National Louis University
Digital Commons@NLU

12-2014

Utilization-Focused Evaluation of a School District Leadership Pipeline

Whitnee Shaffer
National-Louis University

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.nl.edu/diss

Part of the Educational Administration and Supervision Commons, and the Educational Leadership Commons

Recommended Citation

Shaffer, Whitnee, "Utilization-Focused Evaluation of a School District Leadership Pipeline" (2014). *Dissertations*. 88.
https://digitalcommons.nl.edu/diss/88

A UTILIZATION-FOCUSED EVALUATION OF A SCHOOL DISTRICT LEADERSHIP PIPELINE

Whitnee Shaffer

Educational Leadership Doctoral Program

Submitted in partial fulfillment

of the requirements of

Doctor of Education

in the Foster G. McGaw Graduate School

National College of Education

National Louis University

December, 2014

NLU Digital Commons Document Origination Statement

This document was created as *one* part of the three-part dissertation requirement of the National Louis University (NLU) Educational Leadership (EDL) Doctoral Program. The National Louis Educational Leadership EdD is a professional practice degree program (Shulman et al., 2006).

For the dissertation requirement, doctoral candidates are required to plan, research, and implement three major projects, one each year, within their school or district with a focus on professional practice. The three projects are:

- Program Evaluation
- Change Leadership Plan
- Policy Advocacy Document

For the **Program Evaluation** candidates are required to identify and evaluate a program or practice within their school or district. The "program" can be a current initiative; a grant project; a common practice; or a movement. Focused on utilization, the evaluation can be formative, summative, or developmental (Patton, 2008). The candidate must demonstrate how the evaluation directly relates to student learning.

In the **Change Leadership Plan** candidates develop a plan that considers organizational possibilities for renewal. The plan for organizational change may be at the building or district level. It must be related to an area in need of improvement, and have a clear target in mind. The candidate must be able to identify noticeable and feasible differences that should exist as a result of the change plan (Wagner et al., 2006).

In the **Policy Advocacy Document** candidates develop and advocate for a policy at the local, state or national level using reflective practice and research as a means for supporting and promoting reforms in education. Policy advocacy dissertations use critical theory to address moral and ethical issues of policy formation and administrative decision making (i.e., what ought to be). The purpose is to develop reflective, humane and social critics, moral leaders, and competent professionals, guided by a critical practical rational model (Browder, 1995).

Works Cited

Browder, L.H. (1995). An alternative to the doctoral dissertation: The policy advocacy concept and the policy document. *Journal of School Leadership, 5,* 40-69.

Patton, M. Q. (2008). *Utilization-focused evaluation* (4th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Shulman, L.S., Golde, C.M., Bueschel, A.C., & Garabedian, K.J. (2006). Reclaiming education's doctorates: A critique and a proposal. *Educational Researcher, 35*(3), 25-32.

Wagner, T., et al. (2006). *Change leadership: A practical guide to transforming our schools.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass

ABSTRACT

The Future Leaders Academy is a program for aspiring leaders that is directed by the Hillsborough County Public Schools Leadership Development Department. The research in this paper demonstrates the views of the cadre members that have completed the program. The research provides data and information as to their responses to the effectiveness of the program and whether it was beneficial to be a part of this leadership program. The following details the rationale for the research and the results of the surveys from the cadre members.

PREFACE

An alternative to the traditional doctoral dissertation is the program evaluation dissertation. I have been in education for 11 years. I have been in the classroom as a teacher and subject area leader for mathematics in my school, and transitioned into a leadership role of peer evaluator. My current role of peer evaluator allowed me to become part of the focus group that assisted with the brainstorming and development of the courses for the Future Leaders Academy. I also was in the first cadre of the Future Leaders Academy. After completing the academy, I began to work with leadership development as part of my internship and in in talking with them I approached the leadership director about evaluating the program to obtain more detailed information and feedback as to the points of view of the cadre members. They agreed that they would like to know what the members thought. I developed research questions and presented them to the leadership director for approval. Once that was completed the surveys were sent out and the research began. I wanted to know what aspects of the program other members thought needed to be enhanced because I had a small hand in helping develop the program and I wanted to know how to make it better. By completing this research, I have learned that no matter what type of program that you develop to help provide more information and opportunities to people to develop their understanding of leadership roles, you cannot please everyone. There will always be somebody that feels that they do not need the information and finds the idea negative. It is also interesting to see the perspectives that people have and suggestions that they provide to make the program better. I know that in reading the responses from the cadre members, there are definitely many, many different leadership styles.

Table of Contents

Figures and Table

Figures

Tables

SECTION ONE: INTRODUCTION

Purpose

This research project evaluated the Future Leaders Academy (FLA) program which is the first stage in the Hillsborough Principal Pipeline in the Hillsborough County Public School District in Florida. The program intent is to prepare aspiring teachers to fill the role of leaders in the school district. The overarching goal of the FLA program is to provide the necessary knowledge to those applying to become assistant principals. The design of the courses provides content intended to provide insight into the role and responsibilities of the school site principal so that once participants in the program are appointed the role, they can "hit the ground running." Previously the person who was appointed as assistant principal at a school had completed a leadership program at a university, but it has been determined by many researchers that the "leadership development programs provided by universities have not adequately prepared principals [or assistant principals] to undertake the new demands of school leadership" (Quinn, 2005, p. 14). This is why the Hillsborough Principal Pipeline program is so important; as times change, so must the way that leaders are prepared and chosen for the role of school leader.

The leader of a school needs to be aware of the responsibilities that they are undertaking, as well as the impact that their role has on the students. The school leader's interaction with the students in the school can positively affect the quality of the students' learning experience; this influence is not to be understated according to the research. A school site administrator is able to influence whether or not a student has a year of academic performance, a year marked as one of the best that they have in their school

career. The main priorities of all school leaders are the academic success of the students and providing a safe environment that is conducive to learning. The school environment must be safe for learning to occur and safe because this is where the students spend the majority of their day.

Hillsborough County Public Schools is the eighth largest school district in the nation. There are 143 elementary schools, 43 middle schools (grades six through eight), 28 high schools, three K-8 schools, 15 career, technical and adult schools, six alternative schools, 11 exceptional student centers, and 47 charter schools. There are approximately 15,500 teachers for the over 200,000 students that attend the schools daily. During the 2013 school year 75 schools earned a grade of an "A", 59 earned a "B", 58 earned a "C", 41 earned a "D", and five earned an "F". The district earned a grade of a "C". Of those schools, there are 136 qualify as Title I schools. With a district as large as this, it is important for the responsibilities of the leader of a school to include developing relationships with staff, faculty, parents, and the community. All of these stakeholders play an important role in the success of the school and on the individual who leads the school.

With the continuous changes that have been taking place the school environment and in the demands placed on school leaders, the school district felt that it was necessary to shape and mold exemplary leaders of tomorrow. In 2011, the school district received a grant from The Wallace Foundation to begin to develop a program to prepare the most capable leaders in the district for future administrative positions. The initiative began with the convening of a focus group. As part of the focus group, I was able to provide input to assist in the development of the courses that would provide information that is

important for the success a school administrator. The contributions made by focus group members provided insight into the development of the courses, the candidate scoring rubric, application process, and selection processes. Once the aspiring leaders' applications were submitted, the coordinators of the program began the review of the applications and selected the first cadre of leaders for this academy. The participants attended courses covering various topics, such as transportation, safety, and employee contracts. Once they complete the program, they can apply for any open assistant principal positions. The purpose of the program is to aid principals in hiring leaders to fill the vacancies at their school by providing a pool of potential administrators who are capable and highly qualified as a result of their completion of the Future Leaders Academy program.

