THE MAINE PRINCIPAL STUDY

Change and Stability in School Leadership: 1997 – 2011

Gordon Donaldson
George Marnik

Graduate Program in Educational Leadership
College of Education and Human Development
University of Maine
Orono, Maine

In Collaboration with the

Maine Principals' Association

October, 2012

Table of Contents

Tables

Appendices

Introduction

Students, parents, school boards, and teachers across the state of Maine put a lot of stake in the principals of their schools. The professional knowledge and skills of these key educators can spell the difference between a school where everyone knows that "every child is learning" and one where many doubt the quality and focus of the educational program. Principals' ability to work well with a wide variety of people, their capacity to address with others the many educational challenges in a busy school, and their personal resilience are extremely important.

The Maine Principal Study (MPS) has documented since 1997 how Maine principals experience their work and feel about their effectiveness. The insights gleaned from it are, we think, critical to maintaining and growing the quality of school leadership in the state. As Maine and the nation have rallied to improve schools, concerns about school principal quality, recruitment, turnover, and work conditions have risen. Since the mid-1980s, we have witnessed a steady stream of articles and studies raising doubts that the principalship is in good health (Center for Public Education, 20012; Fenstermacher, 1999; Murphy, 1992). A recent study by the Wallace Foundation (Seashore-Louis, et al, 2010) noted the importance to a school's success of principal continuity, the principal's engagement in instructional supervision and improvement, and district support for principals' instructional leadership and professional learning.

In our 2005 report, we noted that Maine school boards, educator associations, and school administrators agree that the principal is a key player in the health and success of our schools. They agree, as well, that our state has yet to address directly the "school leadership crisis" highlighted in 1999 at a Select Seminar conducted by the Maine Leadership Consortium.

Indeed, as performance demands on Maine schools, educators, and communities have continued to rise, the challenges detailed in two 1998 studies on the principalship (Educational Research Service, 1998; Keller, 1998) and reinforced by our three earlier studies of Maine principals have grown steeper. These, in brief, are: 1) attracting the best educators to the principalship; 2) supporting them professionally so that the management requirements of running the school do not eclipse the leadership of top-notch learning programs for children and teachers; and 3) making this work manageable and personally rewarding – not at the cost of personal commitments and priorities.

A team from the University of Maine led by Gordon Donaldson has, since 1997, sought to provide a research base to inform the state's efforts to strengthen school leadership. Following the first administration of the Maine Principal Survey to all principals and assistant principals by Donaldson and Charles Hausman in 1997, the MPS was again administered by Donaldson, Don Buckingham and Ted Coladarci in 2001; and again by Donaldson, Buckingham, and George Marnik in 2005. These earlier studies were reported through publications (Donaldson & Hausman, 1998; 1999; Hausman et al., 2002; Donaldson, Buckingham, and Coladarci, 2003; Donaldson, Buckingham, and Marnik, 2005) and presentations in Maine and to national audiences.

This monograph describes the results of the 2011 survey and compares the profile of Maine principals that emerges with the 1997, 2001, and 2005 profiles. The trend data reported here can provide a powerful basis for districts, professional groups, and policy makers to use in planning the improvement of conditions for leadership in Maine schools.

For more detailed data or to share observations and comments, readers are encouraged to contact the authors at (gordon.donaldson@umit.maine.edu) or george.marnik@umit.maine.edu.

The Survey

The 2011 Maine Principal Study survey (see Appendix A) differed from previous surveys in two respects: it was distributed electronically; and several items were dropped because they had not yielded particularly useful information during previous administrations. In the past, cover letters and surveys had been mailed to school leaders throughout the state; data were hand entered or scanned, then analyzed with statistical software. In 2011, electronic distribution through the Maine Principals' Association (MPA) membership list permitted a higher rate of return, more convenient data analysis, and lower cost.   The research team used "Qualtrics", a web-based survey software available for use by all University of Maine faculty, students and staff, for this iteration of the survey.

In November 2011 emails were sent to PK-12 school principals and assistant principals throughout the state asking them to participate in the survey and linking them to the designated web site where it could be taken. Two departures from the past were implemented at this point. First, the survey timeframe was shifted to late fall from the springtime in a further attempt to increase the rate of participation. Second, the Maine Principals Association agreed to support this effort by electronically distributing the emails to all of their membership and encouraging their support of this initiative.

Of the 718 notices about the survey emailed to MPA members, 479 were returned and were usable in the final study, a response rate of 67%. This rate of completion is in comparison

to 43% in 2005, 53% in 2001 and 63% in 1997. Of these respondents, 24% were assistant principals, 6% teaching principals and 70% supervising principals. By our calculations these 347 principals and teaching principals represent 60% of the total population of principals and assistant principals on the Maine Department of Education roster for the year. These figures also indicate a higher rate of participation compared to those in our 2005 study (46%). With these increases over past participation rates, the research team believes an even more valid view of leadership in Maine schools is provided.

The researchers compared the sample of responding principals with the state's principal population and found that it approximately matches the statewide distribution of principals with respect to gender, length of tenure, education level and several attributes of the schools they served, including size, rurality, and percentage of students eligible for free/reduced lunch. Although there is reason to see the sample as representative of the whole population, readers need to be cautious about claims made on the basis of these findings. It is likely that school leaders who did not respond differed in experience, attitude, and demographic characteristics from those who did in some respects. We conjecture, for example, that principals who felt most burdened by their work in November 2011 and who were less interested in the goals of the survey were less likely to have responded.

The 2011 Maine Principal Study survey itself was identical to the 2005 survey with two exceptions. In 2005 and before, we asked principals to rate not only how frequently they were involved in a range of typical principal activities, but also the "impact" each activity had on their success as a principal. In the 2011 survey, we dropped the "impact" dimension of this item. See Table 5. Beyond that, we removed several items that in the past yielded results quite similar to closely-related items in the "activity" section (E) and the "worklife" section (F).

Maine Principal Study 2011
Executive Summary
Observations About Maine Principals: 1997 – 2011

Based on the responses of 479 Maine principals (67% return rate) to the 2011 Maine Principal Study survey:

❖ In comparison to 1997, 2001, and 2005, the typical Maine principal:

  o is slightly younger and has two years' less experience in administration;

  o is a woman (53% of those who responded);

  o is supervising a larger school (enrolling 69 more students for an average size of 407) and a significantly larger staff (53) than before;

  o is supervising a school where more students are eligible for Free or Reduced-price Lunch (54% reported over 50% of their students qualify)

❖ Maine principals devote on average 70 hours per week to their work, up from 58 hours in 2005 and the highest work-hours recorded in this study. Principals average 32 hours per week on the job during the summer. 39% "often wonder if the long hours are worth it."

❖ Principals' activity patterns continue to be characterized by many diverse tasks. They are most engaged in "student management" and "personnel management" activities; they devote least time to "instructional leadership" and "resource management" activities.

❖ The vast majority – 80% to 95% -- of Maine principals continue to find their work rewarding, energizing, and enjoyable.

❖ Similar majorities believe they are "making a positive difference for students at my school" and that "I am making progress at my school."

❖ 83% report that their work is "stressful"; 72% say their work involves conflict and disagreement; and 56% indicate that their workload makes it difficult to give their "best attention to tasks".

❖ 65% continue to report that they struggle to balance job and family/personal life; 56% say the job "intrudes too much on my personal life"; 69% report that "because of the long hours, I have little time left for myself."

