for a better educational environment and improved student outcomes.

Standard 2 speaks directly to the overall goal of improving each school's performance. It is aligned with standard 1, as much of the work must involve the principal. This standard ensures that it is not enough to coach and improve the performance of the principal, but there is a standard of responsibility for a network of schools. This standard speaks to the overall growth of a school – quantitative and qualitative – and the actions that an ILED must take towards real improvement.

Actions

ILEDs:

- Completely understand the overall performance of each school through an analysis of summative, end-of-year data to determine the effectiveness of the school's leadership and to engage the principal on improvements moving forward.
- Similarly, completely understand the performance of each school throughout the year so that changes are made based on formative data and qualitative observations through continual engagement with the principal.
- As performance is analyzed and changes made, an emphasis on equity and children that need specific supports must be a part of the analysis, the plan and ultimately the actions of the school.
- While there could be many needed areas of improvement, the ILED coaches the principal to prioritize work streams that will meet student academic or social/emotional needs, along with staff instructional needs.
- Similarly, the ILED coaches the principal to determine how the changes will take place with staff, students and community so that it is a collaborative process that results in authentic engagement, trust and buy-in.

Appendix E: Principal Supervisor Job Description (continued)

Standard 3
Growing the District's Overall Performance. Based on evidence seen across schools, ILEDs advocate for resources, changes and prioritizes that will directly lead to better supported schools and improved student learning.

Standard 3 is an acknowledgment that the collective experience and analysis of schools both lives with ILEDs and should be a part of the decision-making process on the district level as changes are discussed and priorities created. Because an ILED knows their network schools well, but doesn't know other schools or grade bands, there is a level of advocacy, authority and humility that must be associated with recommendations of district priorities and changes. The ILED that is effective in this standard is adept at analyzing the needs of schools in total, presenting a compelling rationale and ultimately pushing the district towards improved student outcomes. While this aspect of an ILEDs leadership is important, it cannot take away from the first two standards.

Actions
ILEDs:
- Participate in a TAG structure where each ILED contributes to 1-3 divisions as a team member, thought partner and liaison to the larger ILED team.

- Balance the urgency they see in specific schools versus the needs of the entire district. This is done by specifically advocating for the needs of individual schools while simultaneously painting a picture of the needs across schools for central office leaders.
- Communicate with candor and humility to other district leaders how schools are experiencing district work and where themes have emerged – acknowledging both the areas where positive support has been experienced and the areas of needed improvements.
- As a district leader, lead staff, families and the community with a listening ear, honest dialogue and a belief in the district's vision.
- Communicate, explain and implement district priorities across all schools with fidelity and flexibility as warranted by school types and needs. At the same time, look for areas of innovation and implement nimbly.

Standard 4
Growing and Modeling Their Own Leadership. ILEDs model senior leadership qualities while engaging in their own development that ultimately lead to more effective principals.

As a leader of schools, many times the ILED is the representative of the district. This can be in teacher or faculty meetings, with parent groups, school leadership teams, with individual internal or external stakeholders and many other occasions. As such, Standard 4 recognizes that the ILED is often the face of the district and must model senior leadership qualities, as trust and credibility in the system is communicated through their actions. An ILED, working with the Chief of Schools, must also be developed as critical-thinking senior leaders for the district and instructional leaders of schools.

Appendix E: Principal Supervisor Job Description (continued)

Actions
ILEDs:
- Must sit comfortably in their authority, knowing when to coach, direct, act, observe and add value based on the specific situation.
- Face many urgent and emotional situations, and must lead with poise, compassion and decisiveness.
- Must connote and link their work, and that of their principals to the vision, goals and priorities of the district.
- Understand that their work cannot be done on an island and that any work that they lead has a collaborative aspect with teachers, principals, community and central office divisions.
- Seek feedback and take developmental actions based on that feedback from superiors, peers and those that they are leading.
- While leading a network of schools, understand the need to be one ILED band with one ILED sound so that a level of consistency is experienced across the district by principals.

Behaviors / Competencies of an Extraordinary ILED

The behaviors below are adapted from The Extraordinary Leader (Zenger & Folkman, 2009) and the CCSSO Model Principal Supervisor Professional Standards (2015, p.9) and can be represented through all four standards.