Rationale

The Future Leaders Academy is the first step in the Hillsborough Principal Pipeline, a program to help develop successful leaders for the Hillsborough County Public School District. This program is the first of its kind in the state of Florida. I chose to evaluate this program because I was selected to be part of a focus group that assisted in the development of the program providing input into the topics and content for the courses of study for the Future Leaders Academy. I also had the pleasure of being selected to participate in the first cadre of participants who entered the selection process and subsequently the academy. I informed the Leadership Development Team that I was interested in conducting a research study on the Future Leaders Academy. My purpose was to make an inquiry into the effectiveness of the courses and elicit recommendations for the improvement of the courses for the next cadre of students. They were excited and

eager to see the results of the study. As the need for high quality administrators continues to expand in the school district, so the need to provide feedback to help enhance and refine the program to make it more and more successful in providing a pool of potential high quality administrators is ever expanding.

The Future Leaders Academy program is very important to those that aspire to fill administrative positions in the district. I feel that the more that you know about the role and what is going on in your district, the more marketable you become to the district in regards to a working knowledge of the school district and the school site. This program in Hillsborough County is paving the way for other school districts in Florida. There are many districts that are curious and are taking notice of the advancements that Hillsborough County is making. The reputation of the district as a leader inspires confidence within the educational community as well as within the greater community. The academy impacts the district by providing more prepared leaders who can maintain effectiveness within the school and maintain positive relationships with the community and all of the stakeholders who are involved. The candidates that complete the Future Leaders Academy have a better understanding of the district expectations. I feel that it is important to have people in positions for which they are prepared and schooled in an understanding of the role and all of the responsibilities it entails. The candidates understand how effective and constant communication those associated with the school is crucial to the success of the school. The importance of the extended community and their perception of the school is a central responsibility of the school leader. Those who observe the results of the academy from the outside include the parents, teachers, principals, and district personnel; all of these stakeholders in the process of preparing

new administrators have a vested interest in the effectiveness of the academy program to produce highly effective administrative applicants. I feel that it is imperative that those who complete the Future Leaders Academy have a real grasp on the competencies of leadership along with strong interpersonal interaction skills for motivating and communicating with people that are involved with or in the school every day. The stakeholders need to know that the person in the administrative position is a correct fit for the school and are knowledgeable of the students and surrounding community. The district needs to feel that the person who they appoint to the administrative position will be successful and will demonstrate the qualities of a highly effective leader. By having an administrator who is the best fit for the school and understands the needs of the community, the district and school community can feel comfortable knowing that the right person was chosen for the position.

Goals

The goal of the Future Leaders Academy is to better prepare the leaders of tomorrow. The idea is for the leaders that are accepted into administrative roles in the schools to be ready from day one. In the years past, this has not been the case. Quinn (2005) stated that "candidates for the principalship do not develop the practical knowledge necessary for the job" (p. 14). This is why the Future Leaders Academy provides specific courses and application to ensure that the participants know the role of the assistant principal before they apply for the position. By having leaders that are more prepared to be placed into those roles within the schools, it provides reassurance to the principals to have a pool of highly prepared potential candidates. In having candidates who are prepared for the administrative role, the principal has a greater opportunity to

select the right person for the vacancy. The substantial preparation of the new hires also alleviates the anxiety and stress that the newly hired administrator feels on the first day. Once the candidates have been hired into an administrative role, the candidate will then proceed to the next phase of the Hillsborough Principal Pipeline.

The goal of this program evaluation is to use information from those that have completed the Future Leaders Academy to determine the effectiveness of the program and to identify areas of need for possible modification and enhancement to make the program more efficient and responsive to the ever changing role of the administrator. The stakes for the school sites are high; the increasing need for highly qualified administrator candidates has never been greater. The administrators play an important role in the school culture and ultimately can create a climate that is conducive to student learning, a vision for academic performance, and inspiration for greater school performance. Highly effective administrators understand all aspects of their crucial role in the school as their actions and choices impact student learning in the classroom.

Research Questions

The primary questions that drove the research on this topic are:

- How do the participants view the Future Leaders Academy?

- Do the participants feel better prepared for the role of an administrator after completing the program?

The questions that are included in the survey provided feedback about the program and about the participants. The data gathered includes current positions of the members of the cadres upon entering the program, position upon exiting the program, feedback about the quality of the program and effectiveness in preparing them for administrative positions,

data concerning cadre member's appointed administrative position, and other feedback about their experience in the program. Additional questions included in the surveys provided information about the candidates who are members of the first two cadres. I used the responses from the cadre members to answer the research questions and provide suggestions to the Hillsborough Principal Pipeline initiative leaders for insights and input into potential course improvements to strengthen the program.

Conclusion

By evaluating the Future Leaders Academy, the responses to the survey questions can help provide insight into the success of the program. The analysis of the responses from the candidates from the first two cadres of the Future Leaders Academy promises to provide information as to the strengths and weaknesses of the program and specific areas that require more attention for future cadres. In completing this research, I provide specific areas in which the candidates feel the FLA program needs to be improved upon, as well as the areas that the candidates felt were very informative and did not need to be changed. This program is a crucial program that will help to provide information to teacher-leaders who are thinking of moving into an administrative role while assisting them to determine if administration is a good fit for them. I feel that there are many candidates who will complete the Future Leaders Academy only to realize that this path is not the path for them. As with any initiated program, there are always areas that can be improved. My hope is that this research provides specific insights and details into the changes and modification that may be made to improve the program and enhance its effectiveness for future success.

SECTION TWO: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Introduction

The development and implementation of an educational leadership pipeline for aspiring administrators is relatively new in the world of education. In 2011 research, Myung, Loeb, and Horng states that "most school districts lack a formal succession management system-based on the criteria for leadership recruitment aligned with district goals that are widely understood by current and prospective leaders" (p.700). For a district to become successful and stand out amongst the rest, a district needs to be able to "identify teachers with high leadership potential early and provide them with the necessary leadership development opportunities for a career in administration" (Myung, Loeb, and Horng, 2011, p. 699). The idea of creating a program to select the most successful candidates for the opportunity to be in a program to prepare them for the role of an administrator is unheard of, until now. The Wallace Foundation selected 6 school districts from more than 90 that applied from across the nation to begin a program to provide guidance and leadership to prospective aspiring leaders. The "idea behind the program is that obtaining effective principals [or assistant principals] requires four essential elements: principal standards, high-quality training, selective hiring, and a combination of solid on-the-job support and performance evaluation" (Mendels, 2012, p.49). Mendels (2012) mentions four essential elements that are essential to the process of obtaining effective principals: exemplary leadership standards, high-quality training, selective hiring, and on-the-job support. The key points mentioned are components of the Future Leaders Academy and the Hillsborough Principal Pipeline.

There is a great need for these programs in the schools districts because many of the universities "do not adequately prepare principals to meet on-the-job demands", so the districts need to ensure that "principal training programs meet the demands of today's complex and multifaceted school environments" (Shelton, 2012, p.1). The search to find highly qualified candidates for administrative positions is one that is greatly needed so that successful leaders can be placed in the more struggling lower socio-economic schools to make the difference necessary for the academic success of the students. According to Gill (2012):

> Aspiring principals need training that prepared them to lead improved instruction, not just manage buildings. Top-notch training programs prepare future principals to make teaching and learning everyone's top priority. Aspiring leaders learn how to coach teachers, plan the proper professional development for them, and use data to spot student needs. Coursework goes beyond textbook theories and uses real-world examples that bring the material to life. (p. 26)

The implementation of this new program is one that can make a significant impact in many districts for the betterment of schools and student achievement. The goal is to find the best candidates to fill the positions who possess the knowledge necessary to succeed upon entering the role in order to hit the ground running from day one. In order to find the best candidates you have to "develop criteria and methods to choose high-quality candidates for leadership preparation. Tap those with a demonstrated knowledge of curriculum and instruction as well as a passion for helping students meet high standards" (Bottoms, 2003, p. 4). One indicator of the success of the program can be

determined by the candidates that complete the program and are hired into the roles of an assistant principal. "Investing in better leadership makes economic sense as a way to spread good practices to every classroom" (Mendels & Mitgang, 2013, p. 28).