❖ But the percentages reported in the last two bullets are lower than in the past; principals seem to now expect the long hours and high demands of the job.

❖ 14 % say, if they had the choice to make again, they would "definitely not" or "probably not" become a principal; 15% were "unsure". This is a consistent finding over 14 years.

❖ Principals continue to view the people closest to them – spouse/significant other, secretaries, other principals, and teachers – as most helpful to them in their work. Least helpful – and sometimes "obstacles" – were the Maine Department of Education, the school board, and parents.

❖ In general, they feel that parents and community have positive views of their schools.

❖ As in the past, it appears that principals' sense of reward from and energy for the job:
  o is inversely related to their feelings of stress and overload;

  o is directly related to their perception that the community, district, and staff are in consensus about the positive direction of their school.

❖ As in the past, it appears that their sense of effectiveness as principals:

  o is directly related to their perception of community, district, and staff consensus about school goals; and,

  o is inversely related to the "unpredictability" of the environment around them and the amount of conflict and challenge they experience.

Basic Descriptors: Maine Principals in 2011

Principals are younger and more are women than in the past.

The number of women in the Maine principalship appears to be continuing to grow. For the first time, a majority of respondents to the MPS survey were women. (See Table 1.) The 2011 respondents include, once again, a higher percentage of women (53%) than did the 2005 group (46.5%), the 2001 group (43.5%) and the 1997 group (41%). Correspondingly the number of male principals who responded to the survey has declined since 1997 from 59% to 47%.

Principals in Maine schools are somewhat younger than in the past, reflecting the retirement of baby-boomer generation leaders in recent years. Between 1997 and 2005, the average age of Maine principals rose. In 2011, the number of principals 51 and over decreased for the first time since 1997. In 2005, 59.2% of those surveyed fell into this age range while in 2011 only 51% were over age 50. However, the percentage of principals 41-50 years of age increased from 25.6% in 2005 to 32% in 2011. This "bulge" of principals in their forties characterizes the current cohort in the state. The percentage of Maine principals under 41 is only slightly larger than it was in 2005 (17% vs. 15%).

Most Maine principals are married or living with a significant other. This percentage has actually increased since 2005 rising from 83.7% that year to 87% in 2011. They also share their homes with children, parents, others, or some combination of these.
Since 2005 the numbers of responding principals who live in the district in which they work has increased (38.4% to 46%) which is the highest percentage since this question was first asked in 2001.

Table 1.
Description of Respondents

	1997			2001			2005			2011	
	n	*%*		*n*	*%*		*n*	*%*		*n*	*%*
Gender											
Female	177	41		158	43.5		145	46.5		225	53
Male	255	59		205	56.5		167	53.5		201	47
Age											
21-30	2	0.5		3	0.8		4	1.3		4	1
31-40	38	8.8		37	10.2		43	13.9		69	16
41-50	231	53.5		140	38.6		79	25.6		136	32
51 and over	161	37.3		183	50.4		183	59.2		218	51
Family condition											
Married, significant other	NA	86		313	86.2		262	83.7		370	87
Single, involved	NA	5		22	6.1		20	6.4		27	6
Single, uninvolved	NA	9		24	6.6		31	9.9		27	6
Dependents living at home											
1 or more children	NA	62		NA	55.4		NA	57.7		NA	NA
1 or more parents	NA	15		NA	14.3		NA	17.6		NA	NA
1 or more others	NA	14		NA	8.2		NA	11.0		NA	NA
Residence											
In district	NA	NA		160	44.1		121	38.4		194	46
Out of district	NA	NA		203	55.9		194	61.6		232	54

Experienced, but Continuing High Rates of Turnover Despite Some Improving Trends

In past MPS reports, we have been concerned with high rates of turnover. The typical Maine principal had about 13 years of teaching experience and 12 years of administrative experience; he or she had served in his or her current position for about 7 years. About one third of all principals, however, changed jobs every two years. Between 2005 and 2011, the retirement of an aging cohort of principals left the profession in 2011 with principals who, on average, had two fewer years of administrative experience than the profession displayed in 2005. (See Table 2.) 2011 principals, however, had served their current schools for an average of about 7 years – just as 2005 principals had.

To get a better grasp of longevity/turnover patterns, Table 2 contrasts principals by different lengths of tenure in administration and in their current positions. More principals in 2011 (10.5%) were in their first two years of administrative work than had been the case since 1997. The percentage of principals with 10 years or more in the profession, however, stood at 34%, just where it was in 2005.

Table 2.
Length of Tenure (Percentages)

Number of Years	1997 in Current Position		2001 in Admin	2001 in Current Position		# of Years	2005 in Admin	2005 in Current Position		2011 in Admin	2011 in Current Position
1 or fewer	17.4		2.8	16.0			5.0	17.2		7.0	15.4
2 or fewer	34.3		10.7	30.9			7.6	30.3		10.5	23.3
5 or fewer	60.4		27.5	56.5			24.8	55.4		26.7	49.5
7 or fewer	70.5		34.7	66.7			36.4	68.5		38.7	65.8
10 or fewer	79.8		44.6	77.7			50.3	77.7		54.7	80.3
More than 10	20.2		55.4	22.3		11-20	34.1	17.5		33.6	16.3
More than 15	9.5		37.5	11.3		21-30	12.0	3.5		9.9	3.3
						31-40	3.3	1.3		1.8	0.2
						41-50	0.3			0.0	0.0
Mean # Yrs:	**8.1**		**12.3**	**6.8**			**12.2**	**6.9**		**10.9**	**6.9**

The 2011 data suggest that the pattern of frequent turnover in some schools may be slowing. In 1997, 60% of principals had been in their current positions for 5 years or less, with 34% for 2 years or less. By 2005, this pattern had improved slightly to 55% and 30%. Since then, however, continuity has improved considerably: in 2011, 49% had less than 5 years' tenure in their current jobs and only 23% had fewer than 2 years. Maine schools have less experienced administrators, in general, but more schools have principals who are staying longer in the jobs they have. This bodes well for the continuity of leadership and programs.

Larger Schools, Poorer Children, and Wider Supervisory Responsibilities

More Maine principals are now leading and supervising larger student bodies and larger staffs than in the recent past. The average enrollment of a principal's school in 2011 stood at 407, an increase of 69 students over the average in 2005. (See Table 3.) Fewer 2011 principals supervised smaller schools; and 10% were assigned to multiple small schools (a common efficiency measure in the recent economic and enrollment downturns). More Maine principals served as principals of large schools (or, again, multiple mid-sized schools) than at any point since 1997: 16.6% of our sample administered schools serving more than 650 students.

As we would expect, this trend has led to broader and more diverse staff supervision responsibilities for Maine principals. The average number of professional staff a principal supervised in 2011 was 35.8, an increase of 5 staff since 2005 and *double the number of professional staff* a Maine principal supervised in 1997. Included in these numbers were teachers, educational technicians, and a variety of instructional specialists. By contrast, principals reported supervising about the same number of support staff – 16.9 – as they did in 2005 and 2001. The bottom line is, however, that Maine principals oversee an average of 53 personnel, the highest supervisory load recorded in the past 14 years.

2011 returns reveal a stunning shift in the proportion of students eligible for Free or Reduced-Price Lunch (FRL). Over 85% of principals reported that more than 25% of their students were FRL eligible, up from 70% in 1997. But fully 54% reported that over 50% of their students were FRL-eligible. By contrast only 30% of principals said they served so many economically-pressed children in 1997, 2001, and 2005.