1. Character
   - Displays high integrity, ethics and honesty
   • Avoids saying one thing and doing another (i.e., walk the talk)
   • Follows through on promises and commitments
   • Acts consistently with their words
   • Models core values
   • Leads by example

2. Personal Capability
   - Technical and professional expertise
   • Are sought out by others for advice and counsel
   • Uses technical knowledge, especially around instruction, to help team members troubleshoot problems
   • Has credibility because of their in-depth knowledge of issues or problems
   -Solves problems and analyzes issues
   • Exercises a high level of professional judgment
   • Makes good decisions based on a mixture of analysis, wisdom, experience, and judgment
   • Courageous and perseveres in doing what is best for students
   -Innovates
   • Encourages alternative approaches and new ideas
   • Consistently generates creative, resourceful solutions to problems
   • Consistently challenges the usual approach of doing things and finds new and better ways to do the job

Appendix E: Principal Supervisor Job Description (continued)

- Creates a culture of learning that drives individual development
- Works to improve ideas rather than discouraging them
- Encourages people to find innovative ways to accomplish their goals

-Practices self-development (Constant Learner)
- Makes constructive efforts to change and improve based on feedback from others
- Seeks feedback from others to improve and develop themselves
- Constantly reflects and looks for development opportunities (they are excited to learn)

3. Getting Results

-Focuses on results
- Aggressively pursues all assignments and projects until completion
- Does everything possible to meet goals or deadlines
- Is growth oriented with all goals and student outcomes
- Has an equity lens on all student outcomes and results

-Establishes stretch goals
- Maintains high standards of performance
- Sets measurable standards of excellence for themselves and others
- Promotes a spirit of continuous improvement and growth

-Takes responsibility for outcomes/initiatives
- Takes personal responsibility for outcomes
- Can be counted on to follow through on commitments
- Goes above and beyond what is needed to be done without being told

4. Interpersonal Skills

-Communicates powerfully and broadly
- Skilled at communicating new insights
- Provides principals with a definite sense of direction and purpose
- Helps people understand how their work contributes to broader objectives

-Inspires and motivates others to high performance
- Energizes people to go the extra mile
- Has the ability to get people to stretch and reach goals beyond what they originally thought possible

Appendix E: Principal Supervisor Job Description (continued)

-Builds relationships
- Trusted by principals, ILED colleagues and central office leaders
- Balances concern for productivity and results with sensitivity for employees' needs/problems
- Approachable and friendly
- Handles difficult situations constructively and tactfully

-Develops others
- Are genuinely concerned about the development of others' careers
- Gives individuals an appropriate balance of positive and corrective performance feedback
- Give honest feedback
- Takes interest in the work of others
- Supports others' growth and success

-Collaborates and fosters teamwork
- Develops cooperative working relationships
- Promotes a spirit of cooperation with other members of the work group
- Ensures that those they work closest to also work well with other groups and Departments

Leading organizational change:
-Develops strategic perspective
- Knows how work relates to the organization's overall strategy
- Translates the organization's vision and objectives into challenging and meaningful goals for others
- Can take the long view; can be trusted to balance short-term and long-term organizational needs

-Champions change
- Becomes champions for projects or programs, presenting them so that others support
  them
- Are effective marketers for projects, programs, or products

-Connects the group to the outside world
- Demonstrates the ability to represent the work of principals to key groups outside the CLN
- Helps people understand how meeting student needs is central to the mission and goals of the organization
- Connects principals to other school leaders, schools and programs that provides different perspectives.

Appendix F: Instructional Learning Walk Feedback Tool

CLN 9 Learning Walk Template

School: _____ Date: _____ Time:_____ Course/Grade: _____ Teacher: _____

Lesson Plan Reflects		**Evident**	**Not Evident**	**Comments**
Standards based lesson objective tells students what they will be learning and what they will be able to do by the end of the lesson				
Teachers use every minute efficiently; opportunities and time are planned for students to grapple with complex texts and/or rigorous task				
All instructional tasks align to standards and /or curriculum				
Task(s) Reflects		**Evident**	**Not Evident**	**Comments**
Teacher Actions	**Student Actions**			
Instruction meets grade-level standards, is relevant to students' lives, and demands student voice and choice	Students' oral and written discourse is grounded in evidence			
The teacher encourages reasoning and problem solving by posing challenging questions and tasks that offer opportunities for productive struggle.	Students are engaged and persevere in solving questions and tasks in the face of initial difficulty.			
The Task attend to the text through reading, writing, and/or speaking for the majority of the lesson	Students tackle the task through reading, writing, and/or speaking about the text.			
The lesson assessment is aligned to grade level standard(s)	Students exhibits mastery of the grade level standard(s)			
Differentiation of Learners		**Evident**	**Not Evident**	
Accommodations: How are students with disabilities given access to the task(s)? – extended time, reduce workload, graphic organizers, UDL, chunking material				