The need for leadership development programs is becoming more of a necessity across the United States. Colvin (2010) noted that:

In school district and state education offices around the country, improving school leadership is considered a must. And if dollars are any indication, the federal government, too, is recognizing the importance of leadership by making significant amounts of new Department of Education funding available to cultivate support strong principals. (p. 6)

Developing effective leadership programs not only affects the school districts that are implementing the programs, but can ultimately have an effect on the students within the school, the greater community, and the education profession. Behar-Horenstein (1995) states that "prospective principals [or assistant principals need] to participate in administrative internship and work with stakeholders, including teachers, teacher educators, community leaders, and politicians who are engaged in school improvement" (p. 28). The Wallace Foundation (2008) spoke with Kati Haycock, president of the Education Trust, and she made the following statement about the "evolving view of leadership":

When you meet the leaders in the places that are really getting the job done, they are not the kind of leaders that just turn things around by sheer force of their personality. They are regular people. They are totally focused. They are not big, outsized personalities and they are not the only

leaders in their schools. Especially in the larger schools, the principals

know that they can't get it done themselves. Those are the places that

improve. Leadership is not about one person, it's about a shared

commitment and building a leadership team. (p. 2)

The view of school leadership is one that needs to change for the positive by

implementing programs that will enhance the leadership potential of aspiring

leaders, while ensuring that they meet the goals and the competencies that have

been established by the leadership development program. Haynes (2009)

commented that "leading change at all levels to create a culture of continuous

improvement that shifts from compliance to a service mode on the part of all

entities" (p. 6). This leads to constant evaluation of the program to ensure that it is

still functioning at the level intended and make changes or modifications when

needed.

Conclusion

The implementation of a program within a large school district, such as

Hillsborough County, is bound to be noticed by other schools districts in the state of

Florida. The research articles reveal that there is a need for programs to develop

competent and highly-effective leaders in administrative roles within schools. The

literature provides evidence that this reform is necessary to ensure that the leaders that are

chosen as administrators within our schools are able to do the job and have had the proper

training to ensure that they understand the responsibilities that accompany the role of

leader. The literature also stressed that the leadership within the schools takes a team

effort and cannot be done by one person.

SECTION THREE: METHODOLOGY

Research Design Overview

This research study consisted of surveys that will be sent to members of the first two cadres of the Future Leaders Academy. The members of the two cadres completed two surveys: a Likert survey and an open-ended question survey. The members of the first two cadres responded to the electronic surveys. I used an internet resource to collect the data called Survey Monkey. This method allowed the members to complete the surveys at their leisure and when the response deadline arrived, I was able to close the survey so that no other responses are accepted. I believe that this method of collecting the information from the cadre members is the most efficient and easiest method for the number of members there are in the first two cadres. The answers provided by the participants helped provide constructive feedback that is crucial in modifications that are made to help enhance the program and process for application, courses, and exit assessments.

Participants

The participants in the surveys were the members of the first two cadres of the Future Leaders Academy. The surveys were sent to 171 cadre members. The Likert Survey received 89 responses and the open-ended question survey received 96 responses, which is a 52% and 56% response rate, respectively. The participation in the surveys was completely voluntary. All of the cadre members have to have a master's degree or higher to apply to the Future Leaders Academy.

Data Gathering Techniques

I collected quantitative (see Appendix A) and qualitative (see Appendix B) data for this research project. The data collected is from the surveys of the participants in the first two cadres of the Future Leaders Academy. The data consisted of two surveys: Likert Scale surveys and open-ended survey questions. The more personalized feedback makes the comments more meaningful because the individuals took the time to provide their impressions of the program and what they feel could be improved or changed for the future participants.

I sent the surveys to the participants of the first-two cadres through an internet survey website called Survey Monkey. This allowed the participant to respond to the questions anonymously and take the survey when it is convenient for them. The participants are sent an email in which they clicked a link to respond to the survey. I was then able to access the survey and analyze their results when the time frame for the survey is complete. Once the time frame was finished, I closed the survey so that no other responses were accepted.

Surveys

The surveys that I created were questions based on the information that I felt would be beneficial to the improvement of the Hillsborough Principal Pipeline. The questions that were developed for both the Likert Survey (Appendix A) and the Open-Ended Survey (Appendix B) were given to the head of leadership development for the district to determine if she felt that the questions would provide the information that she needed to positively impact the Future Leaders Academy with feedback and suggestions that could enhance the program. She provided final approval on the questions and the

questions were entered into Survey Monkey and sent to the members of the first two cadres. The cadre members were given two weeks to complete the surveys online.

Data Analysis Techniques

The data I collected was used to determine participant perception of the program and also trends in the feedback that is provided. At that time, I exported the responses into an excel spreadsheet and began the data analysis. Once the responses were exported, "the first analytical task in evaluation is assembling and organizing the evidence to answer priority evaluation questions. Once presented, evidence can then be interpreted and a judgment rendered" (Patton, 2008, p. 472). I first calculated the response rate of the surveys returned. Then I looked at the Likert Survey (Appendix A) and calculated the percentages based on the responses that were provided by the cadre members. Once the percentages were calculated, I input the data into pie charts to create a visual representation of the data given. Finally, I looked at the second survey and created a chart to place the data as I reviewed the open-ended responses from the cadre members. The responses were then categorized based on the responses. Once I completed the analysis of all of the questions, I calculated the percentages of cadre members for each of the responses to provide the percentage of each response. In looking at the feedback, it provided a better understanding of where modifications to the program could be made to further enhance the program and meet the needs of the aspiring leaders in future cadres.

Ethical Considerations

This study involves over 100 participants in the collection of the data. The participants signed an electronic informed consent (Appendix C) form before completing the surveys. I made it very clear that participation in the surveys was not mandatory. It

was purely their decision if they would provide feedback to further enhance the Future Leaders Academy program; their input would be greatly appreciated. The survey is anonymous and there are no repercussions for completing the survey or not completing the survey. There were no minors involved in the research. The responses from the participants are solely to help in the future development of the program to make it more efficient and beneficial to future leaders in the school district. I submitted the district paperwork to the assessment and accountability office within the school district. The person reviewing the IRRB form asked a few questions to determine if I had spoken with the director of leadership, and I informed him that I had and she was eager to have the research conducted and see the results. The IRRB then was formally reviewed by a board and I received approval to conduct the survey under the guidance of the leadership director for the school district. The process for the institutional approval was similar in that the information was completed on the appropriate forms, discussed and approved by the chair, and then submitted to the appropriate office at my university.

Conclusion

Through the analysis of the data, I hoped to provide positive feedback on the program in taking steps in the right direction for future leaders, while understanding that changes can be made to any program to make it better. I feel that with the responses that I received from the surveys, both positive and negative, provided great insight as to areas that could be improved for the Future Leaders Academy. The number of responses that I received was better than expected, and will provide a sufficient amount of data to analyze and interpret. I felt that the incorporation of the open-ended survey would provide the most reflective feedback from the Future Leaders Academy.