Table 3.
Supervisory Responsibilities

	1997	2001	2005	2011
Mean enrollment	355	371	338	407
% of principals in schools				
Under 200	26.3	27	28.3	18.9
Under 300	45.8	50	55.3	44.0
Under 450	72.8	74	77.8	68.2
Under 650	88.7	87	89.4	83.4
% of principals in schools with				
< 25% FRL eligible	28.5	29	22.4	14.5
< 50% FRL eligible	69.6	77	70	45.7
% of principals in schools				
Serving grades 9-12	24.1	24	22.7	NA
Serving only grades 9-12	18.6	18	18	NA
Supervisory load (mean)				
Professional staff	18	33	31	35.8
Support staff	11	17	16	16.9
% of principals supervising				
< 24 staff	22.7	21	17.2	13.4
< 44 staff	63.6	50	60.8	45.8
> 44 staff	36.4	50	39.2	54.2
Note. FRL = free or reduced lunch.				

Changing Administrative Structures

School District Reorganization, enacted in 2007, has placed more Maine principals in larger administrative structures than before. Only 23% of 2011 principals reported working in School Administrative Districts (SADs), down from 49% in 2005. In similar trends, principals in School Unions decreased from 18% to 3%; in Municipal districts, from 30% to 16%; and in Community School Districts (CSDs), from 3.2% to 2%. Thirty-eight percent (38%) of 2011 principals now work in Regional School Units (RSUs); and 18% work in Alternative Organizational Structures (AOSs). Given the more centralized structure and greater size of

13

SADs and RSUs, it is notable that now 61% of Maine principals are employed in these types of district, a considerable increase over the 49% working in SADs in 2005. In addition to changes in working conditions for some of these principals, current disagreement about the effectiveness of some of these units is making the work of some principals politically and professionally challenging.

Academic credentials of school leaders remain relatively unchanged

The vast majority of principals and assistant principals (95%) hold a graduate degree. This number is actually down slightly from 97.5% in 2005. 70% of respondents are at the Masters and Masters plus credit level, which are also down slightly from 72.4%. The number of principals at the CAS level has held steady at 22%. Finally, 3 % of principals responding to the survey hold Doctorate degrees, a very slight decrease of .5% from the previous survey. 5% of current principals hold a Bachelor's degree plus additional credits.

What Principals Say Contributes to Success

Principals were asked to assess the degree to which a variety of activities and experiences contributed to their success as a principal. Their "experience as a teacher", "graduate training in educational leadership" and "attending professional development conferences and seminars" rated the highest (mean scores indicate that these contribute "substantially" or "a great deal" to their success). On the other hand, "professional reading", "participation in sustained programs" and "internships" rated the lowest mean scores, contributing "very little" or "some" to their success. These two clusters of results remain unchanged since 2005.

School leaders were also asked to assess the degree to which they are engaged in professional development activities in their schools (see Table 6). In all four areas (professional reading, in-service activities, meetings and courses, consulting with colleagues) within this cluster of Principal Activity mean scores have declined since 1997. In total the mean score has declined from 2.85 to 2.61 over the years.

However, when one examines the major clusters of principal activities (See Table 6.), involvement in professional development rises to the mid-point of the seven activity clusters. Since the Principals Study was first conducted in 1997, this is the highest level of involvement and engagement identified by principals.

How Helpful to Principals are the People and Agencies Around Them?

The Maine Principal Study tracks principals' perceptions of the helpfulness of the many people and agencies with whom they work. (See Table 4.) Over the 14 years of the study, the principals' reports of "helpfulness" vs. "unhelpfulness" have been remarkably consistent. In 2011 as in the past, Maine principals feel that secretaries and their spouses/significant others offer "the most sustained help to me" in their work; 94% of responding principals saw secretaries as positive influencers and 85% regard their spouse/significant other that way. Next to them, 82% of principals named "teachers in my school" and 77% viewed "other principals in my school" as important sources of assistance to them. Seventy-seven percent (77%) of principals, interestingly, regard "other principals outside my school" and their district administrative team as important positive forces in their own work. These results point to the importance to principals of the team of people surrounding them at school, of an understanding

partner at home, and of strong professional relationships with principals in other districts and schools.

In general, Maine principals saw the superintendent and central office personnel, guidance counselors, maintenance staff, and the Maine Principals' Association as "often helpful when I needed it".

Table 4.
Perceptions of Sources of Help (Means Scores)

	1997 (1-4 scale)	2001 (1-5 scale)	2005 (1-5 scale)	2011 (1-5 scale)
Source				
Secretaries	1.40	1.47	1.56	1.51
Spouse, significant other	1.65	1.64	1.71	1.65
Principal(s) outside my school	2.16	2.09	2.00	2.05
District Administrative Team	N/A	N/A	2.00	2.09
Teachers in my school	2.09	2.01	2.08	2.05
Principal(s) in my school/district (2005)	2.10	2.49	2.16	2.05
Superintendent, central office	2.26	2.18	2.20	2.21
Guidance counselors	2.15	2.15	2.26	2.18
Maintenance staff	2.21	2.20	2.27	2.22
Maine Principals' Association	2.43	2.41	2.42	2.27
Universities, professors	2.57	2.58	2.57	2.53
Parents of children in my school	2.62	2.49	2.71	2.65
Local school board	2.77	2.72	2.74	2.87
Maine Dept. of Education	N/A	N/A	3.08	3.04

Note: *1997 used a 4-point scale: 1 = provide sustained help to me; 2 = often been helpful when I needed it; 3 = negligible influence on my work; 4 = made my work more difficult.
In 2001, 2005, and 2011 used a five point scale 1 = provided sustained help to me; 2 = often been helpful when I needed it; 3 = negligible influence on my work; 4 = sometimes makes my work more difficult; 5 = has been a regular obstacle for me.

Principals also had the opportunity to rate unhelpful influencers. It is noteworthy that, on average, none of the people or agencies listed in Table 4 was rated overall as unhelpful.

(The lowest rating was for the Maine Department of Education, standing at "3" or "had negligible influence on my work".) Roughly a quarter of Maine principals, however, identified the MDOE, the School Board, and parents as a "regular obstacle" or as an influence that "sometimes makes my work more difficult".

Between 44 and 55% of principals reported the following groups had "negligible influence on my work": university professors (54.5%); the Maine Department of Education (48.9%); the school board (43.7%). Although 36.9% viewed the Maine Principals' Association this way, more principals found the MPA to be helpful in 2011 than had in 2005. By contrast, fewer saw their school boards as helpful in 2011. The challenge for these groups and agencies is to find new ways to offer assistance to principals as they sometimes struggle to lead our schools. This challenge seems particularly vital for school boards and the MDOE, insofar as significant numbers of principals also see them as obstacles to their success.

Professional Work Patterns

Time: Longer Hours at School

In 1997, the average Maine principal reported spending 56 hours per week at work and 24 hours with family. In both 2001 and 2005, the average work hours had risen slightly to 58 and hours with family had increased to 28. In 2011, however, Maine principals reported spending an average of 70 hours "in your role as principal" during the school year, 32 hours per week during the summer, and 31 hours per week with family.