Appendix G: Content Level Meeting Feedback Tool

School:_____ Content/Grade:_____

Elements	Description
Structure	❑ Team meets weekly for 70 minutes by grade/level content. ❑ Team consists of Academic Planning Facilitator and all teachers of content and/or grade level. ❑ Teachers have previewed the lesson prior to the meeting and done the pre-work needed. ❑ Teachers have utilized the city schools' PD platform prior to the meeting and have prepared for the meeting. ❑ Notes for each academic planning meeting shared with ILT members, ILT consists of representation from each academic planning team (Facilitator). ❑ Team has clear roles and responsibilities, agreements for interaction (norms), defined processes for accomplishing goals, SANE (Sign-in, Agenda, Notes, and Evaluation) documentation. ❑ Team reviews data based on module schedule and has a clearly defined data review protocol, and clearly defined action plans.
Content/ Instructional Development and Planning	❑ Teachers analyze the upcoming module and specific topics within the module by examining standards, lessons, and tasks.
Unit/ Lesson Planning	❑ Teachers develop unit plans and constantly reflect on the plan to adjust daily lesson plans and instruction. ❑ Teaching Best Practices are provided to teachers ❑ Teachers engage with experiences that provide support for meeting the needs of diverse learners (Social-Emotional Learning Competencies, Special Education, ESOL) ❑ Teachers engage in purposeful discussion and plan strategically around lesson plans to use during classroom instruction.
Data Analysis/ Looking at Student Work	❑ Team analyzes most-recent student performance data from diagnostic/progress monitoring, formative, and summative assessments to understand gaps in teaching and learning, ❑ Team plans for future instruction, intervention, and differentiation.

Appendix H: Principal Supervisor Meeting Agenda

Appendix E: Principal Supervisor Meeting Agenda		
Time	**Topic**	**Notes**
9:00-10:30am	Updates & Announcements	
10:30-11:00am	Blueprint ILS	
10:00-11:00am	School Leader MOY	
11:00-12:00pm	New Reads in Data Link Training	
12:00-1:00pm	Lunch	
1:00-2:00pm	Secondary Scheduling	
2:00-3:00pm	CAO time	
3:00-4:00pm	K-8 Scheduling	
4:00-5:00pm	Updates & Announcements Continued	

Updates / Discussions

- Meeting Norms
- SFC (School Family Council)
- SPP (School Performance Plan)
- Budget Adjustments & Enrollment Verification
- Blueprint Rubric Review
- Cumulative Folders
- Chief for Change visit
- Dec. 13 principal holiday party
- Wit and Wisdom Implementation
- Preparation for Thursday ESSA/MSDE Star Ratings meetings
- Principal Performance Review meetings

Appendix I: Network Support Team Meeting Agenda

Item	Topic	Notes
1	**Opening**	
2	**Manager of School Support Update**	
3	**Special Education Liaison Update**	
4	**Special Education Resource Specialist Update**	
5	**Academic Content Liaison (Math/ELA) Update**	
6	**Human Capital Update**	
7	**Finance Update**	
8	**Upcoming Items of Importance**	

Appendix J: Network Principal Meeting Agenda

Time	Topic	Notes
8:30-10:00	**Academic Planning Leadership Input (Math)**	
10:00-11:00	**Academic Planning Leadership Input (ELA)**	
11:00-12:00	**Data Discussion**	
12:00-1:00	**Special Education Leadership Input**	
	Upcoming Items	

Appendix K: Citywide Principal Meeting Agenda

Time	Session	Location
7:30 – 8:30am	Registration & Breakfast	Fitzgerald Atrium
8:30 – 10:00 am	Chief Opening Remarks	Fitzgerald Ballroom
10:00 – 10:15 am	*Break/Session shift*	*na*
10:15 – 11:20 pm	ELA Input for assigned CLNs	CLN Assigned Rooms
	Math Input for assigned CLNS	
11:20 – 11:30 am	*Break/Session shift*	
11:30 – 12:30	ELA Input for assigned CLNs	CLN Assigned Rooms
	Math Input for assigned CLNS	
12:30 – 1:30	Buffet lunch service	Restaurant
1:30– 3:30 pm	Principal & ILED Coaching session	CLN Session Rooms & Fitzgerald Ballrooms
	Academic Planning Facilitator Development Session	
3:30 – 3:40 pm	*Break/Session shift*	*na*
3:40 – 4:30 pm	CLN Team Session	CLN Session Rooms