Findings

The results of the surveys sent to the participants were very enlightening. I received a 56% return rate on the open-ended survey (Appendix C) and a 52% return rate on the Likert survey (Appendix B). These surveys were sent to the participants of the first two cadres. I felt that the return could have been better, but overall was acceptable. The qualitative survey data revealed that the open-ended survey provided a plethora of information and feedback from the cadre members that will assist in providing suggestions to enhance the Future Leaders Academy for the next cadres to complete the courses.

Surveys

The Likert Scale survey (Appendix B) results provide insight into the program's efficacy in providing participants with a sense of preparation for an administrative role. This survey had a 52% return rate. Overall, the pipeline program feedback was positive. The cadre members felt that the courses and the program would positively impact their confidence in obtaining a leadership position. The first question was: The FLA has better prepared me for an administrative role. The responses from the cadre members are in the chart below:
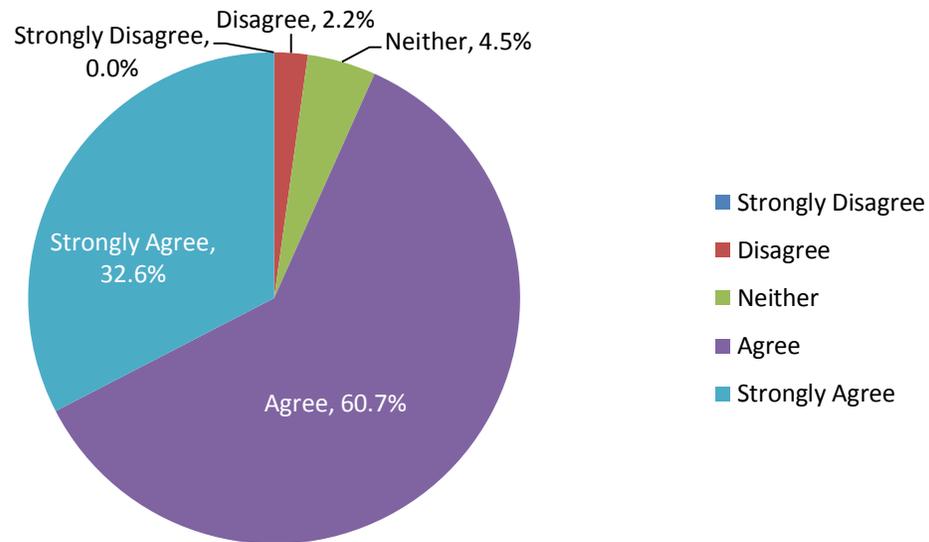
Figure 1. Extent to which FLA is perceived as having better prepared participant for an administrative role.

Ninety-three percent (93%) of the cadre members felt that they were better prepared for an administrative role after completing the Future Leaders Academy. The Future Leaders Academy provided information as to roles and responsibilities that an assistant principal faces on a day-to-day basis. This means that 83 of the 89 responses strongly agreed or agreed with the first question. There were four-and-a-half percent (4.5%), or four people, that neither agreed nor disagreed with the question. This could possibly mean that the cadre members were not sure about the course instruction because they were not yet in the role of an administrator, or they are unsure if they want to continue down the path towards administration. There were two members that disagreed with the question. This might be because they did not feel that the received enough information or because they feel that the Future Leaders Academy should not be mandatory to complete before applying for any administrative positions in the Hillsborough County Public School District. For this survey to be conducted with the

first two cadres, the positive responses are a good indicator of a program that can only become better from the survey results.

The second question in the Likert Survey was: The courses helped me to better understand the role of an administrator.
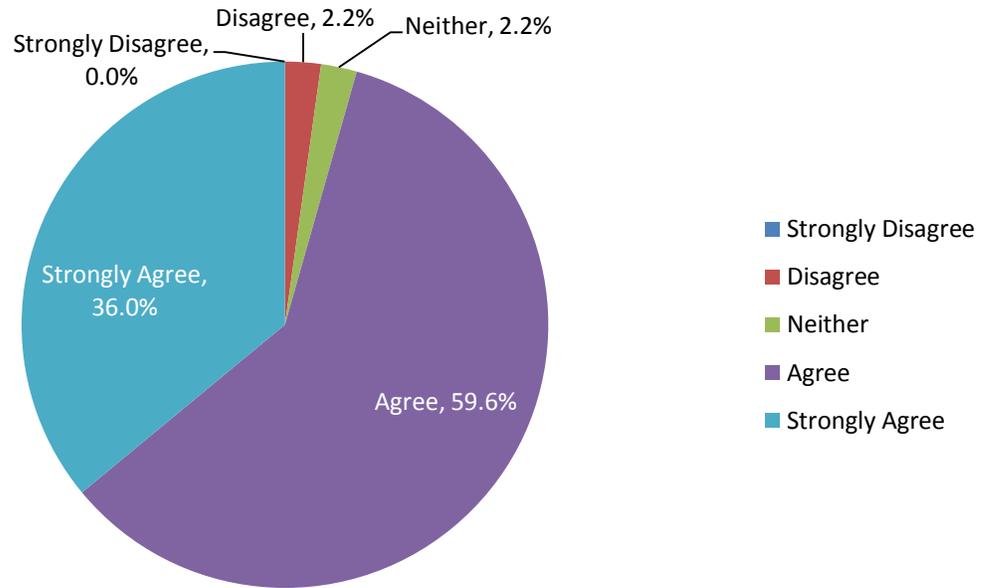
Figure 2. Extent to which FLA is perceived as having instilled in the participant a better understanding of the role of administrator.

The results of the second question are relatively similar to the results of the first question. There were 96% of the cadre members who strongly agreed or agreed with the question. There were four members that disagreed or had no opinion of the question. This could be because they still had questions that were not answered and did not ask them, or because the information might have been overwhelming. The positive response in regards to understanding the role suggests that the instructors for the courses were knowledgeable and were able to convey the information that was specific to the course that they were

teaching so that the participants better understood the role of the assistant principal as a result of taking the class. .

The third question in the survey was: I feel that after FLA (Future Leaders Academy) I am better prepared to apply for an administrative position. The results are as follows:
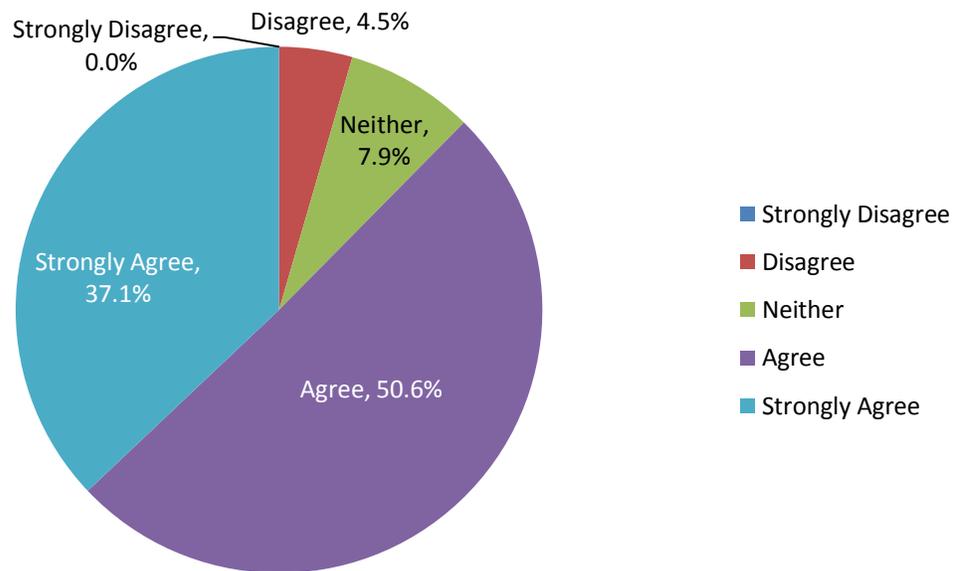
Figure 3. Extent to which FLA is perceived as having better prepared participants to apply for an administrative position.