In each of the three previous survey years, over 96% of responding principals reported spending more than 40 hours per week at work and over 73% reported spending more than 50 hours per week. Although we do not have comparable data in 2011, it seems evident from the much higher weekly average that more principals are spending upwards of 60 hours per week

than in the past. Contributing to this trend are the facts that Maine principals are supervising larger schools, more schools, larger staffs, and ever-increasing curricular, co-curricular, and school reform agendas.

Given this huge investment of time at work and with family, it is not surprising the Maine principals report consistently low involvement – between 0 and 1 hour per week -- in volunteer work, civic organizations, religious activities or "other employment".   They report, on average, spending from 1 to 3 hours per week "exercising/caring for your health" and in "leisure/hobbies".   These reflect slight improvement over past years.

Activities: What Do Principals Do All Day?

What does the typical Maine principal do in her 70 hours at work each week? The Maine Principal Survey has tracked since 1997 the patterns in Maine principals' activities. We listed 31 common principal activities and asked Maine principals to rate how often they "engaged" in each one (from 1 = rarely to 4 = very often). We also categorized the activities into activity clusters often used in the principalship literature, such as "instructional leadership," "interactions with educational hierarchy," and "professional development."   In Table 5, we present a summary of the responses of the principals using these activity clusters. (Past statistical analysis has indicated that these clusters moderately cohere as composite variables.)

As in the past, Maine principals in 2011 were engaged in many, diverse activities. Of the 31 activities, principals reported being engaged in 13 "often" or "very often" (mean scores above 2.90). These activities ranged from student supervision, consultations with teachers and

parents, teacher evaluation, responding to community inquiries, and "initiating new programs". No activity on the list of 31 was rated below "occasionally" by the respondents as a whole.

In 2011, principals reported spending most time in Personnel Management and Student Management activities. These two clusters cover direct supervision of students, conferring about individual students, supervising student events, supervising and evaluating staff, conducting meetings, "coordinating staff efforts on a daily basis", and the like. Over the four administrations of the survey, these two clusters have consistently been high-involvement activities for Maine principals. As in 2001 and 2005, Public Relations (responding to parents; meeting with community groups) was also a high-involvement activity for many principals in 2011.

These reinforce the image of the Maine principalship as a "people-first" profession, one in which principals are constantly responding to others, consulting with others, supervising, and organizing the activities of others. Between 36 and 43% of principals reported that they were "nearly always" engaged in supervising and evaluating teachers, responding to the needs of teachers, consulting with teachers about specific students, responding to parent and community inquiries, and talking with parents about specific issues their children face. Another 40 to 50% of principals indicated they were engaged in these five activities "frequently".

2011 results show that two other activity clusters, Professional Development and Interactions with the Educational Hierarchy, draw less of Maine principals' time and energy than do the top three. Principals' interactions with the Educational Hierarchy (consulting with superiors; administrative team meetings; dealing with the state department) dropped significantly from 2005 and earlier, suggesting that some principals are more isolated and/or

more autonomous than in the recent past. The frequency of engagement in Professional Development activities has also declined over the 14 years of the study.

Finally, principals are least engaged in Resource Management and in Instructional Leadership, but only slightly less so than in Professional Development and Interactions with the Educational Hierarchy. The time they devote to budget preparation and monitoring finances has dropped considerably since 2005. Instructional Leadership (initiating programs, evaluating curriculum, collecting student data, attending school improvement workshops) has consistently been one of the "least involved" activity clusters for Maine principals. Particularly now that Maine principals are in charge of larger schools and staffs, Student Management, Personnel Management, and Public Relations continue to upstage this critical leadership component of the principalship.

In general, the 2011 engagement levels of principals were lower than in 2005, 2001, and 1997. Mean scores for some activities – district administrative team meetings, budget preparation, and scheduling classes and other instructional events, for example – were significantly lower than in earlier years. This may be the result of our changing the survey to ask about "engagement" rather than "involvement", as we did in the three earlier administrations.

Table 5
Patterns of Principal Activity (Mean scores)

	1997		2001		2005		2011
	Involve-ment		**Involve-ment**		**Involve-ment**		**Engage-ment**
Student Management	**3.13**		**3.02**		**2.95**		**2.91**
Direct supervision of students	3.22		2.81		2.82		2.94
Organizing & supervising co-curricular activities	NA		2.38		2.24		2.16
Contact with parent regarding child	3.48		3.39		3.28		3.15
Consulting with teachers about students	3.52		NA		NA		3.29
Special student issues (PET, G & T, etc.)	3.38		3.21		3.15		3.01
Personnel Management	**3.07**		**3.16**		**3.11**		**2.97**
Supervision/evaluation of teachers	3.59		3.47		3.49		3.29
Supervision/evaluation of support personnel	2.72		2.72		2.89		2.74
Scheduling classes and other instructional events	3.05		3.21		3.23		2.59
Running faculty meetings	3.68		3.58		3.54		3.06
Responding to the needs of teachers	3.65		3.66		3.63		3.35
Coordinating staff efforts on a daily basis	3.18		3.07		2.99		2.80
Interactions with Education Hierarchy	**3.02**		**2.99**		**2.96**		**2.60**
District administrative team meetings	3.33		3.48		3.48		2.90
Consulting with superiors /*Responding to central office needs (2011)	2.98		2.89		2.80		2.59*
Dealing with state/community agencies	2.27		2.20		2.18		2.17
Meeting with school board	3.21		3.40		3.23		NA
Completing required reports	NA		3.14		3.11		2.75
Resource Management	**2.95**		**2.73**		**2.84**		**2.56**
Budget preparation	3.55		3.44		3.30		2.74
Purchasing/accounting/*Super-vising accounts/fin.	2.86		2..7		NA		2.39*
Monitoring condition of the building & grounds	3.19		2.94		2.99		2.55

Public Relations	**2.98**	**3.06**	**2.96**	**2.82**
Responding to parent/community inquiries	3.43	3.42	3.25	3.27
Meeting [initiating contact] with parent/citizen groups	2.70	2.63	2.61	2.49
Preparing written information about the school and events	3.24	3.14	3.01	2.69
Instructional Leadership	**2.87**	**2.76**	**2.72**	**2.55**
Curriculum development activities/* initiating new programs (e.g., PBIS; RTI)	3.09	3.14	3.15	3.06*
Curriculum evaluation activities	2.63	2.86	2.85	2.54
Direct involvement in teaching	NA	2.21	2.18	2.03
Collecting and using student assessment data	NA	2.84	2.94	2.99
Attending meetings/workshops on school improvement	NA	2.71	2.75	2.13
Professional Development	**2.85**	**2.83**	**2.75**	**2.61**
Professional reading	2.86	2.81	2.88	2.7
Organizing in-service for instructional personnel	2.89	2.91	2.78	2.78
Meeting/courses for professional growth	2.79	2.77	2.69	2.48
Consulting with colleagues on issues I face	2.64	NA	NA	2.49

Note. Each mean is based on a scale ranging from 1 to 4. For the Involvement/Engagement scale: 1 = rarely, 2 = occasionally, 3 = often, 4 = very often. Bracketed language reflects slight variation in wording between surveys.

How Do Principals Experience Their Work?

Great Rewards but Great Stress as Well

Since 1997, the Maine Principal Study has tracked principals' professional and personal

reactions to the work they do. Do they find the work rewarding? Do they feel successful and,

if so, at what aspects of the job? Are there aspects of the work that detract from their

effectiveness? And how does leadership of a school affect their personal lives and their

commitment to continuing as principal?

Respondents indicated strong agreement, agreement, disagreement, or strong

disagreement with 35 statements about principal work and work conditions. For discussion

purposes, we organized the 35 statements into five clusters based on the following themes:

Rewards of the Work; Professional and Personal Efficacy; School Context Enhancers; School

Context Detractors; and Demands of the Work.

Table 6 reports the 2011 data and compares them to previous survey administrations. In

2011, as in the past, the vast majority of Maine principals – between 70 and 95% -- found their

work enjoyable, energizing, and rewarding; they expressed little interest in going back to

teaching or in leaving their current principalship. (See Cluster I.) Between 80 and 100% of

principals believed they were making "a positive difference for students" and expressed

confidence in their ability to lead. (See Cluster II.) Between 70 and 90% of the principals

viewed their school environments as conducive to success; they felt their communities took

pride in the school, saw parents as supportive, and thought there was "widespread agreement"

about goals and a vision for the school. (See Cluster III.) Although the mean scores on some

of these items were slightly lower than in the past, they present a strong picture of Maine

principals as satisfied and efficacious professionals.

As in the past, however, these positive qualities of the work coexist with some clear and

persistent challenges for principals. Cluster IV, School Context Detractors, reflects the

ongoing burdens for 50 to 70% of Maine principals of keeping "pressure on faculty and staff to

improve", of opposition in the community, and of a workload that undercuts their ability to

"give my best attention to tasks".   Seventy-two percent (72%) disagreed that they "encounter

little disagreement and conflict in my work." The work, as well, takes a clear toll on principals' personal lives. Cluster V, The Demands of the Work, indicates that 83% of Maine principals find their jobs "stressful"; as in 2005, half report that "the demands of my job are wearing me out." Between 50 and 70% find they are "often in situations that are challenging for me", that they have "little time for myself" and that the job "intrudes too much on my personal life". Seventy percent (70%), nevertheless, report that the "stress and challenges" are "well worth it."

In 2011, then, the worklives of most Maine principals continued to be characterized both by rewards and persisting personal and professional challenges. The work is clearly demanding in an interpersonal sense; principals face conflict with and among adults and, as is clear from Table 5, are constantly on call to solve others' problems. The fact that these principals feel they are succeeding suggests that, for many at least, they have adequate support, technical assistance, and skill to handle the continuous flow of problems. As noted earlier, most principals rely heavily on secretaries, spouses and significant others, fellow principals, and teachers in their schools in these respects.

But not all Maine principals in 2011 felt so bullish about their work and their success. Twenty-nine percent (29%) of respondents answered "unsure", "probably not" or "definitely not" to the question, "If you had to do it all over again would you still choose to become a principal?"   For many of these principals, the "detractors" of the job are more influential than the "rewards"; the stress, the conflict, the long hours, and the high-energy requirements of school leadership are quite possibly debilitating. We wonder, too, how many of these principals were among the 23% who believe that "the hours student spend at school have little influence compared to their home environments." Ensuring that every Maine school is led by a

principal for whom "rewards" overshadow "detractors" must be a prime concern of

superintendents, school boards, the Department of Education, and the profession itself. The

data from other sections of this report may be helpful in the effort to make every Maine

principal succeed.

Table 6.
Maine Principals' Worklife Assessment: 1997, 2001, 2005, 2011

	1997 Mean Scores	2001 Mean Scores	2005 Mean Scores	% Strongly Agree & Agree	2011 Mean Scores	% Strongly Agree & Agree
CLUSTER I Rewards of the Work						
I enjoy being a principal.	3.53	3.48	3.44	96%	3.37	94.5%
My work is energizing and rewarding.	3.16	3.16	3.18	90%	3.14	90%
I would like to be a principal at this school for many years.	2.93	2.99	2.97	75%	2.98	77%
I have as much enthusiasm as I did when I first became a principal.	2.94	2.92	2.85	68%	2.84	72%
If I could get a higher paying job, I would leave the principalship in a minute.	1.87	2.05	2.07	22%	2.03	21%
I often consider becoming a teacher again.	2.12	2.08	2.02	25%	2.06	25%
CLUSTER II Professional and Personal Efficacy						
I am making a positive difference for students at this school.	3.42	3.49	3.37	98%	3.31	99.5%
I am confident in my ability to be an effective school leader.	3.36	3.37	3.30	96%	3.23	96.5%
I feel as though I am making progress at my school.	NA	3.24	3.26	97%	3.14	94.7%
When all factors are considered, principals are a powerful influence on student achievement.	3.25	3.29	3.23	90%	3.11	87%
I have enough training and experience to deal with almost any learning problem.	2.96	3.06	2.99	78%	2.95	78%
I often wonder if the long hours involved in the job are worth it.	2.38	2.52	2.49	47%	2.35	39%
The hours students spend in school have little influence compared to their home environments.	NA	2.05	2.11	26%	2.10	23%

CLUSTER III School Context Enhancers						
The community takes a lot of pride in our school.	3.17	3.34	3.31	90%	3.20	89%
Parents are supportive of our school.	3.20	3.32	3.29	97%	3.21	95.2%
Most teachers at this school have values and philosophies of education similar to my own.	3.03	2.97	3.07	89%	3.02	87%
There is a shared vision for this school.	3.02	3.03	3.04	85%	2.96	81%
We have widespread agreement here regarding the goals for students.	3.00	3.03	3.02	82%	2.90	75%
Teachers at this school have high standards for all students	3.06	2.99	3.00	81%	2.92	78%
The central office assists me in improving my school.	NA	NA	2.88	76%	2.75	69%
CLUSTER IV School Context Detractors						
My workload makes it difficult to give my best attention to tasks.	NA	NA	2.75	62%	2.67	56%
I feel pressure from others to make sure this school has a reputation for excellence.	3.37	2.72	NA	NA	NA	NA
I am expected to keep pressure on faculty and staff to improve.	NA	NA	2.79	70%	2.82	72%
Priorities change too frequently for our school and staff to improve.	2.37	2.48	2.55	48%	2.52	45%
Some community groups/individuals [fervently/2001] oppose educational practices here at school.	NA	2.20	2.54	59%	2.64	60%
I spend a lot of time responding to conflicting expectations of our school.	NA	2.40	NA	NA	NA	NA
Rules and policies hinder me in doing my job.	1.83	2.14	2.20	27%	2.16	22%
I encounter little disagreement and conflict in my work.	NA	NA	2.16	30%	2.11	28%
CLUSTER V Demands of the Work						
I find my job stressful.	NA	3.20	3.12	85%	3.06	83%
I often find myself in situations that are challenging for me.	NA	3.11	2.92	77%	2.78	70%

Because of long hours required by my job, I have little time left for myself.	3.18	3.06	2.90	69%	2.88	70%
I think the stress and challenges of being a principal are well worth it.	2.96	2.76	2.80	67%	2.87	73%
My job intrudes too much on my personal life.	NA	2.85	2.66	56%	2.60	54%
The demands of this job are wearing me out.	NA	NA	2.58	51%	2.53	48%
I find it easy to balance my commitments to job and family	2.10	2.13	2.25	35%	2.25	34%
Clusters Based on Face Validity Mean score scale: Strongly Agree = 4; Agree = 3; Disagree = 2; Strongly Disagree = 1						

Questions of Personal-Professional Balance Persist

Given the extraordinary number of things principals are expected to do and the extraordinary number of hours Maine principals spend at work, it is not surprising that most continue to express the sentiment that their jobs "intrude too much on my personal life" and that "I have little time for myself" because of the long hours on the job. Table 7 reveals the persistence of this "balance" challenge over the 14 years of our study: 66% of 2011 principals strongly disagreed or disagreed with the statement, "I find it easy to balance job and family", a similar percentage to what we found in each of the first three surveys.