The data in the chart shows that 87% or 78 members agreed or strongly agreed that they were better prepared to apply for an administrative position. This means that the information in the program helped them to better understand the role and more confident when it came time to submit an application. There were 11 members or twelve percent (12%) that remained neutral or disagreed with the question. This seems to indicate that the information that they were provided during the courses made them feel that they were not at a point that they were ready to make that next step to the role of an administrator.

The forth question asked the cadre members to respond to the statement: I do not plan on applying for an administrative role after completing FLA.
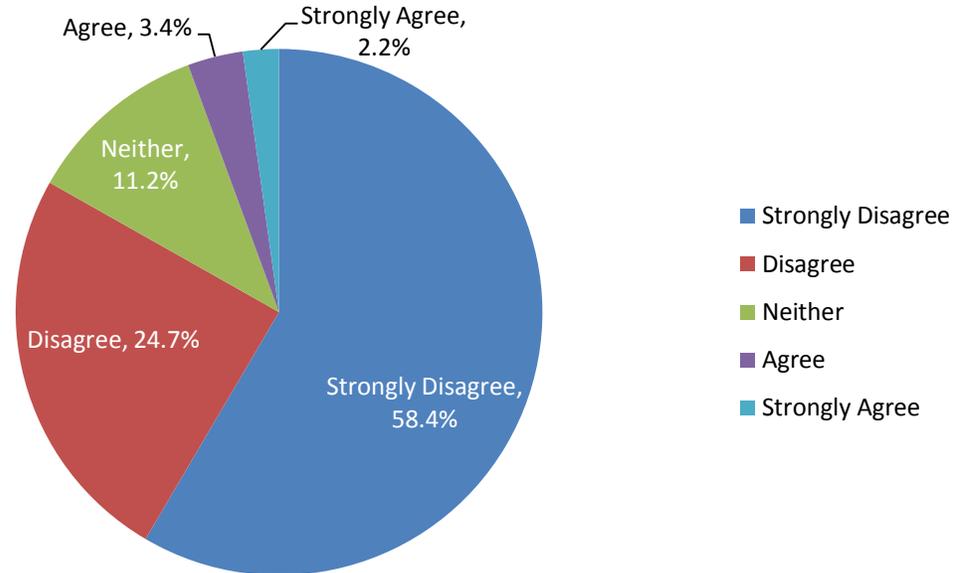
Figure 4. Those participants who do not intend to apply for an administrative position.

Based on the responses to this question, there was an overwhelming disagreement to this question. Eighty-three percent (83%) of the members, or 74 people, disagreed or strongly disagreed with the question meaning they do plan on applying for an administrative position within the school district. This means that the program was successful in recruiting applicants for the administrative positions that are available. There was approximately eleven percent (11.2%), or ten people, that did not agree or disagree with the statement. This could mean that they still need time to process all of the information that was presented in the courses to make their final decision as to whether they want to become an administrator or not. Finally there was a little over five and a half percent (5.6%), or five people, that agreed or strongly disagreed with the statement. These five

people could have possible read the question incorrectly or after attending the courses decided that administration is not the position that they see in their future. The responses to this question show that there are a number of cadre members that are ready to make the jump into a leadership position.

Questions five and six had responses that were not that different. Question five asked them: I plan to apply for an administrative role within the next 6 months; and question six changed the time frame to within the next year.
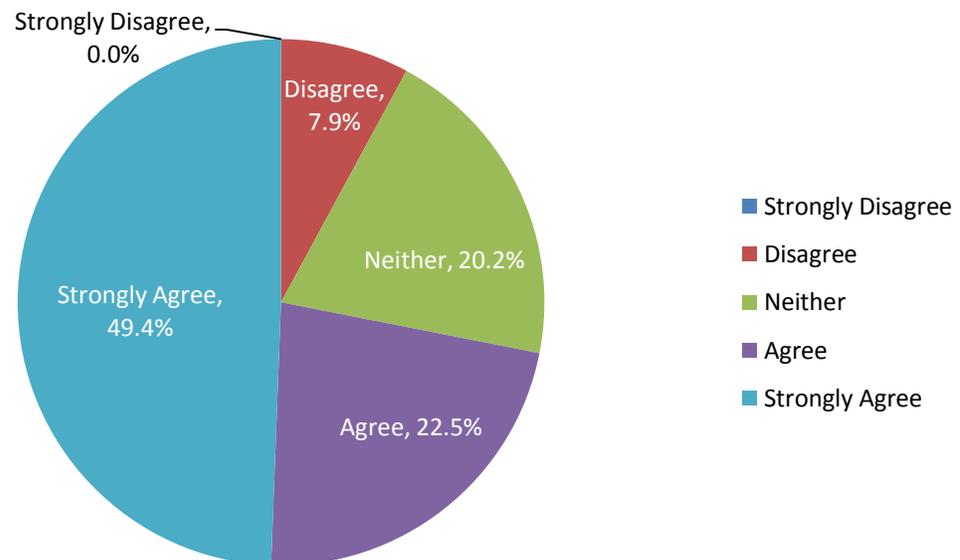
Figure 5. Participants who intend to apply for an administrative position within 6 months.

Approximately seventy-two percent (71.9%) or 64 people agreed or strongly agreed that they plan to apply for an administrative position within the next six months, which means that the program prepared them to take the next step in their career. There were 20.2% or 16 people that were undecided at the time of the survey and 7.9% or seven people that disagreed with the statement. They do not plan to apply for a position within the next six

months. This could mean that they feel that they are not ready yet to apply or they changed their mind about administration and do not plan to apply at all.

When the time frame of the question changed to applying within the next year, the percentages did not change significantly. The agree or strongly agree changed by one person, from 64 to 63, neither gained two people to go from 18 to 20 people, and there were six people that disagreed with the statement which is down from seven people. The decrease in the strongly agree and agree cold be because the one person is more confident that they will get an administrative position within the next six months, rather than a year, or they feel that if they do not get an administrative position within the next six months then they are not sure what direction they will go with their career.   The person that changed their response from 'disagree' to 'neither' could mean that they will feel more confident in applying for an administrative position within the year. They might need time to process all of the information from the courses and take their time deciding which schools to apply for the positions.

Question seven of the survey asks the members: I would recommend FLA to other aspiring school leaders. The responses are as follows:
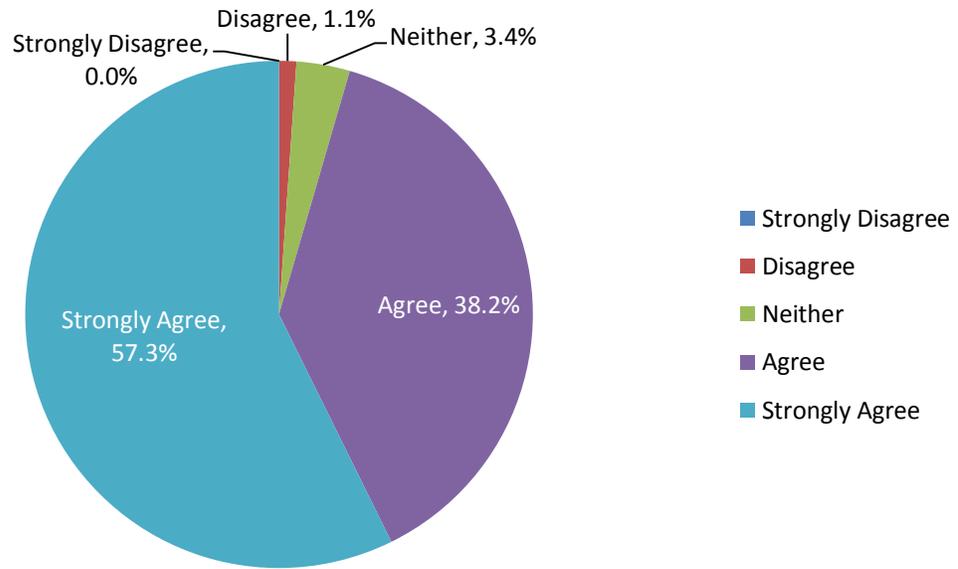
Figure 6. Participants who would recommend FLA to aspiring leaders.