To what degree do the long hours and their attendant intrusion on "personal time" erode principals' effectiveness? Based on principals' opinions on this matter, many principals continue to feel they cannot be at their best at all times because of the workload and long hours. However, fewer Maine principals expressed these concerns in 2011 than had in the past. In 2011, 56% believed that "my workload makes it difficult to give my best attention to tasks", a decrease of 6% since 2005. Since 2001, the number of principals who feel the "job intrudes too much on my personal life" has fallen 12% but still shows in 2011 that 54% of principals agree with the statement. Over that same timeframe, the number of principals who "often wonder if

the long hours at work are worth it" has also continued a downward pattern, declining from 48% to 39% over the last ten years.

While these declines are noteworthy, a significant percentage of those responding to the survey report adverse effects from the demands of the principalship. The persistence of these effects of the principal's job on the people who hold them raises disturbing questions about school leadership in Maine. Since 1997, a clear majority of the respondents (ranging from 69% to 74%) believe "I have little time for myself." Why, for instance, would an accomplished teacher who, like many teachers, feels deeply rewarded by her work with students want such a job? Why, as well, would a young father or mother sacrifice time with her or his own children and spouse for a job that intrudes so much?

Table 7.
Opinions on Balancing Work and Personal Lives

	1997	2001	2005	2011
My job intrudes too much on my personal life				
% A/%SA	NA	64%	56%	54%
Mean	NA	2.80	2.66	2.60
Because of long hours, I have little time left for myself				
% A/%SA	74%	72%	69%	70%
Mean	3.18	3.06	2.90	2.88
I find it easy to balance job and family				
%D/%SD	68%	67%	65%	66%
Mean	2.10	2.13	2.25	2.25
My workload makes it difficult to give my best attention to tasks				
%A/%SA	NA	NA	62%	56%
Mean	NA	NA	2.75	2.67
I often wonder if the long hours are worth it				
%A/%SA	42%	48%	46%	39%
Mean	2.38	2.52	2.49	2.35
% A/%SA: Percentage of principals responding "Agree" and "Strongly Agree" Mean scores based on: Strongly Agree = 4, Agree = 3; Disagree = 2; Strongly Disagree = 1				

Commitment to the Principal Profession

The extraordinary time demands of principals' work and their impacts on principals raise the question: Once a person has chosen to be a principal, how does the experience itself shape her/his commitment to the role? We asked: "If you had to do it over again, would you still choose to become a principal?" and, "Would you still choose a career in public education?" Researchers have used items of this sort to gauge satisfaction and sense of efficacy individuals feel in their work.

On the 2011 Maine Principals Survey, 71% of principals responded "yes, definitely" or "yes, probably" when asked if they would choose to become a principal again. This continues the relatively stable pattern that began in 2001 when 70% responded in the affirmative and then again in 2005 when 74% agreed with this statement. However, it still raises the concern that slightly more than one quarter of Maine principals would not make such a choice or are unsure if they'd choose the principalship if given the option once again. Approximately 14% said that they would "definitely not" or "probably not" make this choice while 15% of the respondents were "unsure" of their choice.

Interestingly, these figures are not significantly higher than those who would "still choose a career in public education". To that question school leaders responded "yes, definitely" and "yes, probably" at the rate of 70%. Those that would "definitely not" or "probably not" continue in public education tallied 13%. Seventeen percent (17%) of the respondents were "unsure" of their choice.

Three themes emerge from the comments made by principals who would choose not to follow this career path again. First, some principals report missing the direct educational relationship with students either in the classroom as a teacher or in the role of an athletic coach.

One respondent captured such sentiments as follows: "I love to teach and coach. I love to work with students and I don't feel that I get enough time working with all students. I miss my content area and seeing students succeed." Second, a number of principals see the rewards of the position as insufficient, a theme that we also identified in 2005. Principals continue to judge their salaries and benefits as low when one considers the level of stress, the never-ending nature of the job, and the impact on one's self and family. In as nutshell, one principal wrote, "Too much work for the reward." Finally, the third theme that emerges is one of feeling "under-valued and under-appreciated". Individuals felt that "we give so much of ourselves and our time and with little positive in return". The lack of support many feel leads, as one person said, to "too many days where it is an absolutely thankless position".

On the other hand the feelings of principals who would choose to become a principal again are summed up in the statement, "As frustrating as our profession can be, it's truly one of the few that makes a life-changing difference in people's lives." While these principals recognize the variety and complexity of the challenges they face on a daily basis, they find their interactions with teachers, parents and community members "rewarding" and "fulfilling". What comes through from their comments most significantly is their strong focus on children and the potential they feel to shape the quality of students' experience and learning. "I love my job and I love making a difference in the lives of children", one principal wrote, adding, "A principal has a unique ability to impact student learning, achievement and success at the school level".

Concluding Thoughts

The Maine principalship, to the extent that it is accurately represented in the MPS 2011 survey returns, has changed since 2005 in some potentially powerful respects. The cadre of Maine principals is somewhat younger and less experienced in administration than it has been since 1997. It includes, as well, more women. (A majority of respondents was, for the first time, female.) The average principal now supervises a school with nearly 70 more students than was the case in 2005; that principal is responsible for leading a staff of 53, up by five employees since 2005. Ten percent of Maine principals supervise more than one school. Distinctly more students in the average principal's school are now eligible for Free or Reduced Lunch than were in 2005. More principals now work in large, centralized school districts than at any point in the past.

This 2011 portrait of less experienced professionals leading larger and possibly more complex schools might seem to present greater leadership challenges. In some respects, Maine principals report that it does. They now spend an average of 70 hours per week in their "roles as principals", up 12 hours from the average in 2005. They report the same "stress", "conflict", and difficulty balancing "personal and professional". Yet, fewer Maine principals in 2011 reported feeling that their "workload makes it difficult to give my best attention to tasks", that "the job intrudes too much on my personal life", or that they wonder if "the long hours make it worth [doing the job]".

Indeed, the current cadre of Maine principals seems more "bullish" about their work. As in the past, more than 80% of them state that they enjoy their work and feel that they are succeeding. They value the opportunities to "make a difference" for students and families and

feel supported in their work, particularly by their staffs, spouses, and fellow principals. As in the past, 71% say they would choose the principalship again for a career.

This is a fairly robust picture of school leadership. Schools are apt to thrive when their leaders are energized, engaged, and believe, as most Maine principals do, that they and their schools are "making progress".

The MPS 2011 portrait, however, raises some questions:

1. Principals' time and energies are devoted most to "student management", "personnel management", and "public relations" and least to "instructional leadership". Does this activity profile serve the best educational interests of all students?

2. Significant numbers of principals identified external forces – and specifically the Maine Department of Education, the school board, and parents – as sources of "obstacles" and "difficulties" in their work. How can school district personnel and the profession itself assist Maine principals to deal with such demands in a productive manner?

3. The rewards of leadership as they are experienced by most Maine principals are offset by stressors, both personal and professional. The most successful principals, we imagine, handle the stress in productive ways so that it does not erode their sense of enjoyment and efficacy as school leaders. But half the 2011 principals report that "the job is wearing me out." How can school district leadership, school boards, the Maine Principals' Association, and the Maine Department of Education build leadership capacity in every principal in the state in this respect?

The final item in the MPS 2011 survey asked, "What one thing would make you more successful as a school leader?" One principal responded, "Having two of me!" Another, with slightly darker humor, wrote,

> Increase days to 30 hours or find a way to eliminate the need for sleep. Get rid of NCLB and focus on individual student improvement. Cut back on special education paperwork and mandates - give us some flexibility. Give us options about what to do with children who are angry and violent and who have no desire to be in school. I know that's more than one [thing], sorry.

Others echoed the school improvement and leadership literature, pointing to the need for Maine to pursue principal capacity building. One set of these emphasized the power of sustaining focus and the role of districts, state, and federal government in staying the course:

> Having a sustainable goal for student improvement that does not change. It's difficult to lead a charge for school and student improvement when the end goal keeps changing. It burns out teachers; it burns out staff, and it burns out the principal. If we knew what to teach, how to assess, and how to measure it consistently, progress could be made.

> And another cluster stressed the importance of two types of support. The first was

restructuring the job to permit strong instructional involvement by the principal:

> More support staffing to take care of the management of running a school so that I can focus on the aspects that are going to have a greater impact on student learning such as coaching teachers, planning professional development, providing feedback to staff and work on curriculum and instruction.

But a third cluster sought a more lasting transformation of the leadership cadre of school districts themselves, a transformation that would give each leader "help and directed support" in the important but challenging work they do every day:

> Systematic support within my district. Having help and directed support from my Superintendent and fellow principals. There are so many things to spend my time on that I have a hard time prioritizing, having a support group to keep me focused on the most important issues would be most helpful. My current admin team has the potential to fulfill this need. Not sure how to engage the group to do this- that feels like another thing to add to the "to-do" list!

These suggestions from Maine principals themselves remind us that engaging these vital school leaders in the improvement of their profession will be essential to Maine's educational future. The state has, in the past, supported several initiatives in leadership development: the first-in-the-nation Maine Principals' Academy in 1979; one of four national innovative leadership development grants in 1991; the Maine School Leadership Network and professional development collaboratives in Southern, Western, and North-central Maine; and the MPA's new principal mentoring project in recent years. The Maine Principal Survey points to the need to rejuvenate such rich opportunities for principal growth and to include principals in their creation and success.

References

Center for Public Education (2012). *The principal perspective.* Retrieved October, 2012 from
www.centerforpubliceducation.org.

Donaldson, G., Buckingham, D., and Marnik, G. (2006) *The Maine Principal Study: Stability
and Change Among Maine Principals, 1997-2005.* Orono, ME: College of Education
and Human Development, The University of Maine.

Donaldson, G., Buckingham, D., and Coladarci, T. (2003) *The Maine Principal Study: Stability
and Change Among Maine Principals, 1997-2001.* Orono, ME: College of Education
and Human Development, The University of Maine.

Donaldson, G., & Hausman, C. (1998). *Maine principals and their worklives: A study of the
Maine school principalship.* Orono, ME: College of Education and Human
Development, The University of Maine.

Donaldson, G., & Hausman, C. (1999). What makes principals feel successful*?* Reston VA:
National Association of Secondary School Principals. *The NASSP Bulletin, 83*(608), 64-
75.

Educational Research Service. (1998). *Is there a shortage of qualified candidates for openings
in the principalship? An exploratory study.* Prepared for the National Association of
Elementary School Principals and the National Association of Secondary School
Principals. Alexandria, VA: Author.

Fenstermacher, G. (1999). Agenda for education in a democracy. In Smith & Fenstermacher
(Eds.), *Leadership for educational renewal: Developing a cadre of leaders* (pp. 3-28).
San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Hausman, C., Nebeker, A., McCreary, J., & Donaldson, G. (2002). The worklife of the

assistant principal. *Journal of Educational Administration, 40*(2), 136-157.

Keller, B. (1998, November 11). Research: Principal matters. *Education Week,* pp. 25-27.

Leithwood, Kenneth, Karen Seashore Louis, Stephen Anderson and Kyla Wahlstrom (2004).

Review of Research on How Leadership Influences Student Learning. Toronto: OISE

and Minneapolis MN: University of Minnesota.

Murphy, J. (1992). *The landscape of leadership preparation: Reframing the education of*

school administrators. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin.

Read, A. (1998). *Conversations on the status of women school leaders in Maine: It doesn't just*

concern women anymore. Augusta, ME: Maine Leadership Consortium.

Seashore-Louis, K., Wahlstrom, K. L., Leithwood, K. and Anderson, S. E. (2010).

Investigating the Links to Improved Student Learning. The Wallace Foundation.

Maine Principal Survey 2011

A. PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Maine Principal Survey 2011 Instructions: Indicate your responses by clicking on the appropriate "button" following each item or typing into the spaces provided. If you need to backtrack, you may do so. When you have completed the survey, you will find instructions to forward it. Thanks again for your help.

A1. What is your current position?
    ⭕ Principal   ⭕ Teaching principal   ⭕ Assistant principal

A2. How many years have you been in this position?   _____

A3. How many years have you worked at your current school? _____

A4. How many years have you been a school administrator? _____

A5. How many years of classroom teaching experience do you have? _____

A6. How many different principalships have you held? _____

B. SCHOOL BACKGROUND

B1. For how many schools do you serve as principal?
    ⭕ One   ⭕ Two   ⭕ Three   ⭕ More than three

B2. What is the total student enrollment at your schools?   _____

B3. What is the grade span? Select all that apply.
    ⭕ PreK - 2   ⭕ 3 - 5   ⭕ 6 - 8   ⭕ 9 - 12

B4. How many professional staff do you supervise? _____

B5. How many support staff do you supervise? _____

6B. What percentage of your enrollment qualifies for free/reduced lunch? _____

B7. Which of the following describes your district?
    ⭕ SAD   ⭕ Municipality   ⭕ RSU
    ⭕ Union   ⭕ CSD   ⭕ AOS

B8. In what type of community is your school located?
    ⭕ Urban   ⭕ Rural – within 40 miles of an urban area
    ⭕ Suburban   ⭕ Rural – more than 40 miles from urban area

B9. Is your district a newly reorganized district?
    ○ Yes   ○ No

C. PERSONAL

C1. What is your gender?
    ○ Male   ○ Female

C2. What is your age?
    ○ 21 - 30   ○ 31 - 40   ○ 40 - 50   ○ Over 50

C3. What is your highest level of education?
    ○ Bachelor's   ○ Master's   ○ CAS
    ○ Bachelor's + credits   ○ Master's + credits   ○ Doctorate

C4. In what kind of community did you grow up?
    ○ Urban   ○ Rural – within 40 miles of an urban area
    ○ Suburban   ○ Rural – more than 40 miles from urban area

C5. Do you live in the district in which you work?
    ○ Yes   ○ No

C6. What is your marital status?
    ○ Single/involved in a significant relationship   ○ Single/uninvolved

    ○ Married with significant other

C7. Please list the number of the following individuals for whose care you are directly responsible.
    Children _____   Parents or other relatives _____   Other (please specify) _____

C8. In an average week, approximately how many total hours do you spend interacting with your spouse/significant other and the individuals listed in #7 above?
    Weekly total hours _____

C9. In an average week, approximately how many total hours do you spend in your role as principal (including commuting)?
    During the school year _____   During the summer _____

C10. Approximately how many hours per week do you regularly commit to each of the following? (check the appropriate column).