The responses indicated that 95.5% percent or 85 people would recommend Future Leaders Academy (FLA) to aspiring leaders. The results indicate that the information obtained during the program was beneficial to helping them better understand the role of an administrator. Almost three and a half percent (3.4%) were undecided as to recommend FLA to aspiring leaders. This could be because they were unsure of their response to the effectiveness of the program and how it fits within their goals and career path. There was one person or a little over one percent (1.1%) that disagreed with the statement. The disagreement could be from a person that could have been expecting more from the program or they are a person that does not feel that the program is necessary.

The eighth question asks the members to respond to: The FLA courses prepared me for the Program Exit Assessment. The graph shows:
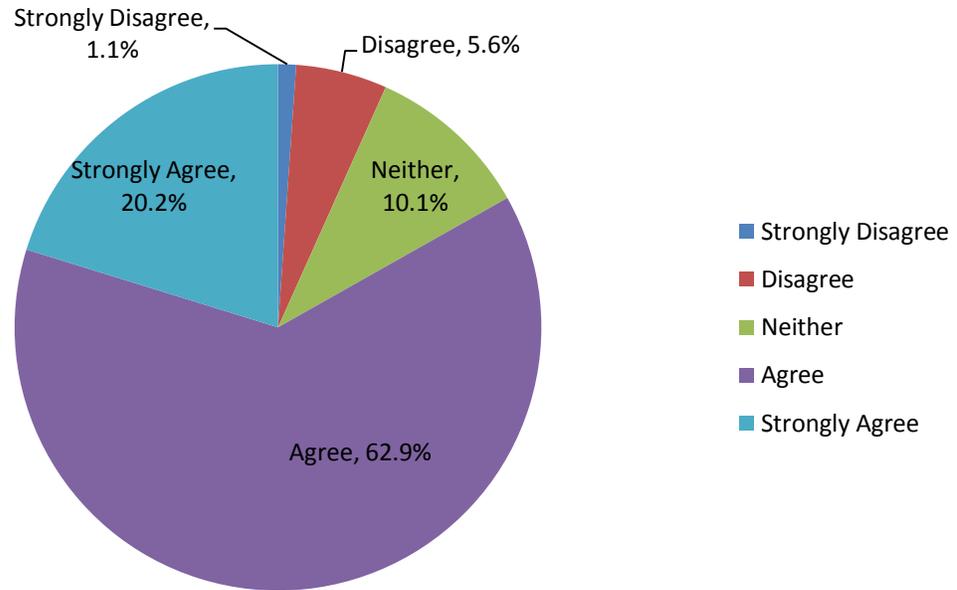
Figure 7. Participant perception of their preparation for the program exit assessment.

A little over 83.1%or 74 people agreed or strongly agreed with the statement. They felt that they were prepared for the exit assessment that they were to take at the end of the program to determine their success on the courses and upon passing, place them on the list of eligible candidates for administrative positions. There were nine people or a little over ten percent (10.1%) that were unsure whether the courses prepared them for the exit assessment. This could be because they were not good test takers, or needed more study time during the courses. There were six people or a little over six and a half percent (6.7%) that disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement. This again could be attributed to people not being good test takers or they felt that they needed more information during the courses to be more successful on the exit assessment.

The Likert Survey results provide great insight into the opinions of the FLA members participating in the first two cadres. This survey is one that can continue through to the other cadre members and use their feedback to determine if the opinions of the members have changed as the program progresses. The second survey will be able to provide a little more insight into the perception of the members of the first two cadres. The second survey will help to provide more specific details as to areas that need to be focused upon to strengthen the program and make it more successful.

The second survey (Appendix B) allowed the cadre members to respond to open-ended questions. This allows them greater latitude in their responses to the questions about the Future Leaders Academy. In looking at the first question posed to the cadre members they are asked: Why did you apply for FLA? There were 76% (72 people) that stated that they were in FLA to become an assistant principal, better prepare them for the role, or because it is a requirement to be able to apply for an assistant principal position. The other 24% or 23 people had varying answers such as, leadership opportunities, encouraged by supervisor, from another state and need to know the skills required in Hillsborough County, or to advance their career. Based on the information provided in the first question, there are many aspiring leaders that want to become administrators in Hillsborough County.

The second question that they were asked to respond to was: What is/was your position upon entering FLA? This question is designed to get a pulse of the people that are applying to be part of FLA. Sixty-six percent (66%) or 63 of the members were in the role of a teacher when they applied, 14% or 14 people were Peer Evaluators or Peer Mentors with the district, nine percent (9%) or nine were Administrative Resource

Teachers, and e11% or 9 people were specialists, counselors, or academic coaches. The classification of teachers includes classroom teachers, District Resource Teachers (DRT), Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID) coordinator, and Resource teachers assigned to specific schools. The results reveal that the program is reaching the teacher leaders within the school district. These are the people that the district wanted to reach and begin to mold them to become highly effective administrators within the Hillsborough County Public School District.

The third question asked the members: What is your position upon exiting FLA? The responses showed the 13 people were appointed to an assistant principal position by the time that they completed FLA. The other cadre members' positions remained relatively the same. The classification of "other" positions on the table includes academic intervention specialists, guidance counselors, behavior specialists, and Exceptional Student Education (ESE) specialists. Table 1 shows the changes in the cadre members' positions from the beginning of FLA to the end of FLA membership to provide an indication of how the positions changed amongst the cadre members. Table 1 provides the results from the survey:

Table 1

Cadre Members' Position Changes from the Beginning of FLA to the end of FLA

Membership

Position	Before	After
Teacher	63	52
Peer Evaluator	13	11
ESE Specialist	3	2
Administrative Resource Teacher	9	10
Assistant Principal	0	13
Other	7	7
Total Members	95	95

The table shows that some of the teachers and peer evaluators moved into other positions,

with several moving into the role of assistant principal. These results are positive because

14% of the cadre members received an administrative position upon exiting the program.

This is a good indication that the program is beginning to contribute to a good candidate

pool of administrative leaders from which the district can pull to fill the vacant positions

due to attrition or the opening of schools.

The fourth question posed to the cadre members asks them: Have you applied for

an administrative position? The data results are presented in Figure 8.
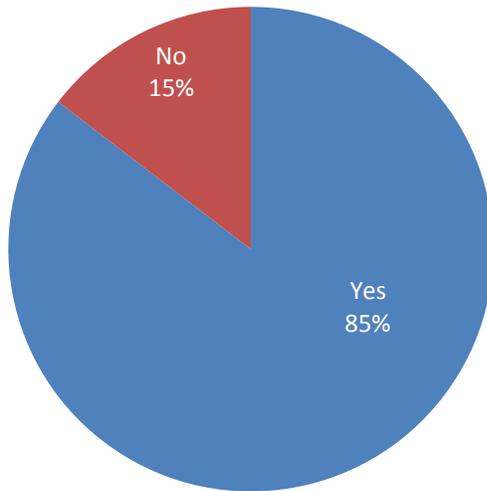
Figure 8. Cadre members who have applied for an administrative position.