	0-1 Hrs	1-3 Hrs	3-6 Hrs	6+ Hrs
a. Religious activities	○	○	○	○
b. Civic organizations	○	○	○	○
c. Volunteer work	○	○	○	○
d. Other employment	○	○	○	○
e. Exercise/caring for	○	○	○	○

your health
  f. Leisure/hobbies   O   O   O   O

C11. If you had to do it over again, would you still choose a career in public education?
  O Yes, definitely   O Yes, probably   O Unsure   O Probably not   O Definitely not

C12. If you had it to do over again, would you still choose to become a principal?
  O Yes, definitely   O Yes, probably   O Unsure   O Probably not   O Definitely not

C13. If you answered "Definitely not" or " Probably not" to question #11 or #12, please share
   your reasons. _____

C14. If you answered "Yes, definitely" or "Yes, probably" to question #11 or #12, please share
   your reasons. _____

D. SUPPORT and ASSISTANCE

D1. To what degree has each of the following contributed to your success as a principal?

	Very little	Some	Substantially	A great deal
a. Experience as a teacher	O	O	O	O
b. Graduate training in educational leadership	O	O	O	O
c. A principal internship	O	O	O	O
e. Professional readings	O	O	O	O
f. Attending professional development conferences/seminars	O	O	O	O
g. Participation in a sustained program (eg. Maine Principals Academy, MASLN/MSLN, Beginning Principal/Mentor Program, Great Beginnings)	O	O	O	O

D2. In general, how have the following individuals/groups influenced your work as a principal?

	Provided sustained help to me	Often been helpful when I needed it	Negligible influence on my work	Sometimes made my work more difficult	Has been a regular obstacle for me
a. Teachers in my school	O	O	O	O	O
b. My superintendent/central office	O	O	O	O	O
c. Other principal(s) in my school	O	O	O	O	O
d. Guidance counselors	O	O	O	O	O
e. Parents of children in my school	O	O	O	O	O
f. The school board	O	O	O	O	O
g. Maintenance staff	O	O	O	O	O
h. Secretaries	O	O	O	O	O
i. Other principals outside of	O	O	O	O	O

my school

	Rarely	Sometimes	Frequently	Nearly always	
j. Universities/professors	O	O	O	O	O
k. Maine Principals' Association	O	O	O	O	O
l. Spouse/significant other	O	O	O	O	O
m. District Administrative Team	O	O	O	O	O
n. Maine Department of Education	O	O	O	O	O

E. ROLES and RESPONSIBILITIES

E1. Please indicate how often you engage in each of the following activities as principal and assistant principal:

	Rarely	Sometimes	Frequently	Nearly always
a. Responding to parent/community inquiries	O	O	O	O
b. Initiating new programs (such as RTI, PBIS, Laptops)	O	O	O	O
c. Professional reading	O	O	O	O
d. Direct supervision of students	O	O	O	O
e. Supervision/evaluation of teachers	O	O	O	O
f. District administrative team meetings	O	O	O	O
g. Budget preparation	O	O	O	O
h. Meeting with parent/citizen groups	O	O	O	O
i. Evaluating effectiveness of curriculum	O	O	O	O
j. Organizing professional development for staff	O	O	O	O
k. Organizing and supervising co-curricular activities	O	O	O	O
l. Coordinating staff efforts on a daily basis	O	O	O	O
m. Responding to central office needs	O	O	O	O
n. Supervising accounts and finances	O	O	O	O
o. Direct involvement in teaching	O	O	O	O
p. Contact with parent regarding issue with student	O	O	O	O
q. Scheduling classes and other instructional events	O	O	O	O
r. Dealing with state/community agencies	O	O	O	O
s. Monitoring condition of the building and grounds	O	O	O	O
t. Preparing and publicizing	O	O	O	O

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
information about school and events				
u. Collecting and using student assessment data	O	O	O	O
v. Meetings/courses for professional growth	O	O	O	O
w. Consulting with teachers about specific students	O	O	O	O
x. Conducting faculty/committee meetings	O	O	O	O
z. Attending sessions on school improvement (e.g., Race to the Top; conferences)	O	O	O	O
aa. Consulting with colleagues on issues I face	O	O	O	O
bb. Special student issues (PET, G & T, etc.)	O	O	O	O
cc. Responding to the needs of teachers	O	O	O	O
dd. Completing required reports/data entry	O	O	O	O
ee. Supervision/evaluation of support personnel	O	O	O	O

F. WORKLIFE DESCRIPTORS

F1. Rate your level of agreement with each of the following statements.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
a. I enjoy being a principal.	O	O	O	O
b. The hours students spend in school have little influence compared to their home environment.	O	O	O	O
c. My work is energizing and rewarding.	O	O	O	O
d. I have enough training/experience as a principal to deal with almost any learning problem.	O	O	O	O
e. I think the stress and challenges of being a principal are well worth it.	O	O	O	O
f. Some community members oppose educational practices here at school.	O	O	O	O
g. Parents are supportive of our school.	O	O	O	O
h. I would like to be a principal at this school for many years.	O	O	O	O
i. Rules and policies hinder me in	O	O	O	O

doing my job.

j. Priorities change too frequently for our school to succeed at them all.	O	O	O	O
k. I am expected to keep pressure on faculty and staff to improve.	O	O	O	O
l. There is a shared vision for this school.	O	O	O	O
m. My job intrudes too much on my personal life.	O	O	O	O
n. My professional judgment is questioned by others.	O	O	O	O
o. If I could get a higher paying job, I would leave the principalship in a minute.	O	O	O	O
p. The community takes a lot of pride in our school.	O	O	O	O
q. I find my job stressful.	O	O	O	O
r. I am making a positive difference for students at this school.	O	O	O	O
s. We have widespread agreement here regarding the goals we want to achieve with our students.	O	O	O	O
t. Because of the long hours required by my job, I have little time left for myself.	O	O	O	O
u. My workload makes it difficult to give my best attention to tasks.	O	O	O	O
v. I have as much enthusiasm now as I did when I first became a principal.	O	O	O	O
w. I often find myself in situations as principal that are challenging for me.	O	O	O	O
x. I feel as though I am making progress at my school.	O	O	O	O
y. This school has written goals for student performance for all grades/courses.	O	O	O	O
z. I often wonder if the long hours involved in the job are worth it.	O	O	O	O
aa. I am confident in my ability to be an effective school leader.	O	O	O	O
bb. I often consider becoming a teacher again.	O	O	O	O
cc. Most teachers at this school have values and philosophies of education similar to my own.	O	O	O	O

dd. I find it easy to balance my commitments to job and family.	○	○	○	○
ee. When all factors are considered, principals are a powerful influence on student achievement.	○	○	○	○
ff. The demands of this job are wearing me out.	○	○	○	○
gg. I encounter little disagreement and conflict in my work.	○	○	○	○
hh. Teachers at this school have high standards for all students.	○	○	○	○
ii. The central office assists me in improving my school.	○	○	○	○

F2. What one thing would make you more successful as a school leader? _____

If you would like to return to a previous page click the Reverse button.
If you have completed the survey please click the Forward button to submit it.
Thank you.