The results show that 85% or 82 have applied for an administrative position and 15% or fourteen people 14 have not yet applied. This shows that the program helped to develop a sense of understanding about the role of an administrator; and with that understanding many of the cadre members applied for the open administrative positions within the school district.

The second part of question four asks the cadre members: How many times that they have applied for an administrative position? The responses yielded a variety of answers. The responses ranged from once to at least 60. I feel that the person that has applied for over 60 positions is counting the times that they applied before completing FLA. Most of the cadre members have applied from one to five times, which are fifty (50) cadre members. It is interesting to see the number of people that have applied numerous times and keep applying for positions that are available. It makes one begin to wonder whether administration is the correct career path for them.

The third part of question four asks the cadre members: How many interviews have you been on? The 82 people that have applied for the administrative positions have been on several interviews. There were 49 people that have been on one to five interviews. There are many cadre members that have been on numerous interviews. Twenty-two of the cadre members indicated that they had been on ten or more interviews, and even 3 making the comment that they have been on too many to count. This again makes one begin to wonder about the candidate and their interview skills and presence during the interview. With the number of people that have applied for positions and the number of interviews that they have been on may indicate that the cadre members are not being selective on their applications. They appear to be applying for any position that is open. This is not good practice. This is a good indicator that the application and interview process might need to be further explained to the cadre members, to ensure that they are applying for positions that they feel will be a good fit for them.

The fourth part of question four asked the cadre members: Did you receive an appointment? The results were contradictory of the results from the other questions. The data chart from the earlier question showed that 13 people were appointed to an assistant principal and one more was appointed to an administrative resource teacher. The results from this question were 51 people were not appointed and 31 people were appointed. Of the thirty-one cadre members that were appointed, nine were high school, eight were middle school, eleven were elementary, and three were administrative resources teachers. The reason for the change in the number of people that were appointed to assistant principal positions could have been due to the interpretation of the question, and that they were appointed well after they completed FLA. But this indicates that more people were

appointed to administrative positions than originally indicated from the survey. This is a positive note for the Future Leaders Academy program in that one-third of the cadre members surveyed were appointed to administrative positions.

The fifth question asks the cadre members: What was your impression of FLA before entering the program? The majority of the cadre members felt that FLA would help them learn about the role of an assistant principal and better prepare for entering that role. There were 45 members that provided that type of response. There were a few that were excited to be part of a new program. The overall feeling from the responses was that this program would be helpful to them to move on to the next level in their career, and this program would provide the necessary skills to accomplish that. There are always people that are negative in regards to anything that is new, and six felt that it was a waste of time, it was another hoop to jump through, and that it is not necessary because they do have their master's degree. This information is important because in order to be successful in an administrative position, you have to be able to compromise and be a team player. The negative responses may indicate that those few are not team players.

The sixth question asks the cadre members: What is your impression after finishing the program (FLA)? In analyzing the results from this question eighty percent (80%) of the cadre members found the program informative. The members' further explained the manner that the program was not only informative but provided opportunities for role play, helped to build a contact list, helped them to better understand the role of an administrator, better prepared them for the position, liked the hands-on aspects of the program, helped to hear the information from the current administrators, it helped to fine tune skills, and helped them to take a look at themselves to determine their

readiness to make the step towards administration. There were also five responses that were negative towards the program, classes were not helpful, could have interviewed and accepted without FLA, didn't gain much knowledge, and it didn't prepare me. All of these comments were made by separate individuals. It is always important to remember that attitude can carry you far in your career.

The seventh question asked the cadre members: What could be improved in the courses? The main aspects of the Future Leaders Academy that the cadre members felt could be improved were to have more shadowing experiences (23 people) and more practice on interviewing to develop better skills (8 people). Six people thought that the program was great and nine people felt that nothing needed to be changed. The other comments that were made related to information that was provided in the courses, such as more time on the topics, scheduling, human resource stuff, and technology practice. The feedback was informative to provide guidance to where improvements can be made to the courses to better meet the need of the future cadre members.

The eighth question asked the cadre members: What was good about the courses? There were 32 cadre members that felt that the knowledge that the received about the assistant principal position and their role and responsibilities was good. There were 11 cadre members that felt that the experiences that the instructors shared in regards to situations that can happen in schools was invaluable. It was provided insight into situations that might occur and how you have to handle them. Twenty-six cadre members felt that the courses taught by current administrators and the meetings with the area leaders were very informative. The results indicate that the current course instruction is effective for the benefit of the cadre members. The cadre members receive

the necessary information as to what to expect in the administrative role and the instructions are able to provide real-life scenarios that make the experience more real to the participants.

Overall, based on the two surveys, many of the cadre members felt that the knowledge that they gained about the role of an assistant principal (safety, personnel, budget, discipline, and academics), the experiences that were shared by current administrators, networking, and the courses completed during the program were extremely helpful in understanding everything that it takes to be an assistant principal. Survey member 95 made the statement:

> I think it was realistic as far as time commitments, well run/managed, and worth every minute of my time. The courses were extremely helpful in beginning to see the "bigger picture" that administrators have regarding assessments, data, school safety, transportation, communication and facility management. I exited the program much more prepared for administration and the communication from the FLA office was excellent!

Interpretation

The results of the surveys seem to indicate that the Future Leaders Academy program is on its way to being successful in the selection of future leaders in the school district. The findings were significant because the program was brand new and the cadre members felt that it was very beneficial when applying for an administrative position. The members of the cadres are aspiring leaders that were aware that it was the beginning of the program, and they knew there would be tweaks to make it better. Their feedback

appeared to be sincere, and time was taken to provide detailed information when completing the survey.

The results from the surveys will provide information into the various areas of the program that can be improved and areas that worked well. The cadre members responses to the surveys will help to give the leadership development team an indication of which direction to go with the program and additional developments that need to be made to enhance the effectiveness of the program. Being that there are so many components to the Future Leaders Academy, it is crucial to take all suggestions and comments into account when deciding which direction to go with the improvements to the course of instruction.

Based on the responses from the surveys, the cadre members indicated that the program was informative and better prepared them for the role of an administrator. There will always be situations that new administrators will encounter that the program did not expose them to: when educating students you never know what they will try to do next and what situations will arise. The program appears to have given gave the cadre members the background knowledge to be able to apply and accept an administrative position within the Hillsborough County Public Schools.

SECTION FIVE: JUDGMENT & RECOMMENDATIONS

Judgment

The completion of the surveys and the analysis of the data was very enlightening. The information provided by the cadre members was very helpful in understanding the point of view of the cadre members in regards to the Future Leaders Academy (FLA). The primary questions that drove the research on this topic were:

- How do the participants view the Future Leaders Academy?

- Do the participants feel better prepared for the role of an administrator after completing the program?

The first question addresses the participants of the Future Leaders Academy and what they feel worked well in the program. The surveys indicated that there was an overwhelmingly positive response to the program. Ninety-three percent of the cadre members felt that they are now better prepared for an administrative role after completing the Future Leaders Academy. Majority of the members felt that the information that was provided during the courses and from the administrators was invaluable. The instructors provided the real-life examples to the courses that enabled the cadre members to get a better understanding of the position.

By providing the courses to the cadre members and the instruction being led by current administrators, this allowed the cadre members to feel that they are now better prepared to apply for the role of an administrator. The data from the surveys indicated that the cadre members felt better prepared for the role of an administrator by the number of participants that have applied for an administrative position and received an appointment as an assistant principal. This program is one that with constant feedback

from the future cadre members and active listening to their needs could become one of the best examples for leadership development and having a highly effective administrative candidate pool to select from when choosing leaders within the school district.

Recommendations

In reviewing the survey results from the previous cadre members, it is clear that the program was successful but as with any program there is always room for improvement. The Future Leaders Academy (FLA) is on the right path by providing a program to enhance the understanding of the role of an administrator for the aspiring leaders within the Hillsborough County Public School District. In order to better develop the program and courses necessary for the success of the aspiring leaders, it would be beneficial to conduct continuous surveys of the future cadre members to determine what they thought worked well and areas that need to be enhanced to make the program even stronger. The survey could be part of the exit interview process that can help to better prepare future cadres.

The information that would be provided in the survey could provide insight as to the areas that the cadre members felt that they needed more instruction in or even areas that they felt needed to be enhanced because the information that was conveyed was not as clear as they would have liked. It would also be helpful to survey principals that have hired cadre members and even assistant principals that completed FLA to determine their view on the preparedness of the members for the position and areas that they feel could be improved upon for future cadres in the program.

Conclusion

The overall impression of the program is one that is successful. The cadre members provided positive feedback on the usefulness of the information and their preparedness for their future role as an administrator. The program was successful in its initial implementation and with additional suggestions; the program can only be improved upon and provide even better information for future aspiring leaders. The Hillsborough County Public School District is paving the way for leadership development programs. This type of program is one that has been needed for a long time to ensure that the proper people are being placed into the roles of an administrator, as well as provide a working pool of highly effective administrative candidates to choose from for positions that are available within the school district.

REFERENCES

Behar-Horenstein, L. (1995). Promoting effective school leadership: A change-oriented
model for the preparation of principals. *Peabody Journal of Education,* 3(70), 18-
40.

Bottoms, G., O'Neill, K., Fry, B., & Hill, D. (2003). *Good principals are the key to
successful schools: Six strategies to prepare more good principals*. Retrieved from
http://www.sreb.org/programs/hstw/publications/pubs/03V03_GoodPrincipals.pdf.

Colvin, R. L. (2010). 10-year climb: Education leadership reaches the national reform
agenda. *The Wallace Foundation*. Retrieved from http://wallacefoundation.org.

Gill, J. (2012). *Strength training*. Retrieved from www.learningforward.org.

Mendels, P. (2012). Principals in the pipeline: Districts construct a framework to develop
school leadership. *JSD, (3)*33, 48-52. Retrieved from
http://www.wallacefoundation.org/knowledge-center/school-leadership/district-
policy-and-practice/Pages/Principals-in-the-Pipeline.aspx.

Mendels, P. & Mitgang, L. D. (2013). Creating strong principals. *Educational
Leadership*. Retrieved from http://wallacefoundation.org.

Mitgang, L.D. (2008). Becoming a leader. *The Wallace Foundation*. Retrieved from
http://www.wallacefoundation.org.

Myung, J., Loeb, S., & Horng, E. (2011). Tapping the Future Leaders Academy:
Identifying talent for future school leadership in the absence of formal succession
management programs. *Educational Administration Quarterly, 47*(5), 695-727.
doi: 10.1177/0013161X11406112.

Patton, M. Q. (2008). *Utilization-focused evaluation.* Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE

    Publications, Inc.

Quinn, T. (2005). *Leadership development: The principal university connection*.

    Retrieved from www.naesp.org.

Shelton, S. (2012). *Preparing a pipeline of effective principals: A legislative approach.*

    Denver, Co: National Conference of State Legislatures. Retrieved from

    https://www.aasa.org/uploadedFiles/Resources/Leadership_Development/Prepari

    ng%20a%20Pipeline%20of%20Effective%20Principals%20FINAL(1).pdf.

Appendix A

Cadre Members Survey

Likert Survey Questions

1. The Future Leaders Academy (FLA) has better prepared me for an administrative

    role.

    Strongly   Agree   Neither   Disagree   Strongly

    Agree   Disagree

2. The courses helped me to better understand the role of an administrator.

    Strongly   Agree   Neither   Disagree   Strongly

    Agree   Disagree

3. I feel that after FLA, I am better prepared to apply for an administrative position.

    Strongly   Agree   Neither   Disagree   Strongly

    Agree   Disagree

4. I do not plan on applying for an administrative role after completing FLA.

    Strongly   Agree   Neither   Disagree   Strongly

    Agree   Disagree

5. I plan to apply for an administrative role within the next 6 months.

    Strongly   Agree   Neither   Disagree   Strongly

    Agree   Disagree

6. I plan to apply for an administrative role within the next year.

    Strongly   Agree   Neither   Disagree   Strongly

    Agree   Disagree

7. I would recommend FLA to other aspiring school leaders.

    Strongly   Agree   Neither   Disagree   Strongly

    Agree   Disagree

8. The FLA courses prepared me for the Program Exit Assessment.

    Strongly   Agree   Neither   Disagree   Strongly

    Agree   Disagree

Appendix B

Cadre Members Survey

Survey Questions:

1.   Why did you apply for FLA?

2.   What is/was your position upon entering FLA?

3.   What is your position upon exiting FLA?

4.   Have you applied for an administrative position?

        •   If so, what position(s)? Date(s)?

        •   How many times have you applied for a position?

        •   How many interviews have you been on?

        •   Did you receive an appointment? If so, where?

5.   What was your impression of FLA before entering the program?

6.   What is you impression after finishing the program?

7.   What could be improved in the courses?

8.   What was good about the courses?

Appendix C

INFORMED CONSENT

Adult Survey: Individual Participant

You are being asked to participate in a research study conducted by Whitnee Shaffer, student at National Louis University, Tampa, Florida. The study is entitled A Utilization-Focused Evaluation of One District's Leadership Preparation Pipeline. The purpose of the study is to evaluate the leadership pipeline and determine the success of preparing participants for an administrative role.

For the interview process, you will be asked to answer questions openly about the leadership pipeline program. The interview will be audio recorded for future reference during the research study. You will be given a pseudonym to ensure confidentiality of the interview.
With your consent, you will be interviewed for about 1 hour with a possible second, follow-up interview lasting about 1 hour. Upon request, you will receive a copy of your transcribed interview at which time you may clarify information.

Your participation is voluntary and you may discontinue your participation at any time without penalty. Your identity will be kept confidential by the researcher and will not be attached to the data. Only the researcher will have access to all transcripts, taped recordings, and field notes from the interview(s). Your participation in this study does not involve any physical or emotional risk to you beyond that of everyday life. While you are likely to not have any direct benefit from being in this research study, your taking part in this study may contribute to our better understanding of ways to enhance the information provided to candidates in the leadership pipeline program to build better leaders of tomorrow.

While the results of this study may be published or otherwise reported to scientific bodies, your identity will in no way be revealed.

In the event you have questions or require additional information you may contact the researcher: Whitnee Shaffer, National-Louis University doctoral student, 813-758-1932; Whitnee.Shaffer@sdhc.k12.fl.us, 9325 Governor's Run Drive, Seffner, FL 33584.

If you have any concerns or questions before or during participation that you feel have not been addressed by the researcher, you may contact Carol A. Burg, Ph.D. cburg@nl.edu, 813-491-6109, 4950 W. Kennedy Blvd., #300, Tampa, FL 33609 or the chair of NLU's Institutional Research Review Board:

Provost's Office, National Louis University, 122 South Michigan Avenue, Chicago, Illinois 60603; phone, 312-261-3135; email: Christine.quinn@nl.edu.

_____
Participant Name (Print)

_____   _____
Participant Signature   Date

_____
Researcher (Print)

_____   _____
Researcher Signature   